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IBE-UNESCO Preparatory Report for the 48th ICE on

<u>Inclusive Education</u>

"Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education"

**Preparatory Activity of the 48th Session of the
International Conference on Education**

Kingston, Jamaica, 5-7 December 2007

Abstract

The International Conference on Education (ICE) is a major international forum for educational policy dialogue among Ministers of Education and other stakeholders (researchers, practitioners, representatives of intergovernmental organizations and NGOs). The ICE is organized by the International Bureau of Education (IBE), the UNESCO institute specialized in assisting Member States in curriculum development to achieve quality Education For All. The IBE Council, composed of 28 UNESCO Member States, has proposed in January 2007 that the 48th ICE session, to be held in Geneva in November 2008, should focus on the theme "Inclusive Education: the Way of the Future". The 48th ICE will focus on broadening the understanding of the theory and practice of inclusive education while discussing how governments can develop and implement policies on inclusive education. The IBE is hosting a series of regional preparatory workshops dedicated to exploring and advancing inclusive education in preparation for the ICE 2008. The Regional Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education was held in Kingston, Jamaica on the 5-7 December 2007. This event was organized by UNESCO Office for the Caribbean, Kingston, Jamaica; the Division for the Promotion of Basic Education (ED/BAS, UNESCO Paris), the International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO), the Ministry of Education of Jamaica; the venue of the conference was at the Hilton Hotel, Kingston, Jamaica. This report details the discussion that took place at the seminar, the conception and status of inclusive education in sixteen English-speaking Caribbean countries, and the ideas proposed by country representatives on what the next steps should be on how to advance inclusive education policy and implementation in their region.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The IBE-UNESCO, through the Community of Practice (COP) in Curriculum Development[1], is organizing a series of Regional Preparatory Workshops on Inclusive Education with the overall goal of initiating a participatory, consultative process to highlight key issues and challenges in Inclusive Education to be presented at the 48th session of the International Conference of Education (ICE 2008).

There are a number of critical dimensions contained in the inclusive education agenda. Each preparatory regional workshop centers on four sub-themes around which the IBE Council has proposed to articulate the 48th ICE.

(i)   *Inclusive Education: Approaches, Scope and Content* (to broaden the understanding of the theory and the practice of inclusive education);

(ii)   *Inclusive Education: Public Policies* (to demonstrate the role of governments in the development and the implementation of policies on inclusive education);

(iii) *Inclusive Education: Systems, Links and Transitions* (to create education systems which offer opportunities for life-long learning); and

(iv)   *Inclusive Education: Learners and Teachers* (to foster a learning environment where teachers are equipped to meet the learners' diverse expectations and needs).

The IBE Council understands the conference as an opportunity for promoting dialogue among Ministers of Education, highlighting some universal and complex issues, and engaging the audience. The ICE should play a pivotal role in orientating and clarifying the debate on Inclusive Education. The IBE Council also proposes that the ICE should be based on evidence and involves the Ministers of Education in enriching discussions on evidence-informed policies.

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[1]   IBE, in conjunction with curriculum specialists from different regions of the world, set up from 2005 onwards, the Community of Practice in Curriculum Development (up to the moment made by 697 members from 85 countries). It is understood as an open and plural worldwide space that contributes to generate collective thinking and action on curriculum issues within the framework of a holistic approach to determining and implementing the Education for All (EFA) goals.

The Regional Caribbean Symposium had the objective of exchanging perspectives, strategies and practices on the status of inclusive education in sixteen English-speaking Caribbean countries. At the same time the symposium aimed to identify shared challenges in the context of policy proposals related to inclusive education with the final objective of representatives proposing next steps on how to advance inclusive education in their region. The agenda of the conference was organized around four main programmatic sections: 1) Opening addresses 2) Sixteen National Reports on Inclusive Education 3) Eight Concurrent Thematic Sessions; 4) Group work and regional contribution for the ICE 2008. (See Appendix 1, Programme Agenda).

One hundred and ten participants attended the Symposium including ministerial representatives, policy-makers, and educators from Anguilla; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Bahamas; Belize; British Virgin Islands; Cayman Islands; Commonwealth of Dominica; Grenada; Guyana; Jamaica; St. Christopher and Nevis; St. Lucia; St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Suriname; Trinidad and Tobago; United Kingdom; the UNESCO Office for the Caribbean, Kingston; the Division for the Promotion of Basic Education (ED/BAS, UNESCO Paris); IBE-UNESCO;UNICEF, UNAIDS; FAO and the World Bank. We acknowledge the generous engagement and deep professionalism shown by the workshop's participants (see Appendix 2, List of Participants). All participants were from senior levels at governmental institutions, and thus able to influence decision-making processes in the region.

Methodologically, the report[2] is organized as follows. After an introduction, a second section provides a background on inclusive education based on the United Nations normative framework. A third section discusses conceptual dimensions of inclusive education. In line with ICE 2008 sub-themes, a fourth section addresses the current status of inclusive education in sixteen English-speaking participating countries by identifying as well their challenges, policy initiatives and good practices of inclusive education. This section draws directly from country reports, country power point presentations, and

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[2] This report was prepared by Mr. Renato Opertti (r.opertti@unesco.org) and Ms. Carolina Belalcázar (c.belalcazar@unesco.org, with the assistance of Ms. Jayne Brady, Ms. Leana Duncombe and Ms. Isabel Guillinta Aguilar; Capacity Building Program, International Bureau of Education, UNESCO.

seminar notes. A fifth section addresses eight thematic concurrent sessions of the seminar linking inclusive education to the following themes: Gender-based exclusion in Caribbean schools; Indigenous populations, cultural minorities and inclusive education in the Caribbean; Inclusion of people living with HIV and AIDS within Caribbean education systems; Inclusion in early childhood education; Violence and inclusion; Poverty as exclusion. These sessions and their presentations will be addressed within the four ICE sub-themes. Finally, as a conclusion, the sixth section, presents the proposal of a regional road map that participating countries developed towards the end of the seminar and the various actions workshop attendees consider need to be taken with respect to inclusive education in the region.

II. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: UNITED NATIONS NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

Building a truly inclusive society, where all people learn together and participate equally hinges on providing a quality education for all. The United Nations Education for All movement is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, clearly lays down the foundation for the Education for All movement. It states:

> Everyone has the right to education and education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom[3].

Inclusive education seeks to address the diverse learning needs of all children. This is further supported by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, which states that all children have the right to receive the kind of education that does not discriminate on the basis of disability, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, capabilities, and so on. The principle of inclusive education was adopted at the 1994 World Conference on "Special Needs Education: Access and Quality" in Salamanca, Spain. It was restated at the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal. The idea of inclusion is further supported by the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities proclaiming participation and equality for all.

The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education call upon member states to guarantee the implementation of inclusive education in order to bring back children who are excluded into the mainstream educational system. According to the Salamanca Statement, inclusive education means that:

> Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other conditions. They should include disabled and

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[3] United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (2007). In the *United Nations Website*. Retrieved July 2, 2007 from the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights website: http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html

gifted children, street and working children, children from remote and nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups.[4]

The Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (2000) further supports previous initiatives by calling upon nations to address the needs of learners who are victims of marginalization. It states:

> Education for All (…) must take account of the need of the poor and most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health, those with special learning needs.[5]

The Convention on the Right of Persons with disabilities[6] (2006) specifically addresses the right of all persons with disabilities to education (article 24). In realizing this right, States Parties shall ensure that (a) persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability; (b) persons with disabilities can access an inclusive and free quality primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live; (c) reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided; (d) persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education and (e) effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

Providing quality education for all remains one of the biggest development challenges of our times but with effective legislation and policies it is possible to contribute to build a

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[4]   The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, Adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality. (1994). In the *United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO) website.* Retrieved July 2, 2007 from the UNESCO website: http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF

[5]   Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All. (2000). In the *United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organization (UNESCO) website.* Retrieved July 2, 2007 from the UNESCO website: http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/framework.shtml

[6]   www.un.org/disabilities/convention/

world of inclusion, not only for people with disabilities, but also for all those who are unable to exercise their basic human right to education.

III. CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education is a growing universal concern that informs and challenges the processes of educational reform in both developing and developed regions. Inclusive education is also an evolving concept useful to guide strategies of educational change addressing the sources and consequences of exclusion within the holistic framework of the EFA goals and the understanding of education as a human right.

3.1 SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

Traditionally and even today in various world regions – for example, in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, as well as in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and most parts of Asia[7, 8, 9] the concept and practice of inclusive education have been mainly limited to students categorized as having special needs, meaning mainly those with physical and/or mental disabilities, as well as refugees. Under this perspective, the approaches and responses given to students' needs have been mostly remedial and corrective, consisting of the setting up of special schools and curricular tracks and by increasing the number of special education teachers.

One significant consequence of differentiated curricular and institutional structures for students categorized as having special needs has been their marginalization and even segregation within the education system. Likewise, these children are learning to live separately from society, instead of learning to live together as a main part of it. The assumption that there are "special needs children" is questionable, as stated by Stubbs, "any child can experience difficulty in learning […]; many disabled children have no

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[7]   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2006. Education policies for students at risk and those with disabilities in South Eastern Europe: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, FYR of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. Paris: OECD.

[8]   IBE, 2007 International Bureau of Education (IBE) 2007. Report on the Commonwealth of Independent States, Third Workshop on Curriculum Development: "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future", Minsk, Belarus, 29-31 October 2007. Geneva, Switzerland: UNESCO IBE, IBE/2007/RP/CD/06.

[9]   IBE, 2007 International Bureau of Education (IBE) 2007. Report on the International Workshop on Inclusive Education – East Asia, Hangzhou, China, 2-5 November 2007. Geneva, Switzerland: UNESCO IBE, IBE/2007/RP/CD/08.

problem with learning"[10] and "children with intellectual impairment can often learn very well in certain areas".[11]

3.2 INTEGRATION

The concept of integration came to the fore in the 1980s, as an alternative to special needs curricula and school models, with the objective of placing students identified as having special needs in mainstream schools. The restructuring and improvement of physical facilities and the provision of learning materials, along with the increase in the number of special education classrooms and specially trained teachers in mainstream schools were, and still are, some of the main components for the application of integration models. Mainly focused on students with mild impairments, integration risks becoming a rhetorical device rather than a reality in practice; it can become a spatial change of school classrooms rather than a change of curricular content and pedagogy relevant to children's learning needs and capabilities.

After the 1990s, the scope, objectives, contents and implications of inclusive education in relation to integration considerably changed. This was principally due to the recognition that integration models solely based on closing special schools and "inserting" students into mainstream schools and curricula did not respond to the diversities of learners' expectations and needs. Such an understanding has prompted the revision of educational policies dealing with integration issues by questioning the relevance of the curriculum and school models that are the same for all students, regardless of their differences. In such models, students must *adapt* to the norms, styles, routines and practices of the education system instead of the education system changing according to the learner. Moreover, dropout rates may increase among students with special needs when they are integrated into mainstream schools that have not undertaken a comprehensive set of institutional, curricular and pedagogical changes.

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[10]   Stubbs, S. 2002. Inclusive education: where there are few resources. Oslo: The Atlas Alliance, p. 23.
[11]   Ibid., p. 3.

3.3 INCLUSION

Inclusive education can be understood as a guiding principle to attain reasonable levels of school integration for all students. In the context of a broader vision of integration, inclusive education implies the conception and the implementation of a vast repertoire of learning strategies to respond in a personalized way to learners' diversities. In this sense, education systems have the obligation to respond to the expectations and needs of children and young people, considering that the capacity to provide effective learning opportunities based on a rigid scheme of integration (placing "special needs" students in mainstream schools) is very limited. This is what Peters[12] refers to as the "continuum of placements" paradigm; that is, when inclusive education is conceptualized as a place and not as a service delivered. The debate on inclusive education and integration is not about a dichotomy between integration and inclusion policies and models, but rather about identifying to what extent there is progress in the understanding that each school has the moral responsibility to include everyone. Such requirement is also challenged when education systems have to address effectively other core universal education issues such as poor school attendance, repetition, dropouts, and low learning outcomes. Empirical evidence indicates that a student who repeats the first school years has a strong probability of dropping out of school altogether.[13, 14, 15] Each of the above problems and the combination of them generating exclusion are exacerbated by persistent institutional and pedagogical practices (e.g. frontal teaching) which assume that all children have the same learning conditions and capabilities. Moreover, as noted during the 2004 International Conference on Education,[16] a child's exclusion from education leads to a lack of the professional and social competencies needed in order to access essential knowledge and to exert an autonomous and responsible citizenship.

[12] Peters, S. 2004. *Inclusive education: an EFA strategy for all children*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

[13] United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 1998. *Wasted opportunities: when schools fail; repetition and drop-out in primary schools, Education For All, Status and Trends*, Paris: EFA Forum Secretariat, UNESCO.

[14] United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 1996. *La Repetición Escolar en la Enseñanza Primaria Una Perspectiva Global*. Geneva, Switzerland: UNESCO IBE.

[15] United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 1984. The drop-out problem in primary education: some case studies. Bangkok: UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific.

[16] United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2004. *International Conference of Education. 47th meeting. Workshop 2: Quality education and social inclusion*. Geneva: UNESCO IBE. Available online at: http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/ICE47/English/Wdocs/Wdocs_main.htm, ,pp. 8–14

Therefore, over approximately the last fifteen years, the concept of inclusive education has evolved towards the idea that all children and young people, despite different cultural, social and learning backgrounds, should have equivalent learning opportunities in all kinds of schools. The focus is on generating inclusive settings, which should involve: (a) respecting, understanding and taking care of cultural, social and individual diversity (responding to the expectations and needs of students); (b) providing equal access to quality education; (c) close co-ordination with other social policies.

A broad conception of inclusive education also addresses the learning needs of students with disabilities and learning difficulties, as conceptualized by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.[17] Such conception refers to the inclusion of children with educational needs related to learning difficulties caused by organic pathologies and/or to behavioural or emotional disorders. OECD also addresses learning difficulties in children due to a problematic interaction between the student and the educational context or to disadvantages related to socio-economic or cultural/linguistic factors. Although there are the above categories to consider, the nature of the concept of inclusive education is non-categorical, and aims at providing effective learning opportunities to every child, in particular tailored learning contexts.

UNESCO defines inclusion precisely thus: "as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children"[18]. Furthermore, as stated by Booth and Ainscow[19] in their proposal of an *Index for inclusion*, "inclusion is about

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[17] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2006. Education policies for students at risk and those with disabilities in South Eastern Europe: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, FYR of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. Paris: OECD.
[18] United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2005. Guidelines for inclusion: ensuring access to Education for All. Paris: UNESCO.
[19] Booth T., Ainscow, M. 2002. Index for inclusion, developing learning and participation in schools. Bristol, UK: Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, p. 4.

making schools supportive and stimulating places for staff as well as students. […] It is about building communities which encourage and celebrate their achievements".

Indeed, the design and the development of policies on inclusive education should not be understood as the sum of initiatives and efforts in favour of specific groups (an endless and quite possibly incomplete list). On the contrary, the focus is not on categories but on the provision of friendly learning environments and diverse learning opportunities for all. According to Tutt,[20] the main challenge is to provide inclusive settings in all schools, through the provision of a diverse continuum of services that are part of a school network linked to other social policies.

The challenges of attaining inclusive education are therefore also related to the provision of a comprehensive set of policies aimed at: (a) a pertinent and relevant curriculum with a vision that facilitates dialogue among various actors of the education system; (b) a vast repertoire of diverse and complementary pedagogical strategies (formal and non-formal schooling) that can respond to the specificities of each student by personalizing educational provision; (c) available physical facilities and equipment aligned with the designed curriculum and its implementation; (d) strong teacher support in the classroom —seeing the teacher as a co-developer of the curriculum; and (e) engaging in dialogue with families and communities in order to understand their expectations and needs, as well as to promote their active participation in the schools.

An inclusive educational strategy implies the careful and detailed consideration of the specificity and uniqueness of each child and adolescent so as to provide them with effective educational opportunities throughout their lives. In these terms, inclusive education is about the ways and the modalities under which teachers and students interact with each other and generate mutual empathy and closeness; how they understand and

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[20] Tutt, R. 2007. Every child included. London: Paul Chapman Publishing/The Association for all School Leaders (NAHT). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2005. Human development report 2005: international cooperation at a crossroads: aid, trade and security in an unequal world. New York, NY: UNDP. Available on-line at: hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/.

respect their diversities and jointly create suitable and attainable conditions for achieving relevant and pertinent learning opportunities for all.

Cognitive education plays a key role in achieving inclusive education as it tends to make children aware of their own cognitive functions, which can help them to understand and learn better. It is an effective way for educators to address the needs of diverse populations by better understanding how students learn, think and reflect, critically and creatively, and how this understanding can be used in the construction of a meaningful curriculum and related learning.

As a contribution to the discussion of pedagogical approaches of inclusive education, Skidmore[21] draws attention to the differences between a pedagogy of deviance and one of inclusion by noting the following five aspects:

a) *Student's learning:* while the deviance discourse establishes a hierarchy of cognitive skills to measure the abilities of each student, the inclusion discourse highlights the open learning potential of each student, which can be progressively discovered and stimulated.

b) *Explanation of school failure:* while the deviance discourse points out that the main learning difficulties are related to the deficiencies of the students' capacities, the inclusion discourse argues that the main difficulty lies instead on the inadequate responses generated by the curriculum.

c) *School response:* while the deviance discourse states that the learning process should be focused on the students' deficiencies, the inclusion discourse emphasizes the need for reforming the curriculum and of implementing a cross-cutting pedagogy in the school.

d) *Theory of teachers' expertise:* while the deviance discourse emphasizes the importance of specialized discipline knowledge as the key to the teachers' expertise, the inclusion discourse highlights the active participation of the students in the learning process.

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[21] Skidmore, D. 2004. Inclusion: the dynamic of school development. London: Open University Press, pp. 112–127

e) *The curriculum model:* while the deviance discourse argues that an alternative curriculum should be designed for those students categorized as low achievers, the inclusion discourse emphasizes the need of a common curriculum for all students.

In overall terms, inclusive education implies four key elements:

a) It is essentially a process of looking for the most appropriate ways of responding to diversity, as well as of trying to learn how to learn from differences.

b) It is linked to the motivation and development, through multiple strategies, of students' creativity and their capacity to address and resolve problems.

c) It comprises the right of the child to attend school, express his/her opinion, experience quality learning and attain valuable learning outcomes.

d) It implies the moral responsibility of prioritizing those students who are at risk of being marginalized and excluded from school, and of obtaining low learning outcomes.

3.4 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The urgent need to advance in the democratization of opportunities that would enable all children to access and profit from a high-quality equitable education draws on the conception of inclusion as a guiding principle to foster educational and social change. Inclusion from an educational perspective can help address the traditional and structural problems of poverty, the challenges of modernization and social and cultural integration, and the growing diversity of national societies. Social inclusion and inclusive education are mutually implicated in a feedback relationship. Inclusive education seeks to address forms and contents of exclusion, such as the social gaps in access to information and communication technologies (ICTs); the marginalization of disaffected young people (those who do not study, do not work and do not look for work); the lack of educational opportunities and low learning outcomes among migrant populations; the cultural homogeneity of educational proposals that are not exposed to, or do not understand and

value multiculturalism, and the stigmatization of cultural and social diversity as an obstacle to inclusion.

Inclusive education can therefore be considered a pathway to attain social inclusion. From a societal perspective, inclusive education is clearly and substantially linked to the discussion around the type of society to be attained; the kind of well-being desired for all citizens; and the quality of democracy and social participation we wish to pursue. On a long-term basis, education in relation to social inclusion implies an understanding of the former as the key to citizenship and as an essential component of social policy.

Along those lines, the relationship between social inclusion and education highlights central issues of inclusive education related to: (a) the struggles against poverty, cultural and social marginalization and exclusion; (b) the consideration of cultural diversity and multiculturalism, as both a right and a learning context within a framework of shared universal values; and (c) the protection of the rights of minorities, aboriginals, migrants and displaced populations.

In the light of these issues, the following points are critical in understanding and advancing the conception and practice of inclusive education:

a) Identifying the significance and priority given to inclusive education in governmental and state policies. Inclusive education, as a key social policy, is a powerful instrument to mitigate the negative effects of social inequalities and cultural disintegration, as well as residential segregation. Inclusive education is useful in addressing the changing cultural, ethnic, migrant and social composition of schools, a major challenge to the development of efficacious and efficient government social policies.

b) Fostering high-quality equitable learning opportunities for all by considering the articulation, diversification and flexibility between the different ladders and pathways of the education system, its structures and contents, within a global and unified vision of basic and youth education.

c) Developing a tailored approach to providing a real opportunity for educational success for each child by focusing on the learning needs of both potential and current students (those who have never attended school, those who are currently attending and those who have dropped out), taking into account their cultural, social and cognitive diversities as well as their ethnic origin, philosophical and religious beliefs and migrant status. Diversity in learning contexts should be considered as a challenge and an asset to education and not as an obstacle.

d) Guiding, articulating and undertaking efforts and initiatives aimed at generating suitable conditions for achieving meaningful and relevant learning by conceiving the school as the main force for educational change, as well as an integrated institutional and pedagogical unit within a solid educational policy and shared curriculum framework, from early childhood to youth education.

e) Renovating and recreating teachers' professional roles taking into account their ethical and societal mission and responsibility. Teacher training and professional development should strengthen the ways in which teachers understand, approach and respond to students' differences; teaching styles should be revised and adjusted in order to be aligned with cultural and social contexts that are increasingly complex and uncertain; teachers should be considered as co-designers and co-developers of inclusive education policies at the school and classroom levels, and not as mere implementers of curriculum change.

In overall terms, the transition towards inclusive education implies collective thinking and action on: (i) the concept of social justice and social inclusion; (ii) the beliefs around the learning potential of each student; (iii) the conceptual frameworks that sustain good teaching and learning practices; and (iv) endorsing a comprehensive political and technical vision of curriculum encompassing processes and outcomes.[22]

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[22] Nind, M. 2005. Inclusive education: discourse and action. British educational research journal, vol. 31, no. 2, April, pp. 269–275.

IV. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CARIBBEAN REGION

1. ANGUILLA[23]

Approaches, Scope and Content

In Anguilla, the concept of inclusive education is strongly linked with promoting equity in access to quality education for all. In accordance with this, the government aims to maintain universal primary and secondary education for all children in a way that their full potential as human beings and as citizens is developed. The MOE states that this all-encompassing concept of access to education comes as a response to the practice of excluding children from certain social groups from accessing education due to physical, socio-economic, age, disability and gender differences. The government of Anguilla is currently aiming to address inclusive education in terms of social inclusion. For example, the Anguillan government is targeting the minority group of Spanish-speaking children and migrant workers' children through various literacy programmes. Moving towards inclusion in Anguilla, schools have adopted an integration approach. Students, even those with moderate and even severe learning difficulties, are taught in regular classrooms where possible, and supported with special education classes.

Public Policies

The government of Anguilla's main objective in educational public policy is to provide universal and quality access to educational opportunities. While attaining this objective, the government also recognises the responsibility to ensure that socio-economic barriers do not impede access to such opportunities. The government also acknowledges the importance of providing multi-professional support and counselling services, adult and continuing education, distance education, and scholarships, as way to improve the population's access to education.

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[23] The information in this section was adapted from the country report and from the power point presentation regarding the Inclusive Education in Anguila, submitted by the Ministry of Education of Anguila and presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

In order to achieve this objective, the government of Anguilla critically examined its education system and its ability to respond to the new imperatives of education in 1998 and 2004.[24] The Education Development Plan 2005-2010 was created as a result of this review, as well as of regional and international commitments to improvement in education.[25] This Plan presents priority programmes to increase and sustain the capacity of the Ministry and Department of Education to deliver an enhanced quality education.

The Educational Development Plan has several components; one priority programme is to improve physical accessibility, socio-economic accessibility and promote social inclusion. The Plan also aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of educational services by refocusing the direction of the administration and management of education, and strengthening corporate leadership in education. For example, the Plan aims to increase available funding and manage more efficiently the resources available through capacity building, and ensure efficiency throughout the education system.

The Plan also prioritizes how to make the curriculum more flexible and relevant to the needs of the student, society at-large and the demands of the labour market. This is to be done through a curriculum review and renewal of special and individual education initiatives, and the enhancement of curriculum evaluation. The Plan aims to engender a caring teaching and learning environment by strengthening support structures and improving school discipline and welfare. In addition, the Plan intends to provide for capable education personnel, such as education officers and trained administrative staff to strengthen relationships with the community. These education officers would be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of schools, while education welfare officers would be employed to monitor attendance at school and follow through on any cases of truancy.

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[24] This review was conducted with technical assistance from DFID, addressing the performance of education against the seven broad policy areas of Access to Education, Curriculum Development, Administration and Management, Human Resource Development, Community Alliances, Pastoral Care and Financing Education.

[25] This refers to CARICOM, OECS and UNESCO commitments on education.

The government has adopted various complementary initiatives in accordance with the objective of providing universal and quality access to educational opportunities. Firstly, to promote social inclusion, education is available and compulsory up to age 17 for all children resident in Anguilla. In support of this, the government has developed initiatives relating to library access, cultural institutions and training, as key components of educational programmes. For example, access to museums, historical sites and other cultural institutions has been facilitated. In these areas, multi-media documentation and publication of local history, nature and art and other relevant information for use in schools and by the public is provided. Access to the Internet as part of the national library and archives service is also available.

Secondly, in order to provide more effectively the resources to learners, the government is offering scholarships for tertiary level training overseas and studies at the local university, while coordinating private initiatives and contributions as major sources of funding for the establishment and operation of preschools. Government subsidies are also given to private preschools and primary schools on the basis of their enrolment.

In the same way, the government has also adopted a multi-sectoral approach in implementing its education policies. In order to provide more resources and address the relevant needs of the student, it has teamed up with the community-at-large to establish mechanisms for facilitating access to basic text books, equipment and instructional materials. By working with these communities, the Government has been able to provide counselling and guidance to parents and students who are vulnerable and socially disadvantaged, for example, with respect to nutritional information.

Systems, Links and Transitions

Anguilla has set up a system to ensure that children are exposed to appropriate learning outcomes. Firstly, there are 11 private, church-owned preschools. To overcome partial exclusion due to fees at the preschool level, the government grants subsidies. Attendance at preschool from 3 to 5 is almost universal. There is relatively good access to preschools

across the island. The government has also begun providing facilities for early childhood education in new primary schools when there is no preschool in the area, developing criteria for the establishment of preschools and conducting training for preschool teachers.

Secondly, all children between the ages of 5 and 11 receive primary education in Anguilla, which has been compulsory for many years. There are 2 private primary schools. Thirdly, universal secondary education has been guaranteed in Anguilla for at least 20 years, and secondary education is compulsory for pupils aged 12 to 17. Students are then automatically transferred from the primary to secondary level.[26] Automatic transfer may, however, mean that some students enter the secondary programme without having mastered the primary programme; this group generally includes Spanish speaking students who often have a limited ability to communicate in English.[27]

Following and parallel to the formal education system, there are many education courses which are conducted by community partners and evening Institute classes at the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) level are available. This includes a range of non-formal courses for personal development.

With respect to the curriculum, students can choose, more-or-less freely, from a broad range of subjects that can be done at the local or international examinations level, depending on their aptitude. Thus, a wide range of interests and abilities is facilitated. At the primary level, the curriculum has been broadened to include subjects such as visual art, music, and physical education. There has been a move to harmonize curricula for primary education within the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). This consists of a core curriculum of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies and a co-curriculum of foundation subjects, such as expressive arts like music, drama, art

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26 The Education Act.
27 In 2007, only 84% students leaving primary for secondary school were functionally literate, according to the Ministry of Education of Anguila, 2007, as cited in the country report and from the power point presentation regarding the Inclusive Education in Anguilla, submitted by the Ministry of Education of Anguila and presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

and dance, physical education, craft and design and, more recently, information technology.

With curricular emphasis on subject matter, the first 3 years of secondary school, all students study English, mathematics, humanities, science, modern languages, information technology, technical studies, visual arts, music, physical education, personal social and health education. From year 4 of secondary education, the following academic and technical courses are available: English, mathematics, humanities, science, modern languages, business, information technology, technical studies, home and food technology, visual arts, music, physical education and personal social and health education. All students who qualify are offered free education at the Advanced (CAPE) level. For the delivery of the curriculum at the secondary level, the inclusive principle of child-centred learning is used in all subject areas, except for in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and social studies.

At the same time, it was noted that the curriculum reform at both primary and secondary levels has seen more emphasis placed on personal and social education to encourage social inclusion for students of all abilities over the past 10 years. Personal and social education involves life skills, family life, drug education, guidance and counselling and environmental education; the latter has been infused in all areas of the curriculum.

According to Ministry of Education, the effective delivery of this curriculum depends on a number of factors, including highly motivated and trained teachers, a good teaching environment, appropriate resources, and valid and reliable assessment instruments. Monitoring, supervision and guidance in relation to the delivery of the curriculum is performed by the Department of Education on a regular basis. In particular, regular monitoring is important at the primary level. It has been noted by the government that testing at the end of primary school may not give a true picture of the success of support initiatives, which intervene in the first year of primary school, as there is an influx of children of migrant workers entering primary school mid-way. Regular testing in reading is therefore done at many stages to identify students who may benefit from additional

support, such as remedial reading lessons. The target is to make 90% of students leaving primary to secondary school functionally literate.

Learners and Teachers

In Anguilla, learners with special needs, characterised as those with learning difficulties, for example where English is not their native language as is the case for migrant children from Santo Domingo, are given additional support to guarantee their inclusion in the education system in the form of special education classes. Even where these children have moderate to severe learning difficulties, children are generally taught in regular classrooms, however, as long as this is possible.

As one example of this integration approach, the Learning Centre operates at the secondary level for children in need of help to be assisted mainly in English and mathematics, while extension activities are provided for gifted children. The Workshop Initiative in Support for Education (WISE) is another practical programme used to engage mainly boys who may not be doing well in academic subjects. Children are also supported by an in-school pastoral system of guidance and counselling.

The government has also implemented the Reading Recovery Programme which is a school-based intervention designed to reduce literacy problems within an education system. It intervenes early on, giving children who have particular difficulties in reading and writing a period of intensive individual help in their first year in primary school to catch up to the average level of their classmates. Since the introduction of this programme, there has been a reduction in the number of children who are not functionally literate at the end of primary school and there is a low incidence of dropouts from basic education. For violent students, a pupil referral unit has been established as part of secondary schools. Students are withdrawn to this unit until their behaviour has been modified, allowing them to be reintegrated back into the regular classroom.

With respect to teachers, there have been various initiatives to achieve governmental objectives in Anguilla through the development of capable education personnel. Teacher

development programmes include induction programmes for new teachers, in-service certificate level training for primary and secondary teachers at the University of the West Indies (UWI), training in Curriculum Development and Remedial Teaching at the OECS Education Reform Unit (OERU), and a Reading Recovery Programme at the Commonwealth Institute. Training in basic computer skills workshops for practicing teachers have also been organised by the Canadian Teacher's Federation and Anguilla Teacher's Federation. Similarly, training in ICT and ethics for primary and secondary level teachers has been provided by the government. There is also an ongoing system of support and supervision of teachers through regular school reviews and government training of specialist teachers to cater particularly for children with mental retardation, hearing impairment, visual impairment, speech impairment and Spanish speaking students.

The government has recognised the challenge of a wide range of abilities in the classroom, even with differentiated activities. In particular, these programmes aim to better enable teachers to provide properly differentiated teaching to cater for different learning styles, focusing on child-centred learning as the guiding principle. For example, banding, the practice of placing students into different groups within a school based on their abilities, has been suggested as one pedagogical approach to address such challenges.

2. ANTIGUA & BARBUDA[28]

Approaches, Scope and Content

In Antigua and Barbuda, the concept of inclusive education refers primarily to the right of every citizen (child, youth or adult) having an equal educational opportunity. The Ministry emphasized that this right is linked to social inclusion, whereby education

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[28]   The information in this section was adapted from the power point presentation "Inclusive Education in Antigua & Barbuda" elaborated by Ms. Cynthia Crump and Ms. Edry Joseph, EFA Coordinator - Ministry of Education of Antigua and Barbuda and presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007

allows each citizen to make a worthwhile contribution to society and cope with the challenges and opportunities of the technological era. Accordingly, the government has followed an approach of social inclusion in its educational policy, where inclusive education has meant targeting sources of socio-economic exclusion. National legislation on education guarantees admission to any public school, irrespective of a child or family's religious or political orientations, race or social status. In specific governmental programmes, the government has identified and focused on specific groups who risk being excluded; for example the government is targeting adults through the provision of technical skills. Similarly, for the children of migrant workers, a government initiative will harmonize the Antigua and Barbuda curriculum with that of other countries to facilitate the inclusion of migrant students in the school system.

Special needs education was also addressed in this session as a way to approach inclusive education in balance with mainstream schools. More specifically, providing adequate and appropriate facilities in educational, physical, and financial terms was mentioned as one way to counter exclusion by the Ministry.

The Ministry highlighted that the government's approach to inclusive education varies based on the type of disability. For example, children with deaf, mental and general physical disabilities have been placed in a system of alternative education approach with a varied curriculum through special schools. However, blind children have been included in mainstream primary and secondary schools, while being offered additional assistance.

The Government strongly supported the idea of raising social awareness about exclusion, and increasing participation of communities with the involvement of a variety of private, non-for-profit and religious institutions, as well as families, to support educational changes of inclusive education. In addition, it was highlighted that inclusive education involved educational components changing and adapting to children's different learning needs. Such changes necessitate sufficient and adequately trained teachers in order to provide effective learning opportunities for all students.

Public Policies

In Antigua and Barbuda, the main policy objective, guaranteed by law, is to ensure and improve access to education and learning for all by reducing the discriminatory physical, social and economic barriers, in order to promote students' educational and emotional development. For example, the Education Act of 1973 makes provisions for special schools suitable to the requirements of students who are mentally or physically challenged and guarantees admission to any public school, irrespective of a child or family's religious or political orientations, race or social status. The Draft Five Year Plan on Education also supports this objective.[29] In the area of social programmes, the Book-Loan Scheme provides free books in all subject areas for all primary and secondary students, as well as free uniforms for students. Similarly, the new School Meals Programme has been launched in at least 10 schools and plans are in place to add the remaining public and private primary schools.

For curriculum development and access to early childhood education, there is now a legal framework to monitor the management of preschools. There has also been a harmonization of grading so that external students can be better accommodated across and within grades, especially migrant children from the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Access to technology is being guaranteed through mobile and permanent computer access centres, which have been set up to provide training in, and access to, computers and the Internet for more individuals in the community.

Employment, training and education programmes are also being improved through access to basic technical and vocational educational opportunities. The Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Continuing Education (ABICE) provides alternative adult education with an emphasis on technical vocational education.[30] In particular, one programme pays graduates of special needs schools to work at these same special needs institutions upon graduation.

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[29] Draft Five Year Plan Government of Antigua and Barbuda, 1994, p.4.
[30] ABICE is a conglomerate of Golden Opportunity Program, Youth Skills and the Evening Institute.

The government benefits from collaborative input from several groups, organizations and other Ministries, which provide the necessary support to implement these policies. For example collaboration exists between the Ministry of Education and other ministries such as the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Agriculture. However, other structures need to be in place to cater more effectively and efficiently to the socio-economic and developmental needs of all disadvantaged groups. The government acknowledges that it has not yet allocated enough resources to support the effective development of all groups.

Systems, Links and Transitions

The following education system of Antigua and Barbuda was presented as ensuring and improving access to inclusive education with a division between special needs and mainstream schools. There are 62 primary schools and 17 secondary schools. There are 2 special schools; the School for the Deaf and the Adele School for Special Children. The blind and visually impaired are placed in mainstream schools. Additionally, the ABICE caters to out-of-school youth. Tertiary education is provided at the Antigua State College, the Antigua and Barbuda Institute of Information Technology (ABIIT) and the University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies. However, adult literacy programmes or skill training activities remain minimal.

In terms of the curriculum, the government has promoted curriculum development to meet the needs of most students through a variety of teaching and assessment approaches based on inclusive education principles; nonetheless, it is recognized that such curricular approach needs to further develop. Several education systems are integrated into the same national curriculum structure in core areas, with the exception of the Adele School which has its own curriculum. In addition, students at the School for the Deaf are engaged in an Industrial Arts Program, while students at the Adele School for Special Children have Pottery and Craft classes, which are taught by teachers from other schools and other public institutions.

With regards to the relation between schools and other sectors of society, it was noted that collaboration exists between the Ministry of Education and the private sector, such as banks, wireless internet providers, insurance companies, as well as NGOs and religious institutions. For example, organizations such as St. John's Optimist and the Jaycees implement improvement programmes at the "Boys' Training School" and the "Sunshine Home for Girls". These links provide support and sponsorship in several areas, such as literacy programmes, competitions and computer access centres. The Ministry also collaborates with graduates from specialized institutions and parents to work in these schools.

Learners and Teachers

There are various ways of approaching children that are defined as having special needs in Antigua and Barbuda. Special schools are provided for children with mental and physical challenges to receive education and training; for example at the Adele School for Special Children and the School for the Deaf. However, there is no national exam or standardized form of evaluation for the deaf and with mental disabilities. In comparison, the Unit for Blind Children is a special needs department with an inclusive education approach. The blind children are mainstreamed into the education system, and provisions are made for them to write the Common Entrance Examinations, with the aid of a reader and/or writer and the scripts are presented in Braille. Additionally, the curriculum materials and texts are enlarged to facilitate teaching, learning and assessment. Successful students are then integrated into the secondary school system and assisted by specialist teachers. These blind students are thus not discriminated against in subject choice; they can choose to do subjects such as home economics, music and art. Children with behavioral problems are provided with additional assistance at mainstream schools and follow the same primary and secondary curriculum as the other students. This additional assistance takes the form of rehabilitation centres, as well as counseling services.

At the same time, there are many other children of compulsory school age whose specialized learning needs are not catered for at all, such as children with other physical

problems or children whose parents do not send them to school. Similarly, there are a number of differently-abled teenage youths who are "shut-in" at home, without being given an opportunity to participate in learning activities.

In relation to teachers in Antigua and Barbuda, it was highlighted that special needs institutions often employ graduates from special needs institutions,[31] and that parents of special children are often involved in their child's teaching too. In addition, it was noted that more and more student teachers graduating from the teacher training department are choosing to teach at these schools.

The Department of Teacher Education plays a role in preparing teachers to deliver teaching effectively and efficiently. Special seminars and workshops are constantly being promoted to enhance the capabilities of teachers. In these training sessions, teachers are being empowered with skills and the appropriate competencies to meet differing abilities in the classroom and to provide an improved teaching, learning and assessment environment, especially for the blind and visually impaired. Through this training, more children are being exposed to stimulation programmes.

It was also acknowledged that the government needs to pay more attention to the special needs area - especially for gifted children - in relation to regular retraining experiences of teachers and student teachers. There remains a high percentage of untrained teachers to effectively carry out special needs education, while many trained teachers have had to upgrade their professional capacities at their own expense. Moreover, this situation was exacerbated between 2006 and 2007 when over one hundred trained and experienced teachers left the profession in accordance with the Separation Package.[32]

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[31] Three of these assistants are at the Adele School, one at the Unit for the blind and one at the School for the Deaf. Several can be found at the Centre for the Disabled.

[32] This was the government's recent re-structuring initiative which offered public servants the opportunity to leave their jobs as a lump sum severance deal, Caribbean Development Bank, Economic Review 2007, 2007, http://www.caribank.org/titanweb/cdb/webcms.nsf/AllDoc/1CFEC2906D1F15F4042574660058C494?OpenDocument

3. BARBADOS[33]

Approaches, Scope and Content

In the case of Barbados, several overlapping approaches to the concept of inclusive education can be identified. Firstly, inclusive education can be understood as linked to the concepts of special needs education, integration and equal access for all. For example, the government of Barbados cites as an example of inclusive education their involvement in international advocacy for equal access to education to every category of disabled person as an integrated part of the education system.[34] The Ministry also refers to the authority of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which asserts that education is a basic human right.

More recently, the government has moved towards an integration approach to inclusive education, focusing on "integrating the mentally and physically challenged into the mainstream of the school system" through a "least restrictive educational environment".[35] For example, mild to moderately mentally challenged students who would have previously been removed from general education classes and assigned to a special education unit at special schools across the island now remain in mainstream education.

More specifically, an inclusive approach to the concept of inclusive education can be inferred from the Ministry's understanding of the importance of addressing the diversity of learners. The Ministry underlines that inclusive education refers to the philosophy that ensures students with varied abilities to be supported in chronologically age-appropriate general education classes in their home schools and receive specialised instruction delineated by their individualized education programmes within the context of the national curriculum and general class activities. This tailored individualized education also strongly supports that all students have a voice in school affairs and developments.

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[33] The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding Inclusive Education in Barbados, submitted by the Ministry of Education Youth Affairs and Sports and from the ministerial power point presentation "Inclusive Education Barbados: Access, Acceptance and Adaptation", presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

[34] 1990 World Conference on Education for All, Thailand.

[35] White Paper on Education Reform of 1995 in Barbados.

Moreover, the MOE acknowledge that inclusive education is a concept which "promotes an environment that ensures access, acceptance, belonging and a sense of community". This demonstrates their understanding that inclusive education and social inclusion are mutually implicated in a feedback relationship. This corresponds to an underlying philosophy of education in which quality education must do more to equip persons to secure and maintain gainful employment, but must prepare them to be critical thinkers, innovators and problem-solvers and inculcate the best social values within social tolerance. In accordance with this understanding, the Barbadian concept of inclusive education is also targeted mainly at students who were not benefiting from the delivery of their education, which suggests that inclusive education seeks to address forms and contents of unequal educational outcomes in Barbados. For example, special attention is paid to ensure that students are not at risk of repetition and drop out. These students tend to be students with severe to profound physically or mentally disabilities and children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties which are considered permanent in nature.

Public Policies

The main objective of educational public policies of the government of Barbados is to provide equal access to quality education in order to promote personal and national development and to facilitate social mobility for the population. These objectives have been achieved through a variety of policies, including a focus on special needs education, while allowing scope for adaptation; this should fully encompass all aspects of inclusion. For example, the government has re-designed the national curriculum at the primary and secondary levels. Similarly, a policy has been articulated on inclusive education at a national level, which promotes collaborative and cooperative school cultures as ideal conditions for change. To support quality education in particular, the government has encouraged greater parental involvement and the expansion of support services in schools.

Systems, Links and Transitions

With respect to the education system in Barbados, it was highlighted by the government that the latest curricular reform guarantees the Ministry's inclusive policy objectives to provide equal access to quality education in order to promote personal and national development.[36] The new curricula prepares all students to be creative, numerate, and literate, while ensuring that all students understand the necessity of living and working harmoniously with others. It also prepares students for life in a technologically-advanced society, by ensuring that all school-leavers have a good knowledge, adequate skills, and favourable attitudes towards information technology.

The government noted that inclusive schools require pedagogies that are sensitive to the social construction of difference in the school system and in society at large. The Ministry of Education notes how inclusive education improves the efficiency of the teaching/learning process by encouraging teachers to shift to child-centred and more collaborative forms of learning in their classrooms, which are based on philosophical and psychological premises of a differentiated learning approach. Following such an approach, students respond to a variety of stimuli and learn best with respect to their interests and what is meaningful to their lives. Arising out of the constructivist philosophy infused in the curricula is the notion that students who are actively engaged in their own learning are likely to experience greater success in the classroom.

Such adaptation of the curricula for students with special needs is already noticeable in the Barbados education system. For example, schools may modify the curricula to meet the needs of diverse learners through alternative formats, for example Braille and assistive devices. The general education structure also allows for a variety of assessment modes, with teachers engaging in more authentic assessments for a classroom of diverse learners, such as orals, interviews, exhibitions, portfolios, project-based work and norm-referenced tests. Similarly, the curriculum has been restructured to accommodate individual students to proceed at a rate proportionate to their aptitudes and abilities. This

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[36] The new curricula were implemented through a phased process since 2000.

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includes early sitting of the Barbados Secondary Entrance Examination, and deferrals and exemptions, so that at the secondary level, students may now complete schooling in 6 or 7 years.

In addition, the government also considers that the provision of an inclusive school requires physical modifications, and has provided for the refurbishment of schools to include ramps and, for students who are deaf and blind, one school installed an elevator to give physical access. Bathrooms for students with physical disabilities are also currently being refurbished. Where students are registered in schools where these facilities are not readily available, every effort is made to provide adequate accommodation to ensure accessibility for students.

Learners and Teachers

As part of the new special needs education policy for learners, the Barbados Ministry of Education has sought to focus its attention on 2 basic models of inclusion over the past 10 years. Firstly, the Pull-out Programme was introduced in which students who have been identified as experiencing special educational needs spend part of their time in general education and part of their time in the resource centre where they engage in small group instruction focused on their particular needs. The Learning Support Coordinator may also go into their classes to work with individual or small groups. Secondly, there has been the introduction of the Full Inclusion Model where students with special needs remain in the mainstream classroom all of the time and participate either with adaptations or modifications to the curriculum.

According to the Ministry, more students are being provided with adaptive curriculum programmes indicated by their Individual Educational Plans in age-appropriate mainstream classrooms. As a result, the Ministry has noted, there has been enhanced student academic performance for a small number of students who have been able to improve to a point where they no longer require any curriculum adaptation but are still monitored on a regular basis. There were also noted improvements in student's self

esteem, self-confidence and, in some cases, improvements in behaviour. However, according to the Ministry, integrated classroom conditions can and do affect some students adversely as students with learning disabilities are chronically among the most vulnerable at risk of not learning.

The Ministry of Education recognises the role of teachers as critical in order to give learners opportunities to be taught in a way which respects the principle of inclusion. Teachers must be able to develop the skills and competencies to attend to classrooms of diverse learners, while promoting equity and equality, through teacher training. Appropriate and sufficient training will also enable teachers to have a sense of ownership of the principle of inclusion.[37]

The Ministry has thus demonstrated its commitment by providing over 2 million Barbados dollars in special needs education training, in collaboration with the Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax Canada. Erdiston Teachers Training College has also facilitated training for teachers. To date, 83 teachers have gained degrees at a Masters level in Inclusionary Practices and Curriculum Development, 9 teachers at the Bachelors level in Special Education and 14 teachers have studied Masters in Educational Psychology in deaf or hard of hearing and blind or visually impaired education.

In these programmes, teachers developed skills in learner-centred strategies and practices, in teacher-facilitator modes to support the teaching/learning process, and in learner assessment strategies in the form of strategies that support and enhance programme planning. They also learnt about the delivery of alternative modes of instruction to meet the needs of exceptional learners in regular schools through individualized learning practices that enable meaningful inclusion of a range of learning styles. In addition, varying leadership, collaboration and classroom management models were introduced, as were strategies to address learners at risk in literacy and numeracy at the elementary and secondary levels.

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[37] The Ministry cited a graduate of the Inclusionary Masters Teacher Training Programme in this regard.

While training special education teachers is critical, the Ministry underlined that having the support of heads of schools and other teachers is fundamental to inclusive education. Citing one graduate of an Inclusionary Masters teachers training programme, the Ministry suggested that every stakeholder needs to be involved and committed to the inclusion process in order to guarantee inclusion, not just the special education teacher. Special education teachers should therefore feel supported by their superiors and be actively involved in the day-to-day decision-making process through collaborative, cooperative working practices.

4. THE BAHAMAS[38]

Approaches, Scope and Content

In the Bahamas there is no agreed national definition of the concept of inclusive education. Nonetheless, the government of the Bahamas places great emphasis on the philosophy of equal access to education for all in its presentation on inclusive education. Integration approaches are also used to refer to inclusive education. That is, according to the Ministry of Education, the education of special needs students is understood as the education of exceptional students regardless of the type or severity of disability in regular classrooms in their community school. Along these lines, over the past 10 years the Bahamas government has moved away from a special needs education approach with specialized institutions to inclusive education in mainstream schools. Nowadays, the government's initiatives focus on the inclusion of disabled, multiple disabilities and autistic children in regular schools and classrooms in a number of primary schools and secondary schools with the support of resource rooms.

In addition, there is a government understanding of interrelation between society and education, emphasising the importance of education for instilling in all students positive

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[38] The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding Inclusive Education in the Bahamas, submitted by the Ministry of Education of the Bahamas and from the ministerial power point presentation "Inclusive Education: The Bahamas Perspective", presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

social values and principles which underlie personal and social well-being, such as tolerance and good sportsmanship. The government also identified particular social groups as presenting educational challenges of inclusion as in the case of illegal/undocumented Haitian immigrants, whose first language is Creole and not English.

Representatives of the Ministry of Education also noted how the conceptualization and definition of inclusive education in the Bahamas could be further enhanced by developing social and teacher awareness about this education. The government also suggested that the concept of inclusive education could be further developed by implementing capacity-building activities towards stakeholders, in terms of an increase in human and material resources, parental support and conviction, adequate funding and infrastructure. Likewise, the influence of other countries and the impact of national organizations catering to specific disabilities groupings were identified as important for clarifying the concept of inclusive education.

Public Policies

The Bahamas public policy aims to ensure that all students, regardless of race, gender, religion, socio-economic status or disability, have access to the resources they need to obtain a quality education. The Bahamas government aims at universal access and high retention rates, particularly at the primary school level. The government has employed a range of strategies to achieve this objective; by law, all children between the ages of 5 to 16 years are required to be enrolled in an approved educational programme, which is free for all children in public schools, irrespective of socio-economic background, gender, physical or mental ability.

In accordance with this policy objective, the government also recently initiated a multi-component inclusive education policy. This is in an effort to improve the education process, using resources such as infrastructure and school leadership. It also develops teacher training programs focused on learning styles. In addition, it aims to guarantee

access to technology, professional development, and tertiary education for all learners. The impetus for these strategies was the Task Force on Education Report in 1994, which involved the engagement of consultants with special education and psychology expertise. This task force promoted special education on the Bahamas Learning Channel, and the development of a 10 year plan and budgeting, which includes school safety-net initiatives. An International Development Bank loan also provided for technical assistance and development in the areas of curriculum and human resources, as well as for the procurement of furniture and equipment. In addition, the Ministry of Education has provided funding for 32 registered independent primary and all-age schools, 15 secondary schools, and one special education school, which operates mainly in New Providence and Grand Bahamas.

With respect to special education, two specialized groups, the National Task Force on Disabilities and the National Commission on Special Education, have examined all aspects of special education initiatives, providing recommendations. These have been partly implemented, such as the appointment of teachers' aides, additional special officers, and the screening of all preschool children. Capacity building, school project initiatives, and transition programmes were also considered. Other recommendations, such as the revision and inclusion of certain laws to ensure proper compliance and the development of the 10 year educational plan, are in progress; there is currently dialogue at the Cabinet level on the Revision of the Education Act and the Provision of the Disability Bill.

It was noted that the government plays a significant supervisory role throughout the education system. For example, the Special Services Section of the Ministry of Education provides considerable guidance, support and supervision to public and private educational institutions. The Special Services officers examine teaching and learning factors, while designing and developing curriculum materials for national use in inclusive classrooms. Along these lines, they also assist with teaching strategies and methodologies for teachers working in these classrooms. For example, they provide assistance for children with special needs in the regular class, such as those who are visually

challenged. These students and their teachers are assisted with Braille translations in reading and marking. In addition, the Special Services organise workshops and training opportunities for administrative personnel and new and probationary teachers. The Ministry of Education partners with the College of the Bahamas to examine the conditions for teacher-certification in order to sustain a well-prepared and stable teacher workforce and to promote teacher accountability for student outcomes.

In relation to students, the Ministry of Education also tackles truancy in public schools, motivates students to achieve their full potential and administers national lunch and school uniform programmes to underprivileged children. The School Welfare Section of the Ministry of Social Services is in place to support the work of the school in the areas of school attendance, teen pregnancy and other social problems.

The government has acknowledged that the public school system cannot currently provide primary and secondary education for all of the children in the Bahamas. The Ministry characterized the main obstacles for inclusion and inequity in Barbados as human based, including negative attitudes towards special students, low expectations and lagging professional development. For example, many disabled persons are not given equal access opportunities for employment. The National Commission on Special Education has identified the importance of awareness raising and networking in this respect and suggests that the various efforts undertaken have still made positive strides in narrowing the exclusion gap.

Systems, Links and Transitions

The public education system in the Bahamas is comprised of 113 primary and all-age schools, 34 junior and senior high schools, and 11 special education schools.[39] Special education schools for the physically and mentally challenged are operated jointly by the government and community groups, and are in place in the islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama for students with severe disabilities or handicaps. Students who are

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[39] Forty-seven of the public schools are located on New Providence and one hundred and seventeen on Grand Bahama and the Family Islands.

home-bound or in the adolescent ward of the Sandilands Hospital may be tutored. There are also educational opportunities at the Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute, College of the Bahamas and other training centres and schools.

At the end of the school year, students write national tests such as the Grade Level Assessment Test (GLAT), the Bahamas Junior Certificate (BJC) and the Bahamas General Certificate in Secondary Education (BGCSE). The Evaluation and Assessment Division incorporates alternative assessment techniques for those who write the examinations. In particular, the development of a support model for the effective transition of students with special needs through all education levels and in particular, school-age youth with disabilities is being implemented incrementally in New Providence, Grand Bahama and the Family Islands, focusing particularly on the hearing impaired and autistic.

It was noted that ongoing curriculum reform is considered necessary by the government for promoting inclusion in the Bahamas. The process of change to an inclusive approach at all levels of the educational system is complex and multi-dimensional and thus requires a long-term commitment. The curriculum must be student-centred and cater to children with varying abilities. The reform will, in particular, ensure that the curriculum includes for the provision of technology such as special computers, talking computers and other specialized equipment for the visually and hearing impaired. The shift from an emphasis on academic performance of high achievers in national examination to a curriculum developed for 85% of the student population, allowing students with varied disabilities to participate in these examinations, also illustrates an inclusive approach.

In order to give greater access to and meet the needs of children with special education needs, the Ministry of Education is involving special education teachers as experts on selected curriculum development and revision teams during the drafting of curricular documents. This gives greater focus to children with special education needs in the development of a national curriculum with content standards.

Learners and Teachers

The Bahamas Ministry of Education is moving towards a more student-centred learning environment. At the same time, the expectations of learners have also been raised to be competently equipped for the challenges of the twenty-first century. According to the MOE, the Special Services Division assists students whose abilities, physical or mental condition make the regular school programme inappropriate or impractical for them. There are also a wide range of services in the areas of guidance and counselling, school attendance, speech therapy, school psychology and learning disabilities to assist students with severe disabilities or handicaps in the changing culture of the classroom. In addition, the government has recognised that a concerted effort to attract a greater percentage of males into the teaching profession must be made in order to provide more positive role models for male students.

In order to ensure the delivery of inclusive education in all schools, the expectations of teachers in the Bahamas have also been raised; teachers must meet expectations of mastering new skills and changing current practices. Inclusion must be grounded in individual guided staff development, observation and assessment, involvement, and training and inquiry. The Ministry has also committed to devise ways as well as invest time and resources in teachers. For example, the Ministry will provide teachers with more time and opportunities to work with colleagues, to revise the curriculum, and to reflect current trends in education. It is also important that teachers are equipped with the required competencies to attend to the growing needs of students with varying abilities. A structured professional development program is necessary to enable current and future teachers to acquire the skills to teach in such classrooms. For example, more emphasis needs to be placed on acquiring the necessary skills to work in a democratic, inclusive classroom in programmes by the School of Education at the College of the Bahamas.

5. BELIZE[40]

Approaches, Scope and Content

The MOE identifies an evolution of understanding of the term inclusive education in the case of Belize. Originally, inclusive education in Belize was often used restrictively to refer to provisions for children with special needs due to some physical disability. More recently, there has been a heightened awareness of the need to ensure that absolutely no child is excluded from acquiring a basic education, based on an inclusive, rights-based philosophy to education. The principles of inclusive education now refer to the practice of schools fostering the most enabling environments to allow all children to be supported to achieve their best academically and socially. This awareness was formed in the context of international conventions to which Belize is a signatory, such as Convention of the Rights of the Child, as well as the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All targets. In particular, these targets created a greater sense of urgency and commitment on the part of the Belize government towards ensuring inclusive education.

The government has also identified targeted social groups in its education strategies and initiatives for the elimination and reduction of social factors which contribute to the exclusion of any child from education. This is supportive of the conception of inclusive education as a tool for social inclusion. Such groups include children, for example, with physical disabilities or learning deficiencies, as well as children and families affected by HIV and AIDS, illnesses, or children suffering from discrimination due to financial, social and cultural differences.

Social awareness and advocacy was highlighted as extremely important in addressing factors which contribute to exclusion, such as negative attitudes, ignorance and fear of change.

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[40] The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding Inclusive Education in Belize, submitted by the Ministry of Education of Belize, and from the Belize's power point presentation presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston, Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

Public Policies

In Belize, the guarantee of non-discriminatory access to quality education is an important objective for the government, to allow children and their families to lead full and productive lives. According to the MOE, this objective is even more significant as Belize develops as a modern knowledge-based society. This objective is supported by resource allocation in the national budget and legislation which has a comprehensive view of inclusion. Education commands the second largest portion of total public recurrent spending over the last decade, with the largest portion of the education budget committed to payment of teachers' salaries. Meanwhile, legislation supporting inclusion comprises the Belize Education Act,[41] the Families and Children's Act, the Education Legal Rules of 2000[42] and the Declaration of the Meso-American Project for Inclusion since 2000[43]. The Framework for Action for Persons with Disabilities, the National Plan of Action for children and families and the Education Action Plan, which developed from a series of national consultations, have further identified key action areas targeting access, equity and quality.

Several initiatives have attempted to develop key action areas, which include universal secondary education, early childhood education, teacher education and training, Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) and curriculum development. For example, one initiative provides additional support for children at risk from exclusion is the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) policy, which involves curriculum development and teacher training. Similarly, there has been significant investment in the TVET sub-sector to facilitate increased training opportunities and alternative educational opportunities catering to a wider cross-section of learners with a wide range of abilities. The establishment of a school community liaison unit has provided officers to interact directly with families and law enforcement personnel to prevent truancy and early drop-

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[41] Revised in 2000, approved by the Cabinet in 2006.
[42] The latter state that no citizen or permanent resident of Belize shall be refused admission to any school on account of race, ethnicity, language, political affiliation, region of the country of origin, special needs or because of perceived social and economic status. Nor shall any citizen or permanent resident of Belize be refused admission to any school on account of religion or of gender, except where such schools were originally established as non-coeducational in terms of gender. Section 2 Rule 168 section 1-3: 168. (1) – (3).
[43] http://www.governmentofbelize.gov.bz/press_release_details.php?pr_id=3321.

out from primary schools. The adoption of intercultural bilingual education strategies in 3 pilot schools in indigenous communities has also been introduced as an initial effort to encourage schools to develop curriculum sensitive to the environment from which the children come.

To guarantee access to education in poorer communities, the introduction of a Government Textbook Programme provides standardized, quality textbooks free of cost to primary school children in 5 core areas of the curriculum. The government also subsidizes the salaries of preschool teachers to guarantee the reduction of fees for parents of children attending public pre-schools. For rural communities, the government of Belize is also in the process of constructing new secondary schools, particularly where lack of transportation is a major contributing factor to children being prevented from moving on to secondary school, and has heavily subsidized the construction of pre-school classrooms countrywide.

The area of special education has undoubtedly received the most attention in Belize's efforts to eliminate sources of exclusion for children from quality education. The Special Education Unit (SEU), in particular, underwent fundamental changes in its structure, policies and outlook on the provision of educational services to students with special needs. This led to the creation of the National Resource Centre for Inclusive Education (NaRCIE) in June 2007. Prior to these changes, special education was seen as an appendage to mainstream education, with its own set of teachers, administrators, programmes and budget, and a sense of independence and autonomy. Issues and problems were dealt with unilaterally even when they seemed to demand bilateral action. At that time, there were special schools, centres and specialized teacher training. Although special education certainly benefited from the extra attention, the increasing demand for services, and the international call for reform in education for students with special needs, forced the SEU to reflect on its practices and revise its organizational, physical and conceptual connection to general education.[44] The new NaRCIE is

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[44]   The Belize government noted that whereas many educators may reject all or part of this "second system" analysis, there is growing recognition that a meaningful connection with the general education system is necessary and that the "lone ranger" strategy for special education is self defeating.

responsible for ensuring that the special learning needs of students are properly addressed within the existing education system, by collaborating with other entities to consolidate the principle of inclusive education in the education system. The NaRCIE seeks to institute programmes which will accommodate the growing number of students with varying learning needs in schools and provide technical and professional support.

Lastly, the general policy agenda has also focused on the development of public awareness as well as family and community support to reflect sensitivity to diverse learning needs. In particular, the government's activities have generally provided for a better appreciation for the rights of all children, a growing sensitivity of the general public to the diversified society and a growing collaboration with more partners in education.

However, the Ministry of Education notes how the high accompanying financial and general cost of an inclusive policy is an obstacle. The government recognizes that some special schools and special class placements are still required, as this may prove to be the most enabling environment currently available for students with moderate to severe special needs. Nevertheless, many positive efforts have been made towards inclusive education and it is anticipated that universal access to secondary education will be achieved by the year 2010.

Systems, Links and Transitions

Belize's education system consists of 2 years of optional preschool, 8 years of compulsory primary school between the ages of 5-14, which may be followed by 4 years of secondary education. The transition is not automatic as there are still not enough open placements at secondary schools to allow for universal access. Despite this, the transition rate to secondary education is reported as approximately 80% of the children completing primary level. Post-secondary education opportunities include Junior College, Sixth Form and/or University, either locally or abroad. On completion of Junior College, successful

students are awarded an Associate Degree, which also allows matriculation to University level.

At the primary and secondary levels, education is offered by government-owned schools, private schools and denominational or community grant-aided schools. Indeed, a key feature of Belize's education system is the partnership between different religious denominations and the government in the delivery of primary and secondary education through grant-aided schools. The government pays primary teacher salaries through grant funding and shares the cost of facilities and maintenance of primary school. Secondary grant–aided schools receive 70% of teachers' salaries through public funds and additional financial support for construction and maintenance of buildings. Meanwhile, NaRCIE supports 2 special schools and 6 centres as well as several regular schools, through curricular, technical and professional support.

The government also plays a role in supporting special schools and government-owned schools, by establishing educational objectives, developing curricula and standards, providing teacher training and administering national examinations. For example, there have been various new governmental initiatives introduced with respect to the Health and Family Life Education curriculum, and the enhancement of Technical and Vocational Education Training, and a pilot initiative to adapt the national curriculum to the realities of 3 schools in indigenous communities. There has also been governmental approval of special arrangements for national and international examinations.

According to the MOE, it is essential that the Belize education system works together with multiple stakeholders to provide a strong support system within which schools can operate efficiently and effectively, enabling children with disabilities and vulnerable to exclusion to lead successful adult lives in their communities. The MOE notes how commonly, support is least provided where it is actually most needed. The churches, parents and the community are considered by the government as partners in education with whom they seek to coordinate efforts and collaborate. The government has also forged links with the communities it serves, through NGOs, the business community,

agencies and cooperating foreign universities. In addition, the NaRCIE promotes family and community support by providing a monthly meeting place for the Parents Association of Children with Special Needs (PACSN) as well as training as needed.

Learners and Teachers

In relation to learners and inclusive education in Belize, an individualised approach to learners, focusing on the importance of every child, was noted by the MOE. The government has attributed drop-outs from the education system to mass-orientated educational initiatives. An individual approach would, for example, take account of the trend of children who fall so far behind that they are forced by age and social environment to exit the education system prematurely. For example, a review of enrollment data at the secondary and post-secondary levels has shown a significant decrease in the number of males enrolled in institutions providing higher education compared to female enrollment. This phenomenon calls for further investigation and necessary action to remedy the situation for male learners.

In accordance with an individualised approach, the educational and psychological assessment of learners is essential for making decisions about a student's school life. The NaRCIE is presently piloting the provision of direct intervention to a few students who have been assessed and found to require an intensive programme in order for them to be able to catch up to their age-expected academic performance and to bridge the gap between students' potential and academic performance. The Centre aims to provide much-needed speech and language intervention for students with language and communication problems, once a speech and language therapist is provided. The initial stages of developing a programme for psychological assessment and intervention are also currently in progress.

It was also highlighted by the Ministry of Education that students with special needs and their teachers are supported when an inter-sectoral approach is adopted, following the principles and philosophy of inclusive education. This is even more so the case as the

work of the Special Education Unit continues to expand to include students with a variety of different special needs, including physical, sensory, intellectual, emotional behavioural and developmental needs.

With respect to teachers in Belize, the Ministry highlights that the provision of high quality inclusive teacher education plays a central role in the successful achievement of inclusion for all children. The ministry notes how the quality of teaching is the factor that accounts for the greatest variation in the performance of students. Teacher input has a greater influence than class size, resources or the socio-cultural background of students. It is also clear that the more training they receive, the longer they stay in the profession, making teacher training a good long-term investment as well.

Teacher training ensures that teachers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be able to transform classrooms into learner-friendly spaces where every child is able to receive the care and attention needed to reach their full potential. An inclusive approach requires learners to be able to constantly revise knowledge in collaborative settings, for instance, through teachers with both strong content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. The NaRCIE, for example, helps teachers who seek further information about inclusive education practices and provides opportunities to expand their pedagogic repertoire through teacher training sessions. However, more effort is needed in sensitizing the education community on inclusive education to show that it is not restricted to special education but relates to all the needs of all the marginalized and excluded children. Over the last few years, the Ministry of Education in Belize has put a greater emphasis on explaining inclusive approaches to pre-service teachers, who are perceived as being more flexible and open to innovation.

In addition, NaRCIE is currently conducting a review of the teacher training curriculum. This aims to reflect the elements needed to enable a teacher to understand and manage a diverse group of learners using differentiated instruction in a child-friendly atmosphere. To create this more flexible, coordinated school programme, the NaRCIE has also drawn upon the talents and energies of special and general educators.

Alongside the emphasis on teacher training, the Ministry underlined that support systems must be put in place to assist teachers in managing some of the new challenges they are faced with; teachers must now learn to cope with children with HIV and AIDS, diverse learning needs, physical and psychological handicaps, highly negative social circumstances and a host of other challenges. Indeed, an inclusive approach to learning is relatively difficult for teachers to manage. Therefore, the Ministry notes how only with the strong support from the community, parents, and all stakeholders will teachers be able to remain efficient and effective in a modern classroom where inclusion is the overarching philosophy.

6. BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS[45]

Approaches, Scope and Content

In 2002, the British Virgin Islands introduced a guiding principle in promoting inclusion. The concept of inclusive education came to refer to schools, centres of learning and educational systems that are open to all children. The Ministry of Education (MOE) observes that for this to happen, teachers, schools and systems will have to change so that they can better accommodate the diversity of needs that pupils have and that they are included in all aspects of school life. This approach to inclusive education also means identifying any barriers within and around that hinder learning and reducing or removing these barriers.

The MOE also notes that while the term 'inclusion' is not mentioned in the Education Act of the British Virgin Island, the section on Special Education is a formal acknowledgement for the first time that there are students with various challenges who are entitled to an education in the least restrictive setting. Until now, the British Virgin

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[45]   The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding Inclusive Education in British Virgin Islands, submitted by the Ministry of British Virgin Islands and from the ministerial power point presentation presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

Islands special schools have aimed to meet the needs of students at the primary and secondary level who were not performing at levels expected for their age. At present, there are proposals for restructuring the education system, replacing special schools with programmes that meet the needs of all students. It was also noted that the Government supports the notion of inclusion and, through various initiatives, is seeking to improve the quality of education offered to all children.

Public Policies

Policy initiatives in the British Virgin Islands are aiming to support inclusive education by acknowledging that children with different learning needs are entitled to an education in the least restrictive and most enabling environment. According to the MOE, the government aims to help students to develop all skills for participation in the workforce and to be lifelong learners. Inclusive education is a government priority for the education system and is considered as an ideal best practice towards which all countries throughout the world should strive.

While the Virgin Islands' current stage of development with special education can be described as primitive, the government suggested that this could be a positive factor, as separate special educational practices are not deeply entrenched within a separate education system and present initiatives are working towards promoting the modern practices of inclusion. In fact, the regulations for education are currently being worked on and areas in the Education Act 2004 have already been identified for amendment. Efforts are being made to amend the language of special education that currently exists to reflect an inclusive approach to dealing with special education and the system as a whole.

At present, the Education Act 2004 states that the Chief Education Officer is responsible for providing "special education programmes" for students of compulsory school age who, by virtue of intellectual, communicative, behavioural, physical or multiple exceptionalities, are in need of special education. A special, individualised education programme will be considered by the Chief Education Officer in consultation with

professional staff of the school, Ministry and parents, with regard to the educational needs and rights of all students. At the age of 18, the costs of such an individual education plan may be shared between the student, the parents, and the Ministry.

Critical government initiatives have been introduced in the Virgin Islands in favour of a more inclusive approach to education, however. One initiative aims to reform the curriculum to focus on the inclusion of all children in the educational process as is proposed by the National Curriculum Redesign Project (NCRP). Literacy Intervention and an Early Intervention Programmes are also helping to promote inclusive education.

Some barriers to inclusion have been identified, such as the inefficient structure and functioning of the Education Department, as well as the lack of policy and inconsistent implementation OF WHAT.[46] An area of exclusion for which policies have not yet been put in place is that of children who are HIV positive or have AIDS. However, the newly appointed Minister for Education has already started a review of the system and identified priority areas with senior offices which will be addressed.[47] Work on these areas will further help to remove, or at least reduce, some of the barriers to inclusion previously identified. For example, the National Council for AIDS is working to sensitize people about the issue of living and working with people who have AIDS. Schools and teachers have been a part of this sensitisation process.

Systems, Links and Transitions

The British Virgin Island's school system was presented as a compulsory system of 4,876 students, for children ages 5 to 16 years, including students at both public and private primary and secondary schools, as well as at 2 special schools. At the primary level, there are 14 students in a special school, while at the secondary level, there are 70 students.

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[46]   Dawson (2002), as cited in the MOE country report regarding Inclusive Education in British Virgin Islands, submitted by the Ministry of British Virgin Islands and from the ministerial power point presentation presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.
[47]   Appointed in August 2007.

There is no formal strategy of transition for students with special needs from primary to secondary school at present. However, a proposal for restructuring secondary schooling is presently being considered, which if fully implemented, would replace special schools at the secondary level with programmes to meet the needs of all students. In addition, the establishment of a Unit[48] within the Department of Education in 2001 that has direct responsibility for ensuring that the needs of all students are met is helping to establish the necessary links and transitions from Primary to Secondary to College to Work. The Unit also works with schools in the areas of programming and policy implementation to promote inclusion.

According to the MOE, with respect to the curriculum, the Cabinet[49] of a former government of the British Virgin Islands undertook a comprehensive curriculum reform project to overhaul the education system following the philosophy of inclusion. This ongoing reform is meant to assess, redesign and produce a national curriculum, to ensure that it effectively meets the needs of all students regardless of their level of abilities and to ensure relevance, range and flexibility and that the overall needs of the territory are met.[50] A dedicated office and staff is to be secured in the interest of carrying out the work related to the project[51]. In particular, the project offers learning standards and a core, life-based curriculum in order to develop the "total child" from pre-school level to secondary education. It provides for an extended range of relevant elective subjects at the secondary level and establishes stronger diagnostic capacities in terms of screening and assessment. It also provides opportunities for the challenged and gifted students to each realize their full potential in reading, writing and mathematics through the provision of necessary programmes and support, as well as to stimulate and challenge them to learn through active teaching methodologies. Students with intellectual, communicative, behavioural, physical or multiple difficulties follow the same curriculum as their classmates, except in a few subjects according to the disability and where the school has found it difficult to make the necessary adjustments for the student to be accommodated. While the concept

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[48]   This Unit, the Student Services Centre, was established in 2001 and is served by an Educational Psychologist, an Officer for Special Education, an Officer for Guidance and Counseling and a Speech Therapist.
[49]   Formerly the Executive Council.
[50]   The National Curriculum Redesign Project (NCRP), established and funded by the Government.
[51]   The project began in 2005 and has been supported by two distinctly different elected government administrations.

of inclusive education is not integrated in the curriculum structure of basic education in a formal way, this is realized through practice and through the development of Individual Education Plans, as well as differentiation techniques.

The NCRP team also works with schools to strengthen and improve instruction and assessment with government funding, which is inseparable from the curriculum. As of November 2007, the NCRP has converted approximately half of the extended number of course syllabi to learning standards and some have been edited, according to the Ministry. The NCRP is in the second year of a field test exercise, through which the NCRP may evaluate the aptness of the learning standards, the effectiveness of the active teaching and project-based methodologies, the infusion of new textbooks that are in alignment with the standards and the infusion of Promethean Smart Boards and laptops for field test teachers and students to use.

Certain obstacles have, however, been identified with respect to the curriculum, such as a lack of periodic review to determine its currency, insufficient flexibility in assessment procedures and inflexibility in the organization of schools, e.g. time-tabling, grouping. Similarly, the inadequate staff development in schools and the attitudes and beliefs on universal education have been identified as problematic for promoting inclusion in general.[52] Lastly, the government has also highlighted that the cost of providing many services across its portfolio; education must compete for finite national resources, which undermine the pace of reform.

Learners and Teachers

The most challenging learners group for inclusion that can be highlighted in the British Virgin Islands includes students with learning disabilities. With insufficient support at the school level and negative attitudes in schools regarding these students' placement, many of them are physically included but not fully benefiting from the academic offerings in

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[52]   Dawson (2002), as cited in the MOE country report regarding Inclusive Education in British Virgin Islands, submitted by the Ministry of British Virgin Islands and from the ministerial power point presentation presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

their classes. Additionally, at the secondary level some of these students were also displaying behavioural problems which in some cases stemmed from the difficulties they were having with academic tasks.

The special schools at the secondary level were started to meet the needs of students at the primary and secondary level who were not performing at levels expected for their age. Over the last 2 years, however, the secondary schools have started to put programmes in place to meet the needs of students who are experiencing difficulties and thus the incidence of transfer to the special school at the secondary level has been greatly reduced. People have become more accepting of persons with obvious disabilities (e.g. sensory or physical disabilities) and therefore, such students are more readily accepted in schools, particularly at the primary level.

For example, within the past four years, 3 students at the special school at the primary level have been transferred to mainstream primary schools. Also, other students from the special school work alongside students from adjacent mainstream primary schools in some subjects and also interact with these students for extra-curricular activities. For example, at the primary level, mainstream schools are working with 3 students with spina bifida, 2 with cerebral palsy, one with a physical disability and 3 with Down's syndrome.

At the secondary level, 3 landmark cases of inclusion have been made within the past 3 years with the admittance of a student with cerebral palsy to a mainstream secondary school on one of the sister islands, another with cerebral palsy at a secondary school on the main island and a third student being deaf with a cochlear implant. All 3 students came from mainstream primary schools and continue to receive varying levels of support for their physical or sensory needs.

In relation to teachers in the British Virgin Islands, the government has noted that teachers' general attitude was that children with disabilities should be "somewhere else", with special schools as the only other option available.[53] However, there are also some

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[53] *Ibid.*

teachers in mainstream schools working with students with disabilities, who can be commended for their effort with these students without additional assistance in the classroom. Teachers are adjusting to working with students' disabilities and improving as they realize that despite the students' disabilities, they are still able to perform academically. For example, teachers are now trying their best to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities in regular classes. Additionally, one of the primary schools has a unit which caters for children who are experiencing academic difficulties.

To facilitate these improvements, workshops are held regularly with principals and teachers to help them to reflect on their practice and make improvements where needed. These workshops continue to include the use of video resources as well as having the suppliers of texts and other resources train persons in their effective use. Schools are also visited and teachers are given support to help them adapt their practices to effectively deal with the diversity in their classrooms. Areas such as differentiated teaching, multiple intelligences, and teaching and learning styles have received much emphasis in the workshops with teachers. This emphasis, along with the use of technology in the classrooms, helps teachers activate the learning processes of children with varying abilities. In this regard, some teachers have also received training in the cognitive intervention programme Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment[54].

However, teachers are at varying levels in their abilities to work with the diverse needs of their students and some of the barriers to inclusion still exist. For example, the MOE notes the failure of educators to keep abreast of current research in education; the difficulty to consistently recruit qualified teachers; the insufficient support for teachers as

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[54]   Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment is a cognitive intervention program that can be used both individually and in the classroom framework. As a classroom curriculum, it is aimed at enhancing the students' cognitive functions necessary for academic learning and achievement. The fundamental assumption of the program is that intelligence is dynamic and modifiable, not static or fixed. Thus, it seeks to correct deficiencies in fundamental thinking skills, provides students with the concepts, skills, strategies, operations and techniques necessary to function as independent learners, increases their motivation, develops students' metacognition, basically helping students learn how to learn, http://www.icelp.org/asp/Basic_Theory.shtm#4.

they deal increasingly with diverse student populations and the poor quality of teaching/learning experiences.[55]

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[55] Dawson (2002), as cited in the MOE country report regarding Inclusive Education in British Virgin Islands, submitted by the Ministry of British Virgin Islands and from the ministerial power point presentation presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

7. CAYMAN ISLANDS[56]

Approaches, Scope and Content

In the Cayman Islands, the approach on inclusive education focuses on the provision and access of quality education for all. According to the Ministry of Education (MOE), a Caymanian approach to provision of a world class education for all has emerged with an expanded definition of inclusion. This new definition ensures that citizens are able to access opportunities for learning and therefore to evolve and develop their skill sets. Referring to national studies from a variety of different disciplines, such as the National Consensus, the Special Educational Needs Report, the Criminality Report, and the Review of the Education Law, the MOE notes the importance of inclusion and education as being at the heart of development and as the most potent means of self and social transformation. The MOE linked individual advancement to the collective good, both in economic and social terms; for example, to develop a base for labour force skills and for a positive person in society. [57] Such findings have been central to the reforms embarked upon by the government.

Public Policies

The educational public policy of the Cayman Islands has been premised on the objective to create an inclusive system based on the approach mentioned above. The Cayman Islands' government is now in the process of implementing the concept of inclusion through a National Strategic Plan, recognizing that not everybody in the Cayman Islands had previously received the educational opportunities required. In 1998, in order to achieve equity and inclusion, the previous government embarked upon the establishment

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[56] The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding Inclusive Education in Cayman Islands, submitted by the Ministry of Education, Training, Employment, Youth, Sport and Culture of Cayman Islands and from the ministerial power point presentation at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

[57] According to the MOE, this is perhaps best evidenced by a quote from the keynote speech at the first National Education Conference; delivered by Mr. Conor O'Dea, Managing Director of Butterfield Bank; who solemnly warned that "Presently, the educational achievement of most schools leavers is inadequate for the needs of business and, without investment, the labour force skill base may be obsolete by 2010", "A National Consensus on the Future of Education in the Cayman Islands" Report; Government Motion No. 6/2005, passed by the Legislative Assembly on the 13th day of October, 2005, p. 7.

of a 10-year National Strategic Plan, Vision 2008. The key recommendations of Vision 2008 highlighted the need to support an educational system which identifies and develops the abilities of all persons, encouraging them to realize their full potential in different ways.[58] Despite these recommendations, the implicit acceptance of the importance of inclusion under the Plan remained largely rhetoric until 2005.[59] According to the MOE, individual advances and isolated successes were achieved, but these were not part of any holistic programme. Reform initiatives have since been particularly well received in the smaller sister Islands, where resources were not previously distributed equitably on account of the distance.

The government, which assumed power in 2005, pledged to make education its key priority; human capital and education are the cornerstones upon which the social, economic and cultural well-being of society hinges.[60] The blueprint for their reform began with a National Education Conference in September 2005 on "Defining Challenges, Finding Solutions Together". This conference allowed all stakeholders concerned with the quality of education to discuss the critical issues and to agree on broad paths forward with respect to the core issues facing the delivery of education.[61] Ten specific strategic measures were identified as a response to marginalization and underscored the importance of inclusion, which were then included in the Report of this Conference and adopted unanimously by the Legislative Assembly.[62]

The development of an administrative framework for a new education service, the establishment of a taskforce to oversee and guide the review of the Cayman Islands' National Curriculum and the development of an Early Years Unit to set standards, evaluate performance and support improvements were all recommended. It was also

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[58] Strategy III, The Key to the Future (A Guide to the National Strategic Plan): Vision 2008, 1999, p. 7.
[59] Note, for example, the contemporary decision of the school authorities to exclude from school an eight-year old boy who wore his hair in dreadlocks, in accordance with religious beliefs, because of his failure to comply with school rules regarding the length of hair. See Grant and Chin v. The Principal of John A. Cumber Primary School, The Chief Education Officer and The Education Council 1999 CILR 307, where the Grand Court upheld the decision, which was subsequently overturned on appeal by the Court of Appeal (2001 CILR 78).
[60] People's Progressive Movement Campaign 2005 Manifesto, p. 10.
[61] National Consensus on the Future of Education in the Cayman Islands, 2005, p. 7.
[62] "A National Consensus on the Future of Education in the Cayman Islands" Report; Government Motion No. 6/2005, passed by the Legislative Assembly on the 13th day of October, 2005.

considered important to establish a Human Resources Unit dedicated to personnel management and to develop a Professional Development Services Unit with responsibility for careers education, guidance and scholarship secretariat services. The development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes at primary, secondary and post-secondary levels, to enable students to develop a wide range of skills and aptitudes and good work ethics was also suggested, as was the development of a strategic plan for the maintenance and further development of educational facilities. The development of high quality initial teacher training and continuing professional development opportunities for teachers was also considered an essential strategy component.[63]

Additionally, a review of core business practices within the Education Department Service was recommended, including budgeting, asset management, financial reporting and the improvement in the availability, quantity, quality, analysis and use of educational statistics to inform planning and policy making. This Department has been reinvented to follow a service-orientated governance model. The decision-making process in education was particularly inefficient and lacked clarity and accountability,[64] which led to government schools lacking autonomy and innovation. As a consequence, there was previously an Island-wide perception that students received a better standard of education in the private system. The governmental reforms have changed the core functions in the Department of Education Services so that the student is now placed at the core of the education system. The MOE notes how decision-making has also been decentralized so that decisions are taken as close as possible to the students that are affected by them. In addition, the collection, and more importantly retention, of annual standardized student data has enabled the new Department of Education, for the first time, to identify patterns of performance and to propose actions to improve weak performance. [65] The Ministry intends to improve this further through the introduction of the Schools Management Information System across all government schools.

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[63]   *Ibid*., at pp. 20-22.
[64]   Clayton, Brown and Morgan, Cayman Islands Education Law Review 2007, pp. 17-18.
[65]   Strategy 7, "A National Consensus on the Future of Education in the Cayman Islands" Report; Government Motion No. 6/2005, passed by the Legislative Assembly on the 13th day of October, 2005, at p. 21.

In recent years, the Schools' Inspectorate's reports also revealed that there where problems associated with differentiated learning in government schools.[66] The Schools' Inspectorate previously sought to address such problems by providing coaching and mentoring through its inspectors. However, the responsibility for school improvement will shift to the Department of Education Services as the providers of various education services have been better aligned by the reforms underway. The Head of the Professional Development Services and a new Head of Teaching and Learning Services is also in the process of being appointed to take overarching responsibility for school improvement, Literacy Coordinators and the Literacy Institute, as well as promote a new emphasis on improving numeracy through coaching.

Systems, Links and Transitions

In the Cayman Islands, the education system is experiencing a series of major reforms to address the need for equity and inclusion in education and more broadly within society. These reforms are focused on the development of a new National Curriculum.[67] According to the MOE, this new National Curriculum, with a range of subjects, recognizes the concept of the entitlement of all students to a sound foundation to their educational careers and a broad and balanced education. It also recognizes the plurality of Caymanian society, celebrates the unique and rich local culture and history of the Cayman Islands, while preparing students for an increasingly international world. The Curriculum requires students to consider, for example, the importance of human rights, democracy, conflict resolution, ethics and constitutional change.

The use of ICT has proved extremely successful as part of the new Curriculum strategy in Little Cayman, where the Little Education Centre serves only 4 students; students and teachers tend to otherwise feel remote and marginalised. Students are now making videos and music, working with animations and podcasts, blogging and sharing their work with parents, peers and new found cyber-friends in schools elsewhere in the world, including

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[66] This Inspectorate has now been renamed the Education Standards and Assessment Unit.
[67] http://www.brighterfutures.gov.ky/portal/page?_pageid=1408,1783285&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL.

certain schools specifically chosen because they have a similarly small student population.[68] In terms of inclusion, this initiative integrates ICT entirely into the learning process, as opposed to viewing it as an add-on to the existing curriculum and places ICT at the forefront of the learning experience. It also links students with other students, thereby providing the global perspective in the most remote of settings and draws parents increasingly into the learning community. Having modelled this initiative in Little Cayman, where the benefits will be most widely felt, the Ministry hopes to extend it in the next phase to all primary schools in Cayman Brac and Grand Cayman.

With respect to the criteria for assessment, the new Curriculum recognizes that the attainment of certain levels is independent of age or maturity and thus students should not be placed at an average level. The new Curriculum requires teachers to set work that is suitably challenging and differentiated to the individual, as part of a commitment to the personalised learning of students. According to the MOE, this mode of assessment will also assist in the smooth transition from primary to secondary education.

The introduction of district-based Learning Community Leaders has, in addition, had an immediate impact on schools in every part of the Cayman Islands through the provision of instant support and additional services to schools, and in turn students. This support includes leadership and management as well as facilities and ICT support. Similarly, the government has incurred significant costs to provide an Early Childhood Intervention officer, an educational psychologist, a facilities coordinator and an ICT technician in the smaller Sister Islands.[69]

One challenge in terms of links and transitions in the education system of the Cayman Islands is how to map the new National Curriculum to create the desired continuum of education and facilitate lifelong learning. According to the MOE, this should start with the Early Years initiatives,[70] run through the compulsory sector and move on to the main

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[68] http://littlecaymancommunity.blogspot.com.
[69] Strategy 9, "A National Consensus on the Future of Education in the Cayman Islands" Report; Government Motion No. 6/2005, passed by the Legislative Assembly on the 13th day of October, 2005, at p. 22.
[70] Strategy 3, "A National Consensus on the Future of Education in the Cayman Islands" Report; Government Motion No. 6/2005, passed by the Legislative Assembly on the 13th day of October, 2005, at pp. 20-21.

local tertiary provider, the University College of the Cayman Islands. To facilitate the transition from the compulsory levels to tertiary education, there has been increased cooperation between the secondary and tertiary sectors. This cooperation, along with the increased take-up of technical and vocational courses in the new National Curriculum and significant assistance from the Ministry of Education, Training, Employment, Youth, Sports and Culture, has led to an increase of registered students at the University College from 600 to 3,000 in the last 2 years. Another initiative to create a more inclusive education system and demonstrating a broader alignment and synergy between the secondary and tertiary sectors was the creation of a Cayman Brac Campus of the University College of the Cayman Islands.[71] Previously, many 16 and 17 year olds in Cayman Brac felt too young to leave home in order to continue their education, which resulted in a gap or even an irreversible end to their education.

The transition of students from the one large lower secondary school in Grand Cayman with a total of over 1,000 students into 4 distinct schools within schools of 250 has also occurred recently, in order to create a greater sense of ownership and identity for students. However, the MOE notes that much work remains to be done in terms of the transition to these new schools and the new Curriculum.

Three new secondary campuses are also underway, which aim to ensure the inclusion of the growing diversity of learners' expectations and needs. The campuses should create 3 regional Learning Communities in Grand Cayman for the 2,000 plus student population. In the interests of equity, it was determined that the communities would not be specialised, but that all educational, community and sports resources would be available in each of the 3 districts. The government notes being extremely careful in terms of the design of the new schools; they are being designed on the schools-within-schools model, which sub-divides groups into smaller groupings. According to the MOE, the community is already familiar with the schools-within-schools structure and has accepted that small learning groups of 250, with the possibility of further sub-dividing these into groupings

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[71]   Strategy 8 of "A National Consensus on the Future of Education in the Cayman Islands" Report; Government Motion No. 6/2005, passed by the Legislative Assembly on the 13th day of October, 2005.

of 125 at the secondary level, which provides an environment more conducive to learning. Moreover, the campuses are designed to provide a variety of learning environments. These various learning environments involve 18 different learning modalities in the new secondary campuses, such as independent study, peer tutoring, team collaborative work in small and mid-size groups of 2 to 6 students and one-on-one learning with the teacher. There will also be facilities for a lecture format with the teacher or outside expert, project- and technology-based learning with mobile computers, distance learning and research via the Internet with wireless networking, as well as student presentations. In addition, drama, art and music-based learning, seminar-style instruction, community service learning, naturalist learning, emotional learning and hands-on learning opportunities will be arranged for students.[72]

Learners and Teachers

With respect to learners in the Cayman Islands, the Ministry notes how the government has identified the profile of a model learner which educators should aspire to achieve through the reformed education system. This model learner is a person who is enthusiastic and motivated about lifelong learning, literate, numerate and adept at IT, as well as a good communicator. Such a student should be creative, positive, confident and good at problem-solving and teamwork. The MOE states that educators also should aim to enable students to be adaptable to changing circumstances, have a good work ethic, while respecting God, him or herself, others and the environment. Being proud of and knowledgeable about the Caymanian culture, while having an awareness of modern global issues, cultures and beliefs are also considered desirable according to the MOE.

In order to attain this profile and to include more learners into the Cayman Islands education system, systematic improvements are being made. For example, the MOE notes how students, who are initially identified as gifted and talented, perform poorly as their academic career progresses; the system is then referred to as failing to cater to these students' needs. Similarly, according to the MOE, the Special Education Needs Report

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[72]   Nair and Fielding, (2005), The Language of School Design: Design Patterns for 21st Century Schools, pp. 19-20. Nair and Fielding add that this list is not exhaustive.

concluded that special education had received little attention over previous years and as a consequence, was incapable of reaching out to those who required special services the most. In response, a Code of Practice for special educational needs and gifted learners will require teachers to write differentiated instruction plans for children who fall within the lowest and highest ability levels. Following a graduated response approach, this Code documents how such children are to be appropriately included in teaching and learning activities within typical settings, rather than being segregated in highly restrictive exclusionary settings of an Alternative Education Centre. Previously, such a Centre was the only available option, but with the construction of agile learning environments on 3 multi-small school campuses, it is anticipated that it will only be a means of very last resort. A gifted and talented teacher has also now been appointed.

The improvement of core skills and literacy of learners has been identified in particular as being fundamental to eliminate a cycle of exclusion, both internally in the Department of Education and externally by the Attorney-General Forde's Criminality Report.[73] It was found that the problem of school exclusion begins at school, and is reinforced by a lack of parental involvement and, particularly for young males, culminates in prison admission. In line with this report, educational reforms have been implemented, with the one exception of Forde's recommendations, which relates to the proposed creation of a technical training institute.[74]

There has also been an emphasis on the provision of teacher training in order to equip teachers with the tools for delivering the curriculum in the new learning environments, as part of the government's educational reform towards inclusion. The increased staffing for school improvement and professional development, along with an increasingly close partnership with the University College of the Cayman Islands - which has given birth to a Faculty of Education - should significantly improve the provision of teacher training. In terms of training content, one advantage of using the International Baccalaureate as the

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[73] Attorney General's Pre-Disposing Factors to Criminality in the Cayman Islands; Forde, Report on Pre-Disposing Factors to Criminality in the Cayman Islands, 2006.
http://www.gov.ky/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/CIGHOME/FIND/ORGANISATIONS/AZAGENCIES/PLG/DOCUMENTS/CRIMINALITYREPORT.PDF
[74] *Ibid*, at para. 3.32.

framework for the delivery of a home-grown curriculum, would be that it brings with it commitments for an extensive programme of staff development.

In particular, special education personnel have received greater attention in the Cayman Islands recently; the Special Education Needs Report recommended that additional specialists be hired in areas of educational psychology, speech, language and occupational therapy, even if there are currently excellent practitioners in service.[75] As a result, the number of reading specialists has almost doubled, from 8 in 2005 to 15 in 2007; the number of support assistants has risen from 29 to 70; and the number of Educational Psychologist posts has increased from 2 in 2005 to 6 in 2007. A clinical psychologist and a specialised teacher for gifted and talented children have been engaged for the first time, while the number of speech pathologists and occupational therapists has doubled. There has also been an increase in the number of early intervention teachers. Due to personnel increases, interventions and assessments now take place much earlier in virtually every community and are based on the needs of the individual student.

8. DOMINICA[76]

Approaches, Scope and Content

The approach to inclusive education put forth by Dominica focuses on the difference between inclusion and integration. The Ministry of Education (MOE) emphasized that attempts to promote inclusion must clearly distinguish between these two concepts, in addition to the current provision of special needs education within specialized schools. Moving towards inclusion, the MOE noted how the notion of 'integration' involves focusing on small groups of children for whom the curriculum is adapted and differentiated work is devised. Nevertheless, integration in Dominica does not challenge or alter the organization and provision of the curriculum for students; rather, it involves

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[75] Holt, Cayman Islands Special Education Needs Report, 2007.
[76] The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding Inclusive Education in Dominica, submitted by the Ministry of Education of Dominica and from the power point presentation "Analysis of teachers perspectives on inclusion", presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

placing the child with special needs in the mainstream classroom hoping that he/she will cope. In contrast, the concept of 'inclusion' requires the restructuring of the education system to permit all students to be productively accommodated in mainstream classes through reorganization of the classroom environment and facilitation of instructional shifts. Hence, the MOE stressed that inclusion is not understood as a means to assimilate individual students with special educational needs into existing forms of schooling, but instead as the way in which schools can be restructured in order to respond positively to all students as individuals. According to the MOE, through this process the school builds its capacity to accept all pupils from the local community who wish to attend schooling.[77]

Within this approach to inclusive education, the MOE underlined the importance of learning together in an inclusive setting. In Dominica, inclusion is seen as the process of operating a classroom or school as a supportive community. The MOE emphasized that an inclusive school operates from the principle that all students in the community should learn together. It means therefore that support for the process of inclusion should come from the whole school community and should benefit all students.

The MOE also identified challenges to the approach of inclusive education. It was noted that inclusion is, in many different respects, a value driven goal because of the different opinions people hold about its appropriateness in various circumstances. While inclusion may be a desirable goal for all children, the issue is complicated by differing viewpoints and, as a result, it is often misunderstood, mistrusted and confusing to parents and educators.

Public Policies

Recent public policy in Dominica emphasizes the conscious effort the Ministry of Education has been making to encourage inclusive education within the public schools system, as understood by the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education of June 1994. This statement stated that regular schools with an

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[77]   Sebba, J. and Ainscow, M., International developments in inclusive education - mapping the issues, (2006), Cambridge Journal of Education, 26, pp. 5-19.

inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.[78] The Salamanca Statement indicates that inclusive schools provide an effective education to the majority of children, improve efficiency and ultimately the cost effectiveness of the entire education system.[79]

To this end, practical and tangible efforts have been made to support mainstream schools which practice inclusion in Dominica. In terms of legislation, a student who is entitled to a special education programme shall have the programme delivered in the least restrictive and most enabling environment to the extent that resources permit and is considered practicable by the Chief Education Officer. This decision is made in consultation with professional staff of the school, the Ministry and the parents, and having due regard for the educational needs and the rights of all students, according to the 1997 Education Act. Moreover, a special education programme may take the form of an individual education plan in that the plan is tailored to the specific or individual needs of the student. [80] The government has interpreted the least restrictive environment designated in the legislation to mean a regular or mainstream classroom.

The introduction of universal secondary education in Dominica has also given the issue of inclusion greater prominence. The selection process for secondary schools that existed prior to universal secondary education naturally excluded many students from accessing secondary education. Hence, it has provided special needs students within the mainstream primary schools with new hope and increased opportunities for lifelong learning.

While the Ministry of Education has thus recognized that inclusion is an issue of growing concern, there are certain obstacles which hinder the implementation of inclusive education policies. Firstly, there is the fear that the resources required to facilitate the

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[78]   "Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education" in the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, Salamanca, 1994, UNESCO, Ministry of Spain,
http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF
[79]   *Ibid.*
[80]   Section 81 Sub-section (2) and (3).

process will not always be available as this issue also requires an initial commitment of resources for implementation. Among the most pressing limitations of inclusion are a lack of human resources, limited access to materials and equipment to facilitate inclusion, a silent culture of exclusion among schools and a lack of confidence by parents in the ability of educational institutions to adequately cater for the needs of their children. A second main barrier to inclusion in Dominica is the attitude of society about people with disabilities. Such attitudes stem from a lack of education, inadequate public policies on the issue and insufficient trained personnel. Finally, inclusive education policies have not been guided by a written policy and, as a result, many mainstream schools maintain a degree of control over decisions on the acceptance of students with special needs; this allows for a silent culture of exclusion at the school level. The Ministry has therefore concluded that for inclusive education reform to be afforded with the degree of prominence that it deserves in the Dominican context, more resources need to be invested both in terms of the development of human resources and the provision of material resources.

Systems, Links and Transitions

Over the past few years, only limited progress has been made with respect to inclusive education in the Dominican education system. In most cases, only special schools have catered for the educational needs of students with special needs. These schools form part of the national education provision but function as a separate parallel school system for students perceived to be in need of special arrangements. Within the Dominican context, most of the institutions catering for the needs of students with disabilities are either privately owned or government-assisted special schools. One of the main special schools on the island caters to students who are mentally challenged, while the other main special school caters to the hearing impaired.

In addition, there are only 2 other regular schools which cater to students with special needs, namely vision impairment and autism; the former is a relatively small assisted school. This school has staff members who are trained in Braille education and can

readily cater to the educational needs of the students. The other is the largest public primary school on the island. This institution has most recently been piloting an inclusive education programme with physical assistance from the Ministry of Education and there are a few teachers who are trained in special education within mainstream settings; albeit that they feel unable to adequately address the full needs of such students, the Ministry reported.

With respect to the curriculum, the concept of inclusive education has not featured prominently in Dominica's National Curriculum, nor has there been a shift in focus to facilitate inclusion. Although inclusion is not addressed by the curriculum on a national level, mainstream schools which cater to students with special needs modify their curriculum to facilitate all students. Where the National Curriculum is modified to facilitate all students, this offers differentiated tasks for those students with varying abilities.

Teachers and Learners

The learners who have been identified by the Ministry of Education as suffering the most from exclusion in Dominica are students with special educational needs based on physical or mental disabilities. The reasons given for such exclusion are inadequate physical resources and teacher training at the school level.

On rare occasions, certain learners may also be excluded based on their behaviour. In such cases, exclusion is determined by the Chief Education Officer upon the submission of a dossier of evidence by the school, as well as a recommendation for expulsion. The MOE notes that there is always careful consideration by the office of the Chief Education Officer with respect to excluding students based on their behaviour since it is quite clear that behaviour accepted by one school may not necessarily be accepted by another.

In Dominica, there has been a strong emphasis on the importance and support for teacher training. The reconsideration and adjustment of teaching approaches and the provision of the necessary support for learning by teachers are considered the key features of the

process of inclusion by the government. However, teacher training is, in fact, still a major limitation of inclusive education with many classroom teachers who feel ill-equipped to work with students with special needs. Although there has been some teacher training with respect to differentiated instruction provided by the Ministry of Education, teachers lack specific training relating to the specific learning difficulties of students. Meanwhile, the few teachers who are trained in special education within mainstream settings hold the view that they are not competent enough to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

9. GRENADA[81]

Approaches, Scope and Content

Grenada's conceptualization of inclusive education reflects an 'integration' approach. The Ministry of Education (MOE) noted how special needs students are placed in the mainstream education system with little or no provision of support services, which is necessary for the children to maximize their full potential and be able to make a significant contribution to society. However, the MOE attributed the following definition of inclusive education to Grenada: "the means of placing the special needs students in the mainstream, mainly for the scope of breaking down social barriers". Physical and social, cultural, and economic barriers were identified as the main sources of exclusion in Grenada. Accordingly, persons with physical disabilities face major challenges in gaining access to the mainstream schools. In the framework of this approach, inclusive education can be envisioned as a means of democratizing opportunities for life long learning; the development of relevant knowledge and skills to strengthen human resources and contribute to the nation's development. The MOE gave emphasis to the wide range of skills and attitudes that each individual has as a member of the human family in society.

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[81] The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding the Inclusive Education in Grenada, submitted by the Ministry of Education o Grenade and from the ministerial power point presentation "Inclusive Education in Grenada", offered at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

Public Policies

The main national education agenda in Grenada over the last 10 years has been a positive movement and paradigm shift to the concept of inclusive education, focusing on children with special education needs, reflecting the policy of the Salamanca Statement (1994) signed by Grenada, and the more recent Education for All Action Plan Framework (2000). In accordance with this goal, Grenada's Education Act suggests that children with special education needs must receive their educational programme in the least restrictive environment.[82] Grenada is also presently reviewing the UN Convention of the Rights for Persons with Disabilities. National educational strategies specifically aim to guarantee the adequate provision of education for all children with special needs in mainstream day care centres, nurseries, primary schools and secondary schools. These strategies are made evident in the revised edition of the Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan for Educational Enhancement and Development (2006-2015).This initiative is a high priority of the government, which aims to introduce full support systems by 2010. This meaningful attempt is illustrated by one of the sub-strategic objectives, which suggests that Grenada will re/integrate into mainstream education previously excluded children, truants, intra-cycle dropouts and provide support for participation. Nevertheless, the Ministry has recognised that there are some challenges which exist in achieving these objectives. The main challenges appear to be related to finance, human capacity, materials and infrastructure. Lack of awareness is a major contributing factor for societal exclusion.

Systems, Links and Transitions

According to the MOE, Grenada has a strongly-developed and publicly-supported education system of early childhood education and has also achieved universal primary education. Nevertheless, access to and participation in secondary education is limited to about 80% of primary school children; this figure has recently increased, however, according to the Ministry. The MOE will continue to support the transition from primary

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[82]   21 Part VI Division.

to secondary education and has prioritised the provision of a supportive system for children with special educational needs in an inclusive setting which meets learners' individual needs.[83]

With respect to children with special needs, the main focus at present is students with auditory and visual disabilities. According to the MOE, children with such sensory impairments tend to be perceived as less challenging in mainstream environments. A special education needs 'pull out' programme is being used in at least 12 mainstream schools. The special needs students are sent to special resource rooms attached to the mainstream school, and tutored by Special Education Needs Teachers (SENT) who have been locally trained. These special needs students are also provided with assistive technological devices, materials and the provision of Braille text books, large prints books and other support services from primary to tertiary levels of education (mainly supported by specially trained teachers of the Deaf and Blind). The Ministry also intends to institutionalize a Remedial and Accelerated Learning Programme as a basic part of primary and secondary education. Despite these initiatives, the exclusion of other at risk children remains high.

Furthermore, the Ministry intends to encourage inclusive education in Grenada through curriculum reform by making it a priority to revise and develop an approach of multiple intelligences and aptitude in the curriculum by 2009. The reformed curriculum will emphasise the possibility for curriculum adaptation and place the impetus on catering to the differentiated styles of students, according to their differentiated needs. According to the MOE, this approach was established by data collected from educational practitioners in addressing the special needs of their students and recommended by special education teachers who suggested it enhanced student's self-esteem. An early screening and intervention programme regarding special needs in children is in way of being implemented. This will allow for the assessment of learning needs of children and routing into appropriate learning-support environments within mainstream schools or elsewhere.[84] The development and revision of the pre-primary curriculum and

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[83] Following the Strategic Plan for Educational Enhancement and Development (2006- 2015: 21).
[84] A recent proposal was approved and will commence in 2008.

implementation of the primary school curricula based on OECS harmonized learning outcomes will also reflect a greater focus on quality through its emphasis on basic literacy and numeracy.

To support the curriculum reform process towards inclusion, the Ministry also intends to address macro curriculum development needs through stakeholder participation involving policy development and the review and definition of appropriate curricula. Indeed, special education teachers are collaborating with the school community on special educational needs in general, which helps promotes inclusive practices.

Lastly, with respect to the school itself, the Ministry of Education recognises that physical, social, cultural, and economic barriers of exclusion may exist for example, due to the general layout of the school environment or due to the transportation required to or from institutions of learning. These barriers may be confronted, the Ministry suggests, by schools changing the classroom from year to year, to make it more accessible to all students.

Learners and Teachers

In Grenada, it is one of the core strategic objectives of the Ministry of Education's Strategic Plan for Educational Enhancement and Development to reconfigure the learning environment to establish learner-centred, child-friendly, health promoting schools. According to the MOE, this is being implemented through the modernising and securing of all education facilities to provide adequate safety and health protection, and learning environments with an aesthetically pleasant ambience and physical access for children with disabilities.

There are also ongoing processes of curriculum change, which will foster better learning environments to facilitate inclusion. In particular, the learning process of children of varied abilities in Grenada will be activated by introducing and strengthening the application of initial and ongoing diagnostic assessment, differentiated instruction,

flexible grouping and individualized instruction as a basic aspect of the instructional programme in schools.[85]

The Ministry is implementing measures with respect to teachers in order to support inclusive education in terms of quality education. Teachers' competencies are a growing concern; however the Ministry is attempting to meet these needs. According to the MOE, this attempt is supported by research from a Grenadian researcher on teachers' attitudes to inclusion, which indicates that a fair percentage of teachers consider that special needs students should be integrated into mainstream more for the purpose of socialization.

The Ministry of Education has embarked on developing a teacher-centred professional development and support strategy for improvement in teacher services, to provide relevant pre-service and in-service training which will lead to fully qualified pre-primary to secondary teaching staff and trained graduates for tertiary education. The on-going training is aimed at making teaching staff competent in offering programmes to the differentiated learning needs of their students. The MOE notes that teacher training is needed in particular in the area of curriculum adaptation if teachers are to make a significant contribution to their students' needs. The new primary school curriculum based on OECS harmonized learning outcomes will be implemented through the Caribbean Centres of Excellence for Teacher Training.

It is the intention of the Ministry of Education to have all teachers qualified in their respective areas by 2008. The Ministry was also in the process of developing a Special Education Unit by the end 2007 with fully trained staff by 2008. The Ministry of Education has trained 2 educational practitioners in the area of inclusive education through the European Union's Erasmus Mundus MA Special Educational Needs Programme 2005 -2007. In relation to this EU initiative, there is now a bid being offered to the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to submit proposals for other initiatives, which train the trainer in inclusive practice.

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[85]   Strategic Plan for Educational Enhancement and Development 2006-2015:49

10. GUYANA[86]

Approaches, Scope and Content

Guyana's approach to inclusive education has evolved over time. Initially, inclusive education in Guyana has been associated conceptually to special needs education and thus, primarily as responding to the group of students with special needs, for example students with physical and/or mental disabilities. In accordance, education has been offered to this group in special classes, special schools as well as in mainstream schools. In the 1980's, the scope was expanded to include other groups. To illustrate, one such group comprised of students who are socially disadvantaged or in especially difficult circumstances. This group includes students who are very slow learners and others who might have had some difficulty with the law but were not institutionalised.

In the context of this country presentation, inclusive education was approached as the provision of basic education to all sections of the Guyanese society regardless of geographic locations, religion, ethnicity, social status and economic positions. Accordingly, the Ministry of Education (MOE) noted that inclusive education is ensuring in a qualitative way that equal opportunities and equal access are given to every Guyanese towards acquiring a quality education.

Public Policies

For nearly two decades, successive governments in Guyana have stated their commitment to providing equal access to quality education for all Guyanese children and young people as inclusive education can only be achieved if first and foremost every child is given an opportunity to attain basic education. This commitment was articulated in both the 1990 and 1995 policy documents of the Ministry of Education. The policy of equal access and more so of inclusiveness is more clearly stated in the Ministry of Education's 2003-2007 Strategic Plan, where the Ministry of Education's mandate is to ensure that all

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[86] The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding Inclusive Education in Guyana, submitted by the Ministry of Education of Guyana and from the ministerial power point presentation presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

citizens of Guyana, regardless of age, race or creed, physical or mental disability, or socio-economic status are given the best possible opportunity to achieve their full potential through equal access to quality education, as defined by the standards and norms outlined by the Ministry. The government of Guyana is also moving to increase the upper-age limit to which students must remain in school by law.

The MOE notes that as a result of the emphasis on quality education for all, Guyana has achieved the following outcomes: a new assessment system which emphasizes both formative and summative assessments and utilizes various assessment methods: the reform of the curriculum to deal with issues in regards to Health and Family Life education which includes Human Rights Education and HIV/AIDS; the development of an Integrated Curriculum. There has also been an emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, a new methodology (Interactive Radio Instruction) for the teaching of mathematics at the primary level and the use of the phonetic approach to the teaching of reading.[87] The government has also used distance education to reach unreached students through school broadcasts and CDs. In addition, to target those not receiving education, there have been initiatives on universal primary education, the development of a policy on HIV/AIDS Education, the teaching of mathematics and English through distance education, and programmes for out-of-school youths.

The Ministry has identified several main challenges related to curriculum reform, community involvement and to the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills. These challenges are related to the inaccessibility of remote areas, to a lack of specialized teachers, inadequate resources, and a lack of appropriate infrastructure in terms of physical facilities for all students. The MOE notes how the financial, human and material costs have become an important obstacle in meeting special education needs, and in creating an overall inclusive education system. Without such resources, the Ministry of Education's policies have progressed slowly. For example, in Guyana there are ten administrative regions, four of which fall within the interior and are mostly populated by

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[87] To ensure that all teachers can use the phonetic approach, all schools have been given phonics CDs and there has been intensified and ongoing training of teachers to build their capacity throughout the regions through distance education and the specialized training of teachers.

indigenous people. Historically, the MOE notes that as a result of the lack of infrastructure and qualified personnel, these areas suffered tremendously in terms of the delivery of basic education. Today, there has been a significant improvement in infrastructure and every attempt is made to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of this target group.

Systems, Links and Transitions

Historically in Guyana's education system, basic education has meant early childhood education (day-care, playgroups and nursery), 6 years of primary education and 3 years of secondary education. Through this basic education system, the government of Guyana aims to address what is for them a complex and competitive modern environment. According to the MOE, basic education should produce individuals who are functionally literate, numerate and able to be easily integrated into society. Every attempt is made to ensure that schools in all the regions have the same resources and that the same criteria for acceptance into schools applies to all students, regardless of religion, ethnicity, cultural, social and economic backgrounds.

Special needs education in Guyana targets groups with severe learning disabilities, slow learners, learners with emotional problems and gifted learners. In the past, students with disabilities were educated in one of three modes, namely the 'regular' school system, specialised units attached to regular schools and specialised institutions. Today, all these target groups are integrated into regular classrooms as much as possible, unless children have severe disabilities, in which case they are placed in special schools. Two special schools were set up to cater for these students who are socially disadvantaged or in especially difficult circumstances with smaller classes staffed by older more experienced teachers and a free lunch programme. Some attempt has also been made in these schools to provide alternatives to the traditional academic secondary programme and to prepare students for the working world. At the same time, a residential school at the secondary level was built in order to cater to gifted students. The school offers a much broader programme than most secondary schools with a wide range of co-curricula activities

being an integral part of the school life of the students. However, difficulties in inclusiveness are evident even in these special schools. For example, teachers, in the school for slow learners, feel that children with multiple disabilities are wrongly placed into the school, and many of the teachers feel that they are unable to cope with these students. In the residential school for gifted children, placement has simply been allocated to students who score in the top 2 percentile in the Grade 6 examinations (at age 11) and in recent years even that criterion has been relaxed.

In terms of transition, most students complete primary education and proceed to secondary education in Guyana. There is continuity of the curriculum in the core subjects; however, transition from primary to secondary school is not always smooth. Most teachers at secondary schools feel that students should come there equipped with knowledge and skills in the core subject areas. If students do not arrive at secondary school with such knowledge, they do not accept responsibility for teaching children these core subject areas. In addition, unlike the sharing of information about students in transition from nursery to primary, this is absent from the primary to the secondary; thus the chance to communicate the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of students, through student reports for example, is lost and secondary teachers cannot readily fill in gaps without such information.

According to the MOE, new worldwide educational developments have led Guyana to constantly reform the curriculum. Some major developments that influenced curriculum reform, apart from inclusive education, are culturally responsive teaching, developmentally appropriate practices, outcome-based education, advances in technology and social and economic needs. In terms of inclusive education, there was no real previous effort to create individual education plans with different curricula approaches, even though educational policy has always been, as much as possible, to mainstream students with disabilities. The Ministry recognises the challenge of developing a curriculum that would address the multi-faceted needs of varied students in a "timely, efficient and convenient way". The emphasis on convenience in particular implies that the educational system must be able to reach the unreached, most vulnerable and

economically depressed sections of the community, by being responsive, time-bound, flexible and unique to the student requirements. Students should also be placed as near as possible to their home environments. For example, as the transition from primary to secondary education often involves a change in location, most students are placed as near as possible to their homes so that the cost to travel to schools is reduced, making schooling more accessible. This is extremely challenging in Guyana, a multicultural society with a geographic space of 83,000 square miles, and some hinterland areas only accessible by aircraft or long hours of trekking.

Nevertheless, the curriculum has been adapted to cater to certain groups. With respect to indigenous groups, the curriculum has been simplified and made more user-friendly to ensure that the teachers do not encounter difficulties in its delivery. For the first 3 grades of primary school, mathematics programmes have an integrated approach to learning and are mainly delivered via distance education so that all students at these levels can benefit in the same way from these programmes. Each school in the interior is equipped with a radio and CD player to access these programmes, while DVDs with model lessons in mathematics and beginner's English are developed and sent to schools. Furthermore, for students with severe cases of learning disabilities who are enrolled in special schools, the curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of these children. The delivery of content might be slowed and minimised according to the teacher's perception of the child's ability, but essentially the curriculum offered to the students with special needs is the same as that offered to mainstream students. It is true however that, for children with learning disabilities, the methodology might differ with greater emphasis on concrete teaching aids. There are also attempts to provide special aids for those students with sensory disabilities, such as visually or hearing impaired students. There has also been some curriculum adaptation with respect to vulnerable children living under poor economic conditions, and those who encounter a number of social problems, such as child abuse, drug abuse and those who suffer from HIV/AIDS. For example, Guyana has endorsed the delivery of life-skills based Heath and Family Life Education from Grades 1-9 as a core subject, allowing for all relevant issues to be addressed. A "life-skills" approach is taken so that the focus is on the development of skills to enable students to make decisions

about concerning issues in a manner that would enable them to lead healthy lives. The curriculum engages pupils in practical problem-solving situations to stimulate critical and analytical thinking and to aid them in decision making.

Finally, curriculum adaptation has also occurred for school drop-outs at secondary schools as the Ministry believes that this problem may be due to the inability of the students to cope with the curriculum. One such initiative is engaging drop-outs in the productive sector as a registered group in a formal way, through the introduction of the Basic Competency Certificate Programme. Skills-oriented students are given an opportunity to pursue this programme after the third form of secondary school to motivate them to stay in schools. These youths are given a stipend and assigned to registered agencies while a condensed curriculum is delivered and made compulsory to all participants in the programme. On the successful completion of this programme, a Competency Certificate is issued, allowing these students to re-enter the formal education system at the level of the Guyana Technical Institute or Carnegie School of Home Economics, after which they can continue on to University Education. Another example of how inclusion, transition, integration and flexibility in curriculum delivery aids continuous lifelong learning is the introduction of the Skills For Life Programme, whereby school drop-outs and even young adults are given an opportunity to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills in addition to crafts work skills.

At the classroom level, inclusive education is facilitated and activated through several initiatives, which are also supported by international organizations and at the grass-root level through the Regional Democratic Council, which nominates its own education committee. For example, teaching methodologies now offer differentiated and child-centred instructions as well as individualised and group teaching approaches. All students should be able to participate in debates, visual arts, and essay writing. The subjects, should cater to the various interests of students, although there is instruction in core subject areas, such as mathematics, language arts, science and social studies and there is an emphasis on the development of numeracy and literacy skills as these can have positive impact on general learning. Health and family life education are also taught, with

an emphasis on HIV/AIDS, human rights and the rights of the child. The use of curriculum materials is sensitive to the varying multi-cultural groups in the classroom and schools should be able to celebrate all diverse cultural activities, giving everyone a chance to appreciate and value each other's culture. The Ministry is also considering school sports competitions at the school, district, regional and national levels as a way to encourage in all students the opportunity to excel in other non-academic activities.

The MOE also notes how there has been a shift in assessment practices. These are now integrated with instruction and serve two purposes, namely formative and summative. At the formative level, assessments are used to identify strengths and weaknesses so that teachers can plan and use strategies to improve performance. It is also used to engage students in self-assessments and to help them to achieve ongoing goals. At the summative level, the MOE notes that assessments are used to measure students' progress as well as their attainments as a way to measure the degree of learning diversity in the student population. According to the MOE, there are high stakes assessments at the primary level, which are used to place students in secondary schools as well as certify students at the secondary level. Despite the high expectations involved in these assessments, there is no "one-shot" exam as instead measures are project-driven and related to practical educational applications. The MOE suggests that based on students' interests and achievements on common examinations, students should be placed in appropriate streams at the upper levels of the secondary school.

Learners and Teachers

The Ministry of Education has identified that special provision must be made to focus on the following learners due to the particular conditions of Guyana, namely hinterland and deep riverain students, vulnerable students and drop-outs. The Ministry is addressing these specific groups in the following ways.

Firstly, particular attention has been paid to the interest of indigenous people, remote hinterland and riverain communities to ensure access and participation in the education process. There has been a strong initial emphasis on physical access. In 1998 Guyana also

began to pilot the Escuela Nueva (New School) approach in a small number of schools in 2 hinterland regions of Guyana. This approach was initiated in Colombia and then used with significant educational gains in other Latin American countries, like Guatemala.[88] The concept of the Escuela Nueva (New School) seeks to replace the traditional method of teacher-controlled lessons with a more child-centred, interactive approach where the teacher functions as the facilitator of the learning process instead of the source of all knowledge. Some of the techniques employed in the programme involved the provision of a student government, multi-grade teaching, learning corners and the use of Learning Guides.

Child-friendly classrooms, and close school and community relations in particular engaging parental involvement have also been promoted, as has the localisation of the curriculum. Secondly, with respect to vulnerable children living under poor economic conditions, and those who encounter a number of social problems, such as child abuse, drug abuse and those who suffer from HIV/AIDS, there has also been some curriculum adaptation to provide useful subjects and appropriate learning methods for these issues.

Thirdly, school drop-outs at secondary schools have been targeted by the Ministry, as a crucial challenge to the education system. To ensure that these students are given educational opportunities, various curriculum initiatives have been undertaken to equip them with basic education skills, reintegrate them into the educational system and provide opportunities for a second chance to continue formal education.

Finally, through the Education for All-Fast Track Initiative project, a hot meal is provided to every pupil in primary school in the interior areas to motivate them to attend school, and, at the same time, help fulfil their nutritional requirements.

The MOE notes that teachers and their role in inclusive education remain are a considerable challenge for Guyana. The Ministry maintains a positive stance, especially as teacher training institutions are aware of the importance to address inclusive education.

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[88]   For further information, see http://www.eninternational.org/ourapproach.html.

Almost all regions have teacher training centres where in-service teacher training is conducted. Various initiatives have been undertaken, for example the Basic Education Access and Management Support Programme that involves both assisting in the improvement of students' achievement as well as in teacher training quality. There have also been initiatives to provide access to the use of equipment by teachers and students, in particular to the use of school libraries and programmes in keeping with curriculum coverage and technological advances.

Teachers are trained to use varied methods to meet the learning needs of students. For example, teachers are trained on how to develop enhancement activities for the gifted and remedial activities for the slow learners. To ensure that the same quality of education is delivered to all students, trained qualified teachers are appointed in all the regions and attempts are made to intensify teacher training via distance education to make certain that teachers for indigenous groups have the capacity to implement the curriculum. The MOE in tandem with NGOs and regional bodies have been collaborating in ensuring that teachers develop competencies to attend to the diverse needs of students.

11. ST. LUCIA[89]

Approaches, Scope and Content

In St. Lucia, the approach to inclusive education is associated primarily in terms of special needs education. Though, inclusive education is recognized as meaning the full participation of children with disabilities into the education system and society, the Ministry of Education (MOE) notes that this approach is not fully understood by all state actors. The MOE underlines that an approach to inclusive education needs to be of paramount importance at the highest governmental level if it is to be adequately implemented. The MOE notes that there is a need for a paradigm shift in the thinking of policymakers and policy-executors in government if the inclusive education concept must

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[89]   The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding the Inclusive Education in St. Lucia, submitted by the Ministry of Education of St. Lucia and from the ministerial power point presentation presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007

be given due priority. Public awareness and sensitization is also needed. It was underlined that structures which do not presently exist will have to be in place for the successful implementation of inclusive education settings.

The MOE identifies a lack of financial, human, and physical resources, which limit the total embrace of the concept of inclusive education. However, the main challenges appear to be related to: (a) the limited understanding of the concept of inclusive education by key actors; (b) traditional attitudes that encourage exclusion of students in the general education system; (c) limited training opportunities: teachers, support personnel; (d) lack of recognition and incentives for special education teachers, inequity; (e) limited research in the area of special education as it relates to the Caribbean region; and (f) limited programs offered at the local teachers college.

Public Policies

One of the main objectives of educational policy in St. Lucia is to guarantee education to all children with special educational needs. The Ministry of Education has increasingly attempted to broaden the scope of delivery of special education services by establishing the Student Support Services Unit, which includes the special education unit. This Unit caters to children in special schools, and supports children with learning disabilities in mainstream infant and primary schools by providing student welfare services and counseling services. In addition, there is a school feeding programme and a HIV/AIDS focal point for children and youth with HIV/AIDS in the education system.

A draft policy on special education is in its final stages to be submitted for discussion. This policy will provide an operational framework for special education practices. The Ministry emphasizes that extensive planning and training of support personnel must be a top priority for the successful implementation of policies. In addition, a substantive campaign of public awareness and sensitization will be required for the effective implementation of the concept of inclusion. Currently, the MOE notes that no comprehensive guide on the education of children with special needs exists. The need for

a long-term plan for inclusive education has also been identified by the government. However, the concept of inclusive education is not currently a government priority due to perceived budgetary constraints of developing countries. Accordingly, long-term initiatives in favor of the expansion of inclusive education are a considerable challenge.

Systems, Links and Transitions

With a focus on special needs education, the MOE notes that special needs students – those who are developmentally challenged, hearing impaired, and have mixed disabilities – are provided for in special schools strategically located in the north, south, and western parts of the island. There are still very few cases of schools with children with disabilities enrolled in mainstream education. However even in rare cases where children with disabilities are enrolled in mainstream education, the learning environment is not appropriately adapted to cater to the children's needs. The MOE remarks how children's physical presence at the school does not amount to "inclusion". Indeed, limited resources and lack of professional support personnel have made it challenging for St. Lucia to embrace the concept of inclusive education in its totality. Children with disabilities are predominantly educated in special school settings. The MOE notes how there must be a support structure in place to include such children in mainstream settings, to ensure that the varied needs of students are successfully met. Furthermore, principals and staff of receiving schools must be trained in the area of special needs, so that they can make informed decisions about students with special needs and the programs that are appropriate for them. The fear of not being able to manage children with severe to profound disabilities has deterred school principals from readily accepting and enrolling children with disabilities into the general education system.

Blind students represent rather an exception to this situation as there are no special schools for the blind. As a result, students who are blind or who have low vision constitute the only group with special needs who are educated from pre-school to tertiary level together with their 'non-disabled' peers, with support from the St Lucia Blind Welfare Association. There are currently 39 blind students who are being supported

throughout the mainstream education system. This Association is the leading proponent of the "Inclusive Education Concept" in St. Lucia. Students with special needs are given support by school counselors, and special needs education teachers. The MOE notes how providing support to these teachers is critical in order to help the students make the transition from elementary to secondary school.

Since 2006, when initiatives for universal secondary education in St Lucia were introduced, every child has had the opportunity of obtaining a place at a secondary school. However, the focus on universal secondary education has brought with it a number of challenges and concerns. The MOE notes that, for example, students who have qualified for secondary school for the first time feel overwhelmed and cannot perform in secondary school as expected.

The MOE notes how the situation is compounded by the fact that here again there is limited professional support, since there has been no adequate preparation of secondary school teachers to accommodate the special needs of such students. Hence, a significant number of students are dropping out of school. The government noted that the transition process highlights the need for curriculum reform to respond to this diversity of functional abilities and educational needs among secondary school students. This is especially needed for children at the lower end of the functional continuum, or who may have learning disabilities. However, according to the MOE, this reform has not yet happened and there are currently no national curriculum initiatives for inclusive education or special education.

Learners and Teachers

As mentioned earlier, children with special needs in St. Lucia are traditionally educated in special schools. These include a school for children with developmental disabilities, a school for the deaf and 2 education and rehabilitation centres in the west and south of the island. According to the MOE, there are 253 learners with special needs who are presently attending special education schools. This represents only 0.64% of the total

school population. As an exception to the rule, the Ministry of Education highlighted the recent example of Jessica Jacobie, the first blind student from St Lucia to graduate with a degree from the University of West Indies St Augustine Campus. Her degree, obtained at the end of the 2006-2007 academic year, was in Human Resource Management. This student was educated from pre-school through to the tertiary level in the mainstream education system.

At present, the MOE notes that one the most significant challenges related to special needs education and inclusive education, is the lack of professional personnel who can correctly assess and diagnose the type and severity of a disability and who is qualified to provide adequate support post-diagnosis. For example, despite the small number of learners with special needs attending special needs schools, there is a broad range of disabilities within that group of students. The Ministry of Education has made a first gesture toward alleviating this situation by assigning special edcuation teachers to all infant and primary schools on the island. A cadre of 40 teachers at the elementary school level has been trained by personnel from Lynchburg College to support children with learning difficulties; this with funding from the World Bank. In addition, 21 teachers have been appointed to elementary schools around the island to specifically serve children with special needs and approximately 1,500 students with special needs are being supported in mainstream elementary schools. The emerging governmental awareness of the role of the special educatiosn teachers should continue in order to create a cadre of special education teachers and support personnel in the elementary and secondary schools.

12. ST. CHRISTOPHER AND NEVIS[90]

Approaches, Scope and Content

The Ministry of Education in St. Kitts-Nevis presents the approach to inclusive education as based on the philosophy that all individuals are created equal and have an equal right to education at all levels. This approach is accompanied as well by special education and integration initiatives that provide assistance to the special needs of learners.

Public Policies

The goal of the St Kitts-Nevis public policy on education is to prohibit discrimination in education and provide universal education. This objective is guaranteed by legislation as well as by the Constitution of St. Kitts-Nevis of 1983 which prohibits discrimination[91]. The Education Act 2005 also provides for appropriate and free education for all children, with special provisions if needed.[92] Similarly, the Curriculum Policy of 1997 is guided by the objective of providing appropriate schooling for all.[93]

In particular, the governmental programmes play a role in defining what pertains to the provision and implementation of an appropriate curriculum. According to the Ministry, an appropriate curriculum relates to the provision of early intervention practices in primary schools and reading programmes in secondary schools. Various national schemes also aim to fulfil the government's commitment to an appropriate education, such as the National Computers in Education programme (NCEC), the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme and the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC).

There has also been a governmental effort to provide for children in need of special education. For example, a Special Education Unit with trained teachers and material

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[90] The information in this section was adapted from the country power point presentation regarding Inclusive Education in St. Christopher and Nevis, submitted by the Ministry of Education of St. Christopher and Nevis, presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.
[91] Constitution of St. Kitts-Nevis (1983), Chapter 2.
[92] Sections 14-15; division 40
[93] Curriculum Policy of 1997, p. 29.

resources has been created. Similarly, a learning support coordinator trained in inclusion and special educational needs, a dyslexia specialist, and a Learning Support Department are available. Similarly, the Ministry has provided Learning Centres, TVs, computer labs and a new secondary school with special facilities.

According to the MOE, the main challenges in achieving universal education are related to human and financial resources, as well as to a "get-rich-quick" mentality which has formed amongst some students. The government must establish how it will provide the retraining needed by teachers in a manner which is least disruptive to the school system, yet respectful of teachers' rights to free time. Similarly, the government must consider how to standardize a high quality certification of teachers that is recognised in all schools.

Systems, Links and Transitions

With respect to the education system in St Kitts-Nevis, there are two models of classroom and school facilities to guarantee universal education. Firstly, the Ministry provides both a classroom and a special school for specific learning disabilities through a Special Education Unit; secondly, the Ministry provides comprehensive secondary education, where learners with moderate learning receive special assistance.

The MOE notes that students' transition from primary to secondary school is supported by enhancing students' basic skills to function at the secondary school level. This is guaranteed through an integrated approach involving reading recovery programmes, in-service training of teachers, and the use of differentiated activities. Lifelong learning is also supported by the choices of subjects available at secondary schools and, in addition, there are options to continue certain chosen skills at other educational institutions. For example, the Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College and the University of the West Indies Distance Learning Education Programme offer a wide range of courses, including courses on teaching, nursing, technical skills. The Averil Archibald College of Management and the Wilkin's Secretarial College offer courses in secretarial and management. Also

available are the International University of Nursing, International University of the Health Sciences, and Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine.[94]

With respect to the curriculum, the government aims to encourage learning through the adoption of a curriculum to suit all abilities, through Individual and Group Education Plans.

Learners and Teachers

In relation to teachers in St. Kitten, it can be highlighted that in-service teacher training is provided, in which teachers are trained in the use of methodologies that could accommodate all students. Teachers' capacity to have an impact on goals of inclusive education is supported as well by a recently introduced Early Childhood Teacher Training Programme. More human resources are also being provided to primary and secondary schools, including for example, the appointment of a multi-professional institution to provide a comprehensive assessment of students' needs. [95]

13. ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES[96]

Approaches, Scope and Content

In St. Vincent and Grenadines, inclusive education was mainly addressed as a fundamental human right that guarantees quality education for all. The MOE noted that the government's philosophy of education is based on the beliefs that all children have the right to education and the ability to learn. This approach puts forth the concept of equity as central to the practice of education. It was revealed that all forms of education

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[94] http://www.stkittstourism.kn/DiscoverStKitts/edu.asp; http://www.gotostkitts.com/english/education.htm, http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/archive/Countries/WDE/2006/LATIN_AMERICA_and_the_CARIBBEAN/Saint_Kitts_and_Nevis/Saint_Kitts_and_Nevis.htm

[95] http://www.unesco.org/education/wef/countryreports/st.kitts_nevis/rapport_1.html

[96] The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding Inclusive Education in St. Vincent and Grenadines submitted by the Ministry of Education of St. Vincent and Grenadines and from the ministerial power point presentation "Inclusive Education in St. Vincent and Grenadines" presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

should be developed to meet the multivariate learning needs of its citizen. For example, the Ministry of Education (MOE) seeks to provide all persons of St. Vincent and the Grenadines with learning opportunities appropriate to their learning needs and to ensure a quality of education that will equip them for life.

At the same time, in St. Vincent and the Grenadines there are efforts to 'mainstream' disabled learners into regular classes. Nevertheless, this initiative remains as an integration effort rather than an inclusive one as, according to the MOE, as there are no further modifications of the curriculum, teaching and learning strategies or even the acceptance of inclusive education by teachers and students.

Challenges to inclusive education were also identified in terms of social exclusion. The MOE acknowledges various sources of exclusion, including rural students, child guardians (often females), children of single parents, children with special needs, children with behavioural problem (often males), etc. Additionally, there is social stigma and discrimination towards people with disabilities in St. Vincent and Grenadines. This has led to the exclusion of some children with disabilities from the school system; or when included, low expectations of slow children by teachers and society.

Public Policies

The promotion of policies to guarantee equal education opportunities for all children has been a constant objective of governments at St. Vincent and the Grenadines since the achievement of Independence in 1979. In light of this objective, the current government is a signatory to international initiatives supportive of equal education for all children. These include the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), which emphasizes the basic right of every child to an equal opportunity to primary education, and the Education for All Dakar Framework for Action 2000, which states that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.

Nationally, the Education Act 1992, revised in 2006, is the current major legal document governing education in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, establishing salient principles that guide the development of education for the future. It states that a person who is eligible for admission to an educational institution or school as a student should not be refused admission on any discriminatory ground, by which is meant a ground based on religion, race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed, social status, physical handicap and in the case of mixed gender schools-sex.[97] There is also a provision for special education for any student of compulsory age, which should be delivered in the least restrictive and most enabling environment permitted by resources, with due regard to the educational needs and rights of other students.[98]

In particular, the Education Act of 1992 and 2006 and the Education Sector Development Plan of 2002-2007 seek to outline and address this agenda through various measures. The development of the National Curriculum and Assessment Framework and the provision of national guidelines will enable all schools to meet these challenges, to seek an improved learning environment, and to provide opportunities for all students to be successful in their full educational potential. The Education Agenda of St. Vincent and the Grenadines articulated in the Education Policy 1995 also aims to improve, quantitatively and qualitatively, access to education appropriate to the needs of all students at all levels. These initiatives are being undertaken in partnership with funding agencies that are aiming as well to support the provision of quality education.

The government is also aiming to further develop training programmes and to improve the management of education, the structure and processes of the education system. Promoting equality of opportunity for all learners and teachers, and providing support in the delivery of Early Childhood Education (ECE) were also identified as essential by the MOE. Indeed, the government recognizes that appropriate ECE or pre-primary education can minimize disparities between children as they enter the formal education system.[99] The Ministry has introduced statutory regulations for ECE including the licensing of ECE

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[97] Part III Division 3 #27
[98] Part VI Division 3 #112
[99] Education Policy 1995

schools, which are currently managed by private agencies. Access to ECE was about 65% in 2007, according to the Ministry of Education, who also projects that this figure will rise to 85% by 2008. To increase access and quality of pre-primary education, the government is investing in privately-owned and operated Early Childhood Education centres.

Systems, Links and Transitions

The Ministry of Education has sought to provide in its education system twelve years of free universal education (primary and secondary levels) for all students in accordance with their individual needs and abilities, including those with special needs and different ethnic, social and linguistic backgrounds.

The Ministry of Education made special reference to inclusive education in secondary schools in terms of access. With the phased introduction of Universal Secondary Education (USE) completed in 2005, all students who have attained the age of 11 years at the beginning of the academic year, or will attain that age by the following September (Education Act 2006) may be admitted to a secondary school.

The government is also committed to providing equal access for all to both formal and non-formal lifelong education of comparable quality. This means equipping adults with life skills through several initiatives for personal development, self-employment and general entrepreneurship, through lifelong education. The establishment of the Adult Education Unit in the Ministry of Education provides support and training for adults who dropped out of secondary school, leading to certification of adults in certain skills.

Education reforms aiming to provide equal access to education to all children are supported by the National Curriculum and Assessment Framework (NCAF). In particular, the NCAF was designed to identify and provide basic resource needs to every student to reduce inequality of provision and improve equity. For example, more geographically accessible schools to cater to the students in the rural areas are being established. To

accommodate the physically handicapped, where access to wheelchairs is difficult, ramps are being built in schools where such children attend. Newly constructed schools are now being designed to allow for full accessibility for students with disabilities. There is also improved access to better quality secondary education and relevant Technical and Vocational Education Training education in the Southern Grenadines with the construction of a new secondary school.

The NCAF is also aiming to provide a quality education for all school-age learners by endorsing the principle that all children can learn, at the same time that the learner is actively involved in the learning process. The NCAF aims to promote a shift to curriculum integration to include differentiated learning in the classroom and raise standards by providing attainment targets and basic learning outcomes that all students can achieve to motivate improved performance of teachers and students. According to the MOE, teachers and students at all levels are expected to perform consistently to the best of their ability so that all students, including those with special needs, fully develop their learning potential. With respect to the different transitions in the education system of children from grade to grade and from primary to secondary, the MOE gives particular attention to the development of basic learning outcomes in the NCAF as a way to ensure that progression and continuity is maintained.

In designing the NCAF, the MOE notes the involvement of all stakeholders, especially parents. The NCAF Policy Framework was developed following consultations undertaken with a range of educational religious and business organizations, and a number of other stakeholder groups in St. Vincent and the Grenadines through public meetings and questionnaires.[100] Recognizing that every learner has different needs, the decision was taken by all stakeholders to design the NCAF to afford flexibility for schools and students to customize the curriculum to cater to students' individual needs using the limited resources and facilities so as to guarantee "Access for All".

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[100] This data provided the draft National Curriculum and Assessment Framework which has already been accepted by Cabinet in June 2007.

However, the MOE notes that the effectiveness of these reforms has been limited so far; there is still insufficient integration in inclusive terms of children with special needs in mainstream primary and secondary schools. As noted earlier, 'mainstreaming' of disabled learners has not implied curricular, teaching and learning modifications to meet the diverse needs of these students. Moreover, universal secondary education has led to a greater diversity of abilities and maturities in students entering secondary schools, especially in terms of literacy and numeracy. This has increased the risk of further marginalizing the already-disadvantaged students. Indeed, at both primary and secondary level, there continues to be low levels of attendance and achievement among certain vulnerable groups, particularly males, children of single parents, child guardians (often females) and rural students. It has also demonstrated that there is lack of curricular relevance to meet the needs and interests of the increased, more diverse student population; in addition, over-stretched scarce resources – human, natural and physical – are limiting the capacity of schools to meet the increasing diverse needs of students. Also, the MOE notes, there has been further fragmentation of the curriculum as different schools struggle to adopt different coping strategies.

Learners and Teachers

With respect to learners in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, there have been several programmes in partnership with donor agencies to facilitate inclusion of children with special needs at school and classroom levels. These programmes entail the diagnostic assessment of learning difficulties; the remediation of learning, literacy and numeracy deficiencies; and the development of remedial education strategies with an emphasis on slow learners. There has also been learning support and academic mentoring programmes provided, as well as item writing and assessment. The use of ICTs in classroom instruction has also been developed, as has the provision of materials and resources to support programmes, for example, in arts and craft, music, dance and drama, ICT, science, reading, mathematics.

The MOE notes that there are difficulties in identifying and diagnosing children with special needs, and that there is no system of record keeping. Accurate data is needed to determine the number of learners excluded from the school system through training during school hours, as well as absenteeism and a trend of drop-outs. Limited access to transport for school children with disabilities makes it particularly difficult for parents to bring their children to school regularly. There is also a need for more quality pre-schools within easy access for all pre-school aged children, especially in the rural areas where poorer families live. The government also highlighted that prejudice and lack of awareness magnifies these problems, so the regular buses do not want to transport disabled children and other passengers complain if they do.

The Ministry of Education of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has provided various training opportunities and support for teachers on its own or under various donor-funded programmes. The ongoing training of principals and teachers in differentiated teaching to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to deal and cope with students of varying abilities is being provided. For example, there has been training of teachers in special needs education at the graduate and post-graduate level, in particular for 30 teachers in Diagnosis and Assessment of Learning Difficulties for primary and secondary students in mainstream classrooms. The Ministry of Education is also providing a Remedial Education Strategies Training Programme, which emphasizes special education for slow learners, basic literacy and numeracy for 100 primary and secondary school teachers, with the supply of educational materials and trained primary teachers in learning support to remediate learning difficulties. Similarly, a Learning Support Programme was introduced in September 2007 to remediate literacy and numeracy deficiencies in all secondary schools and to provide books and materials for schools. Additionally, training programmes have involved an assessment of the reading capability of students since implementation of universal secondary education, to evaluate the impact of interventions in the area of literacy remediation at secondary level on students' reading achievement.

In addition, the Ministry of Education is providing a secondary school-based academic Mentoring Programme. This programme was first piloted in 2006 and aims to enhance the school's ability to effectively and efficiently cater to students with identified needs, while at the same time maintaining a high standard of education for the rest of the schools' population. Training in item-writing for primary and secondary school teachers is also aimed at improving the monitoring and evaluation system in all schools, while the training for 100 secondary teachers in the introduction of ICT for science and mathematics, and the provision of software licenses and laptops for all secondary schools, are aimed to improve teaching and learning of science and mathematics. The establishment of Teachers' Resources Centres with resources for arts and crafts, music, dance and drama is scheduled for Spring 2008.

However, the MOE notes that there is a shortage of trained staff in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, including therapists for speech and mental impairments, specialists on Attention Deficient Hyperactivity Disorder and physical disabilities. Training offered at the Teachers' Training College needs to be reviewed, in order to be responsive to local needs and include special education in the Teacher Training Programme. Lacking adequate resources and training, they are currently unable to adapt the curriculum to the individual needs and abilities of students and make better use of limited resources to enhance delivery of classroom instruction.

14. SURINAM[101]

Approaches, Scope and Content

In the case of Surinam, due to the relative newness of the concept, there appears to be a present lack of a clear definition of inclusive education. Several terms are used to refer to this "new model" of education such as "mainstreaming", "integration" etc. The Ministry

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[101] The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding Inclusive Education in Surinam, prepared and submitted by Mrs. Prya Hirasingh, Chief Education Officer and EFA Coordinator - Ministry of Education of Surinam and Mr. Andre Kramp Senior Policy Advisor and Coordinator Educational Reform Project - Ministry of Education of Surinam, and from the ministerial power point presentation ""Inclusive Education in Surinam" presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

of Education (MOE) notes that further clarification of these terms is needed in relation to inclusive education. Education is a government priority, but inclusive education is a highly untouched area and a national discussion on this topic is needed. At present, the concept of inclusive education can be associated to several approaches. First, the MOE highlights that inclusive education is mainly approached from a special needs education perspective. The term "Special Education" has come into use as a replacement for the term 'Exceptional Education'. The older term was mainly understood to refer to education of children with disabilities that takes place in special schools or institutions distinct from, and outside of, the institutions of the regular school and university system.

Second, the concept of equal access to quality education was also put forth during this country's presentation by the MOE. The educational system of Surinam does not "select" children based on their socio-economic-cultural background. Any child is free to go to any school of choice if the school is in the living area of that child. The MOE observes that the current (regular) educational system is outdated and activities are planned to be implemented very soon towards reform of the system. Working towards a reform, a national discussion with all stakeholders must take place on quality education, the definition of quality education and in this cadre the conceptualization of inclusive education.

Third, the concept of education for all was conveyed as important in developing an understanding of inclusive education. The MOE emphasized that using this approach to understand inclusive education means that all students in a school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, become part of the school community. They are included in the feeling of belonging among other students. In this regard, the MOE pointed out that inclusive education aims to offer together with parents, grown-ups and pupils in the neighbourhood, an education that responds to the needs of diverse children with or without "shortcomings". Indeed, the Ministry of Education promotes and underlines the concept of "all schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, cultural or social conditions, including disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities or children form

disadvantaged or marginalized areas" (Salamanca, 1994). The MOE highlights that this approach to education is paramount in Surinam, a country which has a very diverse society with several ethnic groups with their own cultural habits and traditions and in several cases with their own mother tongue (for example, Javanese, Hindi, Sranan Tongo, Chinese, etc.).

Public Policies

Surinam's public policy aims to guarantee education based on principles of quality, equality, continuity, diversity and stakeholder participation.[102] These principles are concretely reflected in the education system and community development policies in Surinam. For example, the MOE sees that quality means encouraging students to learn how to be, act, live together, and endeavour. The equality principle is evident in the education and development for all approach, with allocation of most efforts and resources to the most vulnerable parts of the population. Continuity is seen to be guaranteed through the broad and flexible educational systems that offer multiple learning opportunities for enrolment of students during their lifetime, and for widening of the horizontal and vertical transfer possibilities. Similarly, diversity is protected through education that respects, appreciates, takes into account and incorporates individual, social and cultural diversity in the learning process. Lastly, stakeholder participation is reflected through an approach of making actors central to the process of education and development, in particular teachers, communities and society.

In terms of objectives, the current government aims to reduce the knowledge gap between and within Surinam and other countries. The MOE highlighted that Surinam is aiming to make school and the class the focus of the educational system and to undo inequalities in the school system. Also, improving educational financing and management and strengthening regional cooperation are part of current policy goals. According to the MOE, education is a government priority, although inclusive education is a highly untouched area. The Ministry of Education recognized, however, that it is very important

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[102] Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (PRELAC), Discussion Paper, 2002.

to work towards more integration and offer quality education for all children. The Ministry's policy underlines the fact that the regular system should educate all children. Policy is very much formulated with a strong emphasis on offering "Education for All"; albeit within the regular system only.

The importance of education is clearly stated in the Constitution, which provides for the creation and maintenance of conditions, facilities and means of education and community development for the benefit of every citizen and resident of Surinam. This includes the acquisition of knowledge, skills, standards and values for every citizen. The Constitution also guarantees efficient and free participation in a democratic society and the modern world, and in multi-cultural life, with strongly developed environmental awareness, as well as the optimal participation of citizens in the socio-economic life of Surinam. In the Ministry of Education policy document 2000-2005, this objective is also concretised into general goals which have been formulated for the coming years. Firstly, the government aims to reform the education system in order to offer all young people in the country modern up-to-date, flexible education schooling of good quality. Secondly, it intends to create opportunities for every Surinamese to attain a critical and constructive attitude in accordance with their own possibilities and talents. Thirdly, the government expects to develop collective norms and values for the community. Finally, the education system will help students attain insight in Surinam's culture, while helping to develop its community.

The Ministry of Education considers that a national strategy of reform and change is imperative in the educational system of Surinam; in this regard, it utilises international assistance and coordination. Firstly, the Basic Education Improvement Project (BEIP), with technical cooperation of the International Development Bank, will implement activities that will lead to curriculum reform, the re-organization of the Ministry, and a strengthening of the personnel of the Ministry of Education and teachers through the teacher training. The main aim is to create a basic education system of 11 years that will include and integrate the kindergarten, primary and junior secondary, in order to reform the current system, which, according to the MOE, is very fragmented, not flexible and

very selective. Secondly, in close collaboration with this BEIP project and the Ministry of Education, there is a multi-annual plan in place, in cooperation with the Belgium Government. This multi-annual project is planned for 2008-2013, of which the focus will be "Quality Education, "Child-friendly" and "Pupil-oriented" Education. The goal here is also to work with all stakeholders and the community towards a process that will create more inclusive education, in which there will be equal opportunities, changes and, as much as possible, education for all in the regular education system, regardless of students' physical and mental differences. Thirdly, there is the Implementation Plan for Education in the Interior, with the support of UNICEF, for the period of 2008-2015. Although the problems in the educational system are more or less the same throughout the country, the interior has been given special attention due to the complexity of its problems. Distance education and/or second chance education are also proposed in this plan.

In addition, the effective and efficient use of the educational resources and facilities will also be increased by the government. Schools in areas with a social disadvantage will be given extra counselling and the private sector will be given a greater role in providing education services. The controlling apparatus will be improved and the legislation adapted so that decisions within the organization may be taken at the appropriate level. Within this framework, schools will be made more self-reliant, starting with junior and senior secondary schools.

However, the MOE noted that a national discussion on inclusive education is still needed. Indeed, projects on the improvement of basic education, inclusive education, or even current special education projects, have been very sporadic. According to the Moe, the concept of Education for All is promoted in all documents, but Surinam concentrates in the overall regular education system without particular attention to the integration of special ones. The MOE noted that there is no budget allocation in the regular education budget for special education. Lastly, the MOE highlights that the government has a special responsibility to initiate educational reforms in various public policy sectors of their work, such as infrastructure. While the reforms primarily concern education that

result in the well-being and good fortune of the population in terms of addressing mental and material disadvantages. Ideally, the reforms should lead to societal progress and an expansion of people's opportunities.

Systems, Links and Transitions

The education system in Surinam currently consists of pre-primary education, primary education, primary special education, junior secondary education, junior secondary special education, senior secondary education and tertiary education. Pre-primary education is offered in 3 types of institutions, day-nurseries, play-groups and kindergartens. There is no specific age to start day-nursery; for playgroups it is approximately at the age of 2 and kindergarten at the age of 4. Kindergartens are usually attached to primary schools and, although the attendance is non-compulsory, enrolment is high (approximately 85% of the school age group, according to the Ministry). The educational objectives of kindergarten are not set by law and there is no competitive examination. At the end of 2 years, all children automatically move into primary school. Primary education covers 6 grades, with entry at the age of 6 or 7 and completion at the age of 12. The average number of pupils per primary class is 30 per teacher. Regarding transitions, according to the MOE, the new basic education cycle of 11 years will allow students to have a smooth transition to senior secondary education.

The MOE refers to Surinam's curriculum as outdated and inflexible, in addition to teachers not being trained to cope with diversity. Challenges to an inclusive education system include a shortage of trained teachers for special education, limited facilities in regular schools (infrastructure), a shortage of material resources, a shortage of motivated persons to work with children with special needs, and over-crowded classes in the regular system. With respect to children with disabilities, the regular system does not make a selection based on socio-economic-cultural background; however, in Surinam, such children have traditionally been educated in separate classes or in separate schools. The MOE notes how people are used to the idea that special education means separate education. By law, the only restriction is that preferably only children from the

neighboring areas are accepted in the schools of that respective area, regardless of socio-economic-cultural background and physical disability. Yet because of tradition and the poor facilities available, regular schools do not allow children with special needs – mentally and physically disadvantaged – to be a part of the regular system and usually children with special needs are sent to special schools.

The Ministry of Education plans to address the above approaches placing students in special and mainstream schools by proposing the following steps. The policy for reform of special education will be directed towards the improvement of the learning and teaching processes of the student and the consolidation of services-rendering, through the acquisition of learning aids, school material, equipment and library books, as well as through the rehabilitation and renovation of the educational infrastructure. By providing appropriate teachers, instruction material and infrastructure, the participation and performance of students with disabilities should be enhanced at all levels. This category of students should be integrated as much as possible in "normal" education, if necessary with additional programmes.

With respect to the curriculum, the BEIP project for the development of new curricula will have to take into account the number of curricula to be covered at the different grades and the need to make provision for life skills, ICT and similar new approaches. The MOE notes that the curriculum will be adapted to the new challenges in the world. Subjects concentrating on children with disadvantages, how to interact with them and life skills will be included in the curriculum. However, according to the MOE, these subjects are not on-going processes that foster leaning environments; a system to facilitate inclusion at the school and classroom level is also necessary. The new curriculum has to be flexible so that it can adapt to varying abilities. For example, classrooms must be much smaller and teachers must be trained to cope with different kind of situations, a care system in schools will have to be set up, and further piloting of improved pupil assessment and tracking systems will require strong consideration as noted by the MOE.

Learners and Teachers

With regards to learners, the MOE mentions that severe handicapped children, especially mentally handicapped are automatically brought to special schools by caretakers. When the child is diagnosed by the teacher in the classroom as not being able to keep up or is very slow for cognitive reasons, the child will be asked to undergo some tests to determine if or whether he must be sent to a special class in the regular primary schools offering special education, which, the MOE notes, offers an integration setting. Alternatively, the child is sent to a special school. When a child is placed in the special education system, it is almost impossible to transfer the child back into the regular system as this is very selective and inflexible.

In the current training program for teachers in Surinam, the MOE notes that very little attention has been given to train teachers to encounter in education settings children with disabilities. Teachers are not even well equipped to address the required competencies of regular students. For these reasons, the MOE notes that programs in teacher training centres are outdated and need to be reformed. It will be a major challenge to equip these teachers with skills to attend to the growing diversity of learners, expectations and needs.

15. JAMAICA[103]

Approaches, Scope and Content

According to the Ministry of Education (MOE), inclusion in Jamaica has recently incorporated a new perspective where the focus is not only on teaching children with disabilities in mainstream schools, but as involving a broader look at the educational provisions for all students. The approach to inclusive education is presented also within the concept of education for all as a basic right. The government embraces the concept

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[103] The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding Inclusive Education in Jamaica, submitted by the Ministry of Education of Jamaica and from the ministerial power point presentation "Inclusive Education: The Jamaican Experience", presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

that all children should have equal opportunities regardless of their cultural and social backgrounds or their differences in abilities or capacities. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that every child's right to basic education and training is guaranteed in an environment that maximizes their potential.

Along EFA goals, the MOE noted the commitment of Jamaica to universal education, which is also interpreted to mean education for all children, including those with disabilities and other special educational needs. The MOE pointed out that the opportunity to create an education system where all children are permitted to learn together is a realistic and challenging one for Jamaica. During this country's presentation, it was stressed that in embracing the concept of 'Education for All', Jamaica must give major consideration to the right of children not only to basic education but education of quality with moral support as well as political and economic backing. In Jamaica's approach to education, inclusion in education must be considered as a long term process for securing economic progress and social stability. The MOE underlined that Jamaica must continue to provide the framework that will transcend all boundaries so that its most treasured resource, human capital, will thrive in a truly inclusive society.

Public Policies

The commitment to education in Jamaica's public policy is grounded on the philosophy that every child can learn and every child must learn. The Ministry of Education is committed to providing access and equity in education. This commitment is based on their vision that education will enable a prosperous and dynamic Jamaica, which upholds the fulfillment of human rights, dignity for all persons, and builds continual social progress based on shared values and principles of partnerships. It will also allow individuals to fulfill their potential and take control and responsibility for their lives to the benefit of society.

Jamaica is a signatory to a number of international conventions ensuring the political and civil rights of all persons, and in particular those with disabilities. For example, Jamaica

is bound by the World Declaration on Education for All of Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990, supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The latter states that children, while retaining their entitlement to the full range of human rights, are often marginalized or excluded and thus represent a special case requiring additional safeguards. In addition, within the constituency of children, the Ministry recognizes that particular groups remain vulnerable to further risk factors requiring additional measures for state ratification.

The government has initiated a number of national policies and initiatives to improve access, equity and inclusion as well. Firstly, the former Prime Minister of Jamaica appointed a 14-member Task Force on Education Reform in February 2004 to prepare and present an action plan consistent with the goal of a world-class education system. One outcome of the review process was the determination of performance targets for education. Reforms will also concentrate on governance and management of the education system, the curriculum, teaching and learning support, full stakeholder participation and finance. A Transformation Team has been put in place to implement the recommendations of the Task Force.

As a result, various initiatives to guarantee universal access to early childhood and primary education have been set up, for example expanding early childhood education to cater to children up to 5 years old. There has also been the institutionalization of a standard curriculum in all infants' schools, an improvement in the quality of Basic School Teachers and the supervision of early childhood education. In addition, an Early Childhood Commission has been established to drive the sector and to advise the Ministry on policy matters relating to early childhood care and education initiatives in order to achieve national early childhood developmental goals. Finally, in terms of legislation and programmes, there has been the establishment of the Early Childhood Act in 2005, a placement programme for college trained teachers in Early Childhood institutions, the enhancement of a Basic School Project 2002-2008 and a National School Feeding Programme, from which approximately 175,000 children benefit on a daily basis.

The main challenges to these reforms continue to be human and financial resources, infrastructure, social perspectives of awareness, attitude, and acceptance, as well as equity and access. However, apart from the Ministry of Finance, the education sector has always received the largest portion of the budget. The government's commitment to education, through its policies and programmes, has provided supportive broad-based participation to a large extent, thus fostering the development of inclusive communities.

Systems, Links and Transitions

In accordance with the Ministry of Education's emphasis on equity and quality in education, the national education system was presented as follows. Firstly, in relation to attendance figures, a National Assessment Programme of Primary Level has been formed by the government, who presented the current gross enrollment rate for the primary level as 95.5% (97% for males and 93.9% for females). Meanwhile, the performance of literacy at the grade 4 levels was noted by the government as having increased by 14% from 65% in 2005- 2006 to 79% in the 2006-2007 academic year. According to the MOE, at the level of secondary education, the government found that the governmental initiative towards universal secondary education currently guarantees full access at grades 7-9 and approximately 80% access at grades 10 and 11.

With respect to children with special needs, including those with disabilities, Jamaica has focused its attention on mainstreaming such children as part of the inclusion process since the eighties, in partnership with the Dutch government. At the primary level a number of special education units were built and incorporated into mainstream schools by providing small groups, class interventions and resource services for such students. Students were expected to remain in the programme for a maximum of 2 years and then be fully mainstreamed. For example, the school for the blind has, over the years, mainstreamed a number of students in high schools, where support has been provided through the services of itinerant teachers. According to the MOE, these students have performed well and have not displayed any maladaptive behaviour that would warrant

staying in segregated facilities. The special education facilities in mainstream schools have continued their work, but over time the significant numbers of children in the mainstream requiring special accommodation suggested a renewed look at the approach. For example, the placement of special education resource teachers in primary and all-age schools has been developed. In addition, even though Jamaica has moved in the direction of inclusion for children with special needs, the Ministry of Education maintains that there is still the need to maintain segregated facilities for the provision of specialized services and programmes for the moderate to severe mentally challenged and schools for the deaf and blind, as appropriate support must be provided to these students. This must be performed on a phased basis in recognition of budgetary constraints; to do otherwise would be a serious compromise for the students.

The Ministry of Education has also developed standards and curriculum at all levels of the system as drivers of equity and quality in the education process. These curricula and standards aim at producing a well-rounded, responsible individual who is literate, numerate, environmentally aware, humane, culturally sensitive and tolerant. They are based on the principle that all students are capable of learning and should be provided with the opportunities to do so. As such, the new curriculum provides for the identification and development of intelligence. The Ministry notes that all students are entitled to quality curriculum and instructional methods. The curriculum at the early childhood level now provides guidelines for the cognitive, emotional, psycho-social development of the child, facilitates the inter-sectoral integration of services, and provides articulation for transition from that level to the early primary years; thus bridging the transition gap. As the importance of literacy to education is well recognized, the Ministry of Education has given special emphasis to the early development of literacy skills as a fundamental tool to enhance student outcomes in all areas of the curriculum. Essentially, attention is given to various facets of instructions such as emergent, developmental, corrective and remedial instructions, as reflected in the different programmes and activities being undertaken.[104] The primary level curriculum was

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[104] Ministry of Education of Jamaica, 2007, as cited in the country report regarding Inclusive Education in Jamaica, submitted by the Ministry of Education of Jamaica and from the ministerial power point presentation "Inclusive

revised in 1999 and was fully implemented in 2002. It is geared at providing opportunities for child-centred, inclusive teaching learning experiences. It is flexible enough to allow teachers to adapt it to satisfy the varying abilities and learning styles of the students as well as the demand of their local environment. National grades 1 to 6 of the primary curriculum are fully integrated with discrete subject areas at grades 4 to 6. Additionally, Spanish was introduced in over 300 primary schools and national standardized primary textbooks and workbooks have been provided free of cost. At the secondary level, a common curriculum is provided for grades 7 to 9 based on the Reform of Secondary Education (R.O.S.E.), a World Bank Project that commenced in 1993 and is still offering support for the programme. This addresses equity, access, quality and productivity and the development of standards for all subject areas in order to establish a foundation for accountability. A national textbook loan scheme has also been introduced, providing approximately 590,000 free textbooks to students at grades 7 to 11 across 270 secondary schools island-wide. Furthermore, a committee to develop a policy for the mainstreaming of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Tech Voc) in secondary schools has been set up to ensure that every secondary school graduate has certification in at least one Tech Voc subject which will allow employment or further training in the area. The Programme of Advancement through Health & Education (PATH) has been organized as well, where students with special needs aged 6 to 17 years benefit from education grants to ensure school attendance.

Related to the curriculum reform, the Ministry of Education recognizes that mastery of the curriculum offerings and delivery techniques are indispensable for success. Teachers must receive in-service training and continuous support, both technical and material, to enable them to carry out basic assessment and plan for students using the diagnostic prescriptive approach to teaching and learning. The posts of National and Regional Literacy Coordinators have also been established to promote and improve literacy at all levels.

With respect to assessment, the MOE notes that students with special needs in particular must be provided for in an inclusive context ensuring a scope within the curriculum to engage these students. Therefore the standards set for curriculum achievement must be applied individually to students. According to the Ministry, approximately 60% of the population of students with special needs fall within the mild range, lagging behind their peers in academic performance. Additionally, gifted and talented children also present a challenge with respect to the adaptation of the curriculum for their specific needs.

The government noted the importance of physical infrastructure; in response to the challenge of space in certain rural and urban centres. Due to migration and the rapid expansion of new housing developments, 17 secondary schools have been constructed between 2005 and 2007, generating over 16,000 spaces in addition to improving the capacity of existing schools. A secondary school enhancement programme has also been set up to upgrade specific programmes and facilities for newer secondary schools, formerly called upgraded and reclassified high schools. Since the inception of the programme in 2001, $547 million have been allocated to over 80 schools.

In addition, the Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of stakeholder participation and has provided the opportunity for the involvement of various stakeholders in the development of curricula at the 3 levels of the school system. The MOE emphasizes that the curriculum must also respond to the emerging needs of the society and where this response is ignored, the national development is at stake. For example, there has been the introduction of technology into education and a national HIV and AIDS Response Team has been established in collaboration with a number of government and non-government partners, as has an inner-city project to deal with issues of access and equity.

Learners and Teachers

In relation to learners in Jamaica, the MOE highlights that learners with special needs are increasingly able to successfully progress through the education system to the tertiary

level; although this has proved difficult in the past. For example, the University of the West Indies has indicated a steady increase in the enrolment of students with visual impairments; although this is limited to the arts, education and a number of disciplines in the social sciences. The University has further reported that the movement of persons with disabilities into higher education continues to be marred by such challenges as language barriers (in the case of the hearing impaired), as well as the lack of technical support. The Ministry of Education notes, therefore, that inclusion must embrace not only physical space but all the support necessary as well as the educational opportunities to enhance success.

There is a particular emphasis by the Ministry of Education on the provision of guidance counseling services and support to learners as an integral part of maintaining an inclusive education system. Philosophically, guidance espouses the concept of a fully functioning person and acknowledges that individuals have the capacity for self-determination, and are able to make intelligent, rational and satisfying decisions about their lives. The process assumes respect for the personal worth of the individual who by nature has integrity and is entitled to dignity. One of the aims of the guidance counseling programmes is to produce students who are more self-aware, self-assured and capable of demonstrating a belief in themselves, no matter the level of academic competence.

In Jamaica, the issue of teaching quality has been an important concern of governments past and present. Various programmes, incentives and initiatives have been put in place to address these concerns. For example, the Professional Development Unit of the Ministry of Education in collaboration with schools, professional associations, as well as the Joint Board of Teacher Education, has organized professional development training for both in-service and pre-service teachers. The provision of scholarships in specialized areas of study such as mathematics, science and Spanish and the provision of postgraduate training of Management and Leadership for all Principals at the Primary level have also been developed in order to increase and improve site-based management and responsiveness to the needs at the local level. Training is also being provided in Management and Leadership for Principals at the secondary level, as well as a revolving

loan scheme to facilitate the professional development of teachers and a 50% refund of tuition to teachers who pursue courses of study up to the graduate level without taking study leave.

With respect to learners with special needs, all teachers in training have been required to do a module in Special Education since 1998. This course is meant to sensitize all teachers to the various types of exceptionalities and the approaches that can be used in working with students, even before a formal assessment is done. Teachers are also exposed to other special areas of training in an attempt to provide the best responses to the specific needs of the students.

16. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO[105]

Approaches, Scope and Content

In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, inclusive education is primarily perceived in the framework of quality education for all, accessibility to educational opportunities for all and education as an inherent right. The Ministry of Education (MOE) subscribes to UNESCO's definition of inclusion which is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education.[106] It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.[107]

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[105] The information in this section was adapted from the country report regarding Inclusive Education in Trinidad and Tobago, prepared and submitted by the Ministry of Education of Trinidad and Tobago and from the ministerial power point presentation "Towards Inclusive Education in Trinidad And Tobago", presented at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston Jamaica 5 -7 December, 2007.

[106] Booth, T. (1996) "Stories of exclusion: natural and unnatural selection", In E. Blyth and J. Milner (eds), Exclusion from School: Inter-professional Issues for Policy and Practice (London: Routledge).

[107] Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, Salamanca, 1994, UNESCO, Ministry of Spain, http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF

To illustrate Trinidad and Tobago's approach to inclusive education, the MOE referred to the Education Policy Paper 1993–2003, which exposed a philosophy that underscored the following beliefs: that every child has an inherent right to an education which will enhance the development of maximum capability regardless of gender, ethnic, economic, social and religious background; that every child has the ability to learn and that [the education system] must build on this positive assumption; and that children vary in natural ability and that schools therefore should provide for all students programmes which are adapted to varying abilities and which provide opportunities to develop differing and socially useful talents. Finally, the MOE stressed that inclusive education is about improving the quality of education with a philosophy built on the belief that all people are equal and should be respected and valued as an issue of basic human rights.

The MOE also brought attention to the evolution of the concept of special needs education[108] in shaping the approach to inclusive education. It was noted that by 1991, the perception of special education had changed significantly. Contemporary thinking no longer allowed the labelling of children by their disability. Instead, the MOE observed that the new focus was on what the child needs to learn, and the teaching methods and arrangements required to enable the child's access to the curriculum. With this new approach, a special educational need was now regarded as relative, based on the interaction between the child and the environment. In this framework, inclusive education is concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non formal educational settings. It was underlined that rather than being a marginal theme on how some learners can be integrated in the mainstream education, inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to change education systems in order to respond to the diversity of learners. In this sense, the MOE noted that inclusiveness must be seen as a pre-condition of bringing about quality education for all.

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[108]   A child is considered to have special educational needs when that child has:a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age or a disability that prevents or hinders the child from making use of the educational facilities of the kind normally available in school for children of the same age. Children with special educational needs are, therefore, those who have characteristics that affect their ability to learn to the extent that specially adapted conditions are necessary if they are to be appropriately and effectively educated.

According to the MOE, inclusion is a work in progress that involves all the components of the education system from "construction to curricula".

In Trinidad and Tobago, inclusive education is not just about students with disabilities but quality education for all recognizing that every child can learn. As such, initiatives for inclusion are situated within the Ministry of Education's Seamless Education approach, designed to facilitate all learners who may be marginalized or excluded, such as drop-outs, underachievers, students with learning or other disabilities, students who are gifted and talented, students affected or infected with HIV, and students with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Public Policies

The public policy of Trinidad and Tobago on education is based on the objective of maximising human resource development in terms of both quality and quantity through universal coverage at all education levels. This objective is based on the government's desire to create a modernized education system; the contents and methods should provide the relevant education, training and skills, as well as reflect the social and cultural values to strengthen the nation's productivity and competitiveness, ensuring that all young citizens are prepared to contribute to the development of a modern skill-based economy. In this regard, the MOE notes that the government has accorded high priority to the improvement of quality in early childhood, primary and secondary education. In addition, the Ministry of Education underscored that the approach to inclusive education in Trinidad and Tobago is first and foremost about school reform, so that all learners can participate in the process of education in a seamless manner from early childhood care and education to tertiary education.[109]

Indeed, the government has embarked on several strategies for the reformation and modernization of the education system to progress towards inclusion.[110] This comes as a response to some criticism of the education system noted by many committees and task

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[109]   Reform Agenda – Appendix I
[110]   Strategic Plan 2000 – 2006

forces on education over the past 20 years.[111] In particular, it was noted then that Trinidad and Tobago faced challenges relating to the existence of few programs for special needs students in regular schools and the lack of training for teachers to deal with special needs. It was also noted that there was an absence of pre-service training for teachers, a weak system for in-service training, and poor integration of technology into teaching strategies. In addition, a centralized management system led to weak communications networks among the various levels of central, district and school activities and, finally, weak articulation among the various levels of the education system.

The Ministry of Education is in the process of reforming the entire education system, in order to respond to these challenges through inclusive education strategies, policies and policy guidelines in keeping with international trends. This reform is based on a major restructuring and decentralization programme; there are several new specialized Units now in place to guarantee quality education for all and promote the reform process towards inclusive education. Firstly, the establishment of an International Cooperative Initiatives Unit (ICIU) has facilitated the support of the Organisation of American States for several education projects, including HIV/AIDS awareness. According to the MOE, Trinidad and Tobago now leads the region in the education sector's response to HIV/AIDS.

Secondly, a Legal Unit was created in 2004, which is undertaking a review of the Education Act 1966 with a view to developing a modern, revised Education Act. For example, the Ministry of Education maintains that there should be a continued review of legislation to outlaw discrimination against persons with disabilities. Thirdly, the Teacher Professional Development Unit charged with responsibility for addressing teacher education reform was set up. It is responsible for teacher education programmes, recruitment and selection of teachers, induction programmes, teacher certification and continuing professional development. For example, the USAID programme "Centre of

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[111] This is based on the Miske-Witt Mid-Term Report (2007); Miske –Witt and Associates were contracted by the Ministry of Education to undertake a comprehensive study of Special Education in Trinidad and Tobago and make recommendations for Inclusion.

Excellence in Teacher Training" to improve levels of reading through in-service teacher development and classroom intervention was adopted. This Unit is now developing teacher training and diverse schemes and incentives to increase the supply of qualified specialists, such as scholarships which have been offered in speech therapy. Meanwhile, the Cabinet has approved additional staffing for schools on a phased basis of 65 guidance officers, 30 school social workers, 30 special education teachers and 2 school psychologists since 2005. The Ministry of Education intends to develop special contractual arrangements to attract Trinidad and Tobago nationals abroad as well as Caribbean professionals, and will also coordinate the continued additional employment of guidance officers, school social workers and special education teachers to staff 75% of schools by 2015. The Ministry is also reforming the management and administration training in the schools. It recognises that training for effective leadership at the school level must be provided to guarantee inclusion and quality education, and that there should be scheduling to provide time for collaboration, problem-solving, mentoring and support for classroom teachers, in order to build up an attitude and philosophical awareness of inclusion among all personnel. Workshops and training have commenced with staff to establish the reform process at the school and district level.

Fourthly, the Student Support Services Division was established in 2004, to provide on-going support to all students in the education system, which is another main priority of inclusive education school reform by the Ministry of Education. In this respect, the Ministry began a pilot Diagnostic Programme in 1999. This Division combines guidance and counselling, special education and school social work to provide on-going support to all students. It has been recommended that the Student Support Services Division continues to expand in order to provide effective support services, appropriate resources for the visually and hearing impaired and take care of the upgrading of technology which assists with learning. These services will include diagnostic testing, special education, parent education, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS awareness. Support to private special schools has already been provided.

Fifthly, with respect to children with special educational needs, the Cabinet determined that a Special Education Unit was to be established in the Ministry of Education as part of the decentralization process.[112] Prior to this decentralization, the education of students with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago was mainly conducted by religious bodies, voluntary organizations and community groups. Later on, students with disabilities attended "Institutional Schools" that were partly financed by government subventions, but mainly by charity. In 1980, the government formally incorporated the "Institutional Schools" into the education system as "special schools"[113] and the Ministry of Education assumed full responsibility for the management and operation of these schools in conjunction with their respective Boards of Management. The Special Education Unit was then given responsibility for coordinating special education, supervising and developing curricula for special schools and regular schools where students with special educational needs were enrolled, as well as collaborating with other Ministries in the prevention of disorders. In 1982, the Advisory Committee on Special Education was appointed, comprising of representatives of the non-governmental organizations involved in the education of students with special educational needs and Ministries involved in the funding of these schools. In 1984, the Report of a National Survey of Handicapped Children and Youth in Trinidad and Tobago was published.[114]

During these reforms, the Ministry of Education also highlighted its intention to build upon areas of excellence in order to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education, specifically, raise awareness on exemplary practice in Trinidad and Tobago to a broader audience. Not only will this prove informative for the general public, staff, parents, individuals with disabilities and their organizations, but such links with this broader audience will allow other stake-holders to participate in all phases of planning and implementation. For example, workshops and seminars have been conducted amongst the

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[112]   Minute 3901, dated October 03, 1980. This decision was to come into effect on January 01, 1981.
[113]   The re-designated schools were the School for the Blind, Santa Cruz; the Schools for the Deaf at Cascade and Marabella; the Princess Elizabeth School for Physically Handicapped Children, Woodbrook; the School for the mentally handicapped at St. Ann's Hospital; and the Training Center at the Lady Hochoy Home, Cocorite and its branches at Gasparillo and Penal.
[114]   This survey was the result of a Project in Special Education and Rehabilitation of the handicapped that was undertaken by the joint efforts of the organization of American States and the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

staff of special schools and selected regular schools with special needs students. While success was not achieved in all of these undertakings so far, the Ministry noted that the public was made more aware of the needs of students with special needs and there was a marked increase in the demand for education and training in the area of special education, as a result of these workshops. The Ministry therefore maintains that it should continue to identify and institute a phased approach to sensitization and outreach, utilizing multi-pronged communication strategies involving agencies, institutions of higher education, the media, community networks, and other communication opportunities.

Finally, the Ministry of Education highlighted that a number of key inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial initiatives have also been implemented in accordance with governmental commitments focusing on equal access and inclusion. For example, the government has endeavored to ensure access to all by providing school nutrition, transportation, school infrastructure, as well as governance and management of the early childhood care and education and sixth form expansion. There are also plans to 'outsource' private services for students. In order to strengthen mechanisms for inter-ministerial co-ordination in the task of the management and administration of schools, the Ministry of Social Development has produced a National Policy which specifically addresses the universal right to an inclusive education, a policy on Student Support Services and a Green Paper on Quality Standards for Education in Trinidad and Tobago 2005, defining an approach to education that is holistic and stresses affirmative programming for disadvantaged children and youth.

Systems, Links and Transitions

Demonstrating the government's commitment to quality and quantity education through universal coverage, Trinidad and Tobago's education system was presented as follows. Firstly, the responsibility for the education system falls mainly under the purview of the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (MSTTE) and the Tobago House of Assembly (THA). The Ministry of Education is the administrative authority for the pre-primary to post-secondary levels and

the Tobago House of Assembly and the Ministry of Education share a collaborative relationship in order to ensure standardized practices in the education system as responsibility for the administration of education, including the curriculum, was designated to the THA.[115] The Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education (MSTTE) has responsibility for tertiary level education and quality assurance in the country through the National Accreditation Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (NAATT), which in turn is responsible for a range of technical/vocational programmes at post-secondary level. It should be noted that at this level of training, there is considerable support from public and private sector organizations, including the corporate sector.

The education system in Trinidad and Tobago includes public (government or government-assisted) and private schools, comprising of 5 levels, namely, pre-primary, primary, secondary, post-secondary (Advanced Proficiency and Technical/Vocational) and tertiary levels. The tertiary level is intended to allow students to pursue different kinds of education and training programmes through a variety of institutions, including the Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality Institute, the College of Sciences, the Technology and Applied Arts of Trinidad and Tobago (COSTATT)[116], the Trinidad and Tobago Institute of Technology, the University of the West Indies, the University of Trinidad and Tobago and private institutions.

As the Ministry of Education's approach to inclusive education is first and foremost about school reform, the physically upgrading and capacity building of schools to adapt to the new inclusive policy can be highlighted. All the schools to be built are being designed according to acceptable international standards to accommodate students with various disabilities. [117] This will be conducted on a phased basis, to be completed by 2015 at an estimated cost of TT$790 million. Similarly, for the provision of didactic materials and equipment, the provision of computers has begun and is completed in about 10% of all schools, while the provision of computers of all secondary schools has begun and is

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[115] Act No. 40 of 1996
[116] COSTATT is to be replaced by a new entity called the Community College of Trinidad and Tobago. The
       COSTATT act of 2000 will be repealed and in its place an Act will be passed to establish the Community College
[117] In keeping with Americans with Disablities Act (ADA) regulations.

about 40% completed. Distance education will also be modernised. Instructional materials are being made available to all special schools and needs assessment are being conducted for provision to regular schools for students with special education needs.

The streamlining of the curriculum and adaptation of testing materials can also be noted as part of the school reform by the Ministry of Education. A structure for the establishment of an Assessment and Examination Authority and the formulation of a Draft Corporate Plan 2006-2010 to serve as a guide to the Ministry's strategic plan to achieve a quality modern assessment and examinations system are also underway. In addition, there has been the development of a curriculum framework, which is managed by the National Curriculum Council, for what the MOE refers to as a seamless education system from early childhood to adult education with an emphasis on lifelong learning and inclusive education.[118] The initiatives in this area include the implementation of a Continuous Assessment Programme at the primary level and the establishment of Caribbean Centre of Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT) to train teachers to address reading among pupils from Infant level to Standard II (children aged 7 to 8). With the help of programmes from the Literacy Remediation and Alternative Education Unit, teachers may also conduct remedial programmes to address learning deficiencies.

Learners and Teachers

It can also be emphasised that, as part of the inclusive education reforms, school support is now being provided to children with special educational needs, to allow such children to remain in mainstream education. Since the establishment of the Student Support Services Division, 88 out of 480 primary schools have support teams and systems providing support for students with learning and behavioural difficulties, such as guidance officers, school social workers, special education teachers, and 60 out of 140 secondary schools have full-time guidance officers. Special education, resource aides and interpreters for hearing-impaired students in regular schools are being introduced for students with severe special needs. Four itinerant teachers provide services to the visually

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[118]   Policy and Policy Guidelines for a National Curriculum

impaired students in regular schools. As a result, 21 visually impaired students are mainstreamed in regular primary and secondary schools and 26 hearing impaired students are mainstreamed in regular schools.

In relation to teachers in Trinidad and Tobago, there is an emphasis on appropriate teacher training under the Ministry of Education's school reforms. Pre-service training on differentiated curricula, which meet the needs of diverse learners, is being included for all regular teachers. There is also exposure to specific areas of special needs for which teachers may want to train, such as training to teach deaf children. Other tertiary institutions have also begun degree programmes in special education; a 4 year or equivalent B.A. in Education is currently being developed by the University of Trinidad and Tobago, with emphasis on special education.

One of the main challenges the Ministry of Education must address, however, is how to maintain pre- and in-service training for all personnel in schools. The MOE notes that there are recommendations for teacher development until 2015 within the following yearly steps according to a study contracted by the Ministry. In the first year, there should be a plan of pre-service training programme at local colleges and universities, a norm diagnostic instrument should be developed and "pockets of excellence" should be found in Trinidad and Tobago schools. In the second year, pre-service programmes at local colleges and universities should be launched and in addition, the in-service training programme should be planned. Meanwhile, the use and results of the diagnostic instrument should be tracked. In the third year, the in-service teacher training programme should be launched and the diagnostic instrument should be adjusted as needed. In the fourth year, an evaluation and adjustment of the pre-service training programme will be necessary. In the fifth year, an evaluation and adjustment of the in-service training programme will be necessary. In the sixth year, the consultants' role in pre- and in-service training will be phased out and the diagnostic instrument will be re-set. In the

seventh year, the training and continuous assessment efforts will be sustained through the Ministry of Education's oversight.[119]

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[119]   Miske-Witt Mid-Term Report (2007); Miske –Witt and Associates were contracted by the Ministry of Education to undertake a comprehensive study of Special Education in Trinidad and Tobago and make recommendations for Inclusion.

V. Concurrent Thematic Sessions of the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education

The following section addresses eight thematic concurrent sessions of the seminar linking inclusive education to the following themes: Gender-based exclusion in Caribbean schools; Indigenous populations, cultural minorities and inclusive education in the Caribbean; Inclusion of people living with HIV and AIDS within Caribbean education systems; Inclusion in early childhood education; Violence and inclusion*;* Poverty as exclusion. These sessions and their presentations will be addressed within the four ICE sub-themes.

1. ACCESS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO QUALITY EDUCATION[120]

Approaches, Scope and Content

The right to quality education for all

In the context of the session *Access of persons with disabilities to quality education,* inclusive education was mainly addressed as a basic right that guarantees quality education for all children with disabilities. Presenters set forth the idea that every individual with a disability must have the right to access free and quality education and training in an integrated environment. Children with disabilities should have greater access to a range of educational opportunities. Moreover, children and their families should have the right to choose the educational option that they find most suitable according to the child's needs, including access to the regular school system. In this session, the scope of inclusive education reaches out to a society in which everyone should be able to develop his or her own potential at their own pace at the same time contributing to public well being. More specifically, the representatives of the Caribbean region referred to inclusive education as a way of ensuring the social well-being for

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[120] The information in this section was adapted from presentations given by Ms Dotsie Bacchus, Vice-President, Caribbean Association for Mobilizing Resources and Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities (CAMRODD), *Caribbean Education Systems' response to the learning needs of disabled communities: Are we on the right pathway?*; Ms Kaye Sargeant, Education Officer in charge of special needs, Ministry of Education, Barbados, *Integrating students with special needs within mainstream schools: lessons learned from recent experiences in Barbados*; and Ms Avril Daley, Special Education Department, Mico Teachers' College, Jamaica, *Special education institutions or mainstream schools... what implications for curriculum development and teacher training*, as part of the session titled "Concurrent Thematic Sessions" at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston, Jamaica, 5-7 December 2007.

persons with disabilities. For example, the philosophy of the Caribbean Association for Mobilizing Resources and Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities' (CAMRODD) underlines that every individual with a disability deserves his or her rightful place in society and that every individual should be treated with dignity and equality and be given the opportunity to develop self respect. Presenters observed that despite this right to quality education for all, exclusions are still common practice and individuals with disabilities, irrespective of the level and severity, are marginalized in terms of access and equity to educational provisions at all levels of education.

Public Policies

Participatory policy making

Presenters noted that their vision of inclusive education and access of children with disabilities to quality education required the participation of all levels of society, from the individual to the community, for successful implementation. As stated by Dotsie Bacchus, a representative of CAMRODD, "it begins within the community; it begins at the birth of a child with a disability when medical professionals inform and educate parents about the disability; it begins at home where members of the family accept, love and appreciate this newborn and come together to make positive decisions for the wellbeing of this child; it begins at the daycare centre where there is no segregation and the care giver feels comfortable to take care of that child with a disability; it starts at the ante-natal clinic, at the church, the recreation centre, the sporting complex, the supermarket and the early childhood care and education centre…" Presenters agreed that inclusive education must engage all levels and groups within society for the education system to progress from exclusionary to inclusionary. Communication among, and between, stakeholders and society in general was seen as key to overcome social intolerance. An example put forth by presenters illustrating the consequences of poor communication and a lack of participation in policy making is when the government of Jamaica adopted an education reform document, which pursued vigorously the concept of least restrictive education environment. Social intolerance was made apparent through society's negative reaction when the document was made public. Presenters stressed the

importance of the participation of stakeholders, educators, parents, students, among others, in the discussion, planning, and implementation of an inclusionary social and educational policy.

Legislation – recommendations

The representatives of the Caribbean region made several proposals in terms of public policy for countries in the region. It was suggested that every country should demand legislation to guarantee inclusive and quality education for all. As an example and basis for other countries in the Caribbean region, the Jamaican Ministry of Education & Culture's mission is: "To provide a system which secures quality education for all persons in Jamaica and achieves effective integration of educational and cultural resources in order to optimize individual and national development; each child can learn and every child must."[121] One of their objectives to fulfill this mission is to secure teaching and learning opportunities that will optimize access, equity and relevance throughout the education system. Presenters stressed the importance of this last point, agreeing that increased and improved training opportunities should be provided not only for persons with disabilities but for those who work and care for them.

Systems, Links and Transitions

The links between special needs and mainstream schools

During this session, presenters emphasized the idea that all children should be educated within an integrated and inclusive education system and that all forms of educational segregation should be eliminated. Examples were given illustrating progress in the creation of integrated educational environments in the Caribbean region. The Happy Haven School[122] is an example of a learning environment where both special needs students and regular students benefit from mutual interaction. The school mirrors

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[121]   Avril Daley, Special Education Department, Mico Teachers' College, Jamaica.
[122]   Happy Haven School, Trinidad and Tobago - Presently there is an enrollment of thirty-eight (38) students at Happy Haven School. The school caters for children who are intellectually challenged between the ages of five (5) to eighteen (18) years with a varying degree of developmental disabilities such as autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, emotional disorders and attention deficit disorders. The school is managed by the Tobago Council for Handicapped Children. The school is government assisted.

inclusive practices by giving its special needs students the opportunity to participate and learn with regular students from mainstream schools in the areas of art, dance and drumming. The students from the regular schools come to the Happy Haven School to share their skill in these areas. This project, among others, raises social tolerance and demonstrates that all children may benefit from inclusion.

Presenters further used this example to exemplify the importance of participation and collaboration between members of special needs and mainstream school systems. During this session, participants noted that mainstream and special needs schools must work together to sensitize all members of the community to create a new inclusive environment, born out of the current dual educational system. Presenters emphasized that inclusive education will start to work once all stakeholders share the vision that integrating all students in an inclusive environment will benefit all. According to them, implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and placements should be a consultative process between parents, students, teachers and professionals.

Curricular changes for inclusive education in mainstream schools

Presenters reaffirmed their belief that an inclusive curriculum is meant to afford all learners equal opportunities to lifelong education. During this session, it was noted that despite the progress made in integrating special needs children into mainstream schools, more development is needed in order to adapt curricular and teaching practices to the diverse needs of children. In this regard, participants still consider inclusive education to be a major curricula challenge. To deal with these perceived challenges, presenters put forth the following recommendations for curricular change. First, the education system must supply related services to support children with disabilities when they enter the regular school environment. Schools must be physically accessible and wheel chair friendly. Second, students, educators and parents already in the mainstream system must be sensitized about the disabilities of the special needs students. Third, it is necessary to implement an appropriate curriculum that will enhance skills necessary for the complete development of children with disabilities. Fourth, presenters noted that although inclusive education calls for the modification of the delivery and evaluation methods of

instructional materials and/or learning outcomes, it should not change the content quality of the curriculum. Examples of curriculum accommodations include requiring completion of every other word problem on a math worksheet and providing for oral performance instead of written. Presenters again stressed that all children should be incorporated into a new single system where the curriculum is modified to address diverse students' needs.

Learners and Teachers

This session and its presentations concentrated more on teacher-related aspects than on those of learners. According to Avril Daley, a teacher in Jamaica, little attention has been given to preparing all teachers to work together to effectively teach students with and without disabilities in future inclusive schools. Instead, presentations portrayed a dual education system in which general education teachers took responsibility for the teaching/learning of "typical students" and special education teachers took responsibility for the teaching/learning of special education students. Team work and consultation between general education teachers and special education teachers are important to achieve a shift from the old system. This challenge is further hindered by societal perception of teachers as pointed out by Kaye Sargeant of the Ministry of Education of Barbados. Presenters observed that if teachers are not valued by society, they will not have the confidence to change themselves and the system towards inclusive education.

During this session, presentations identified a strong need for teacher training in inclusionary practices and curricular development, especially adequate pre-service and in-service programs. Presentations noted that inclusion of special needs students in general education classrooms is sometimes preceding the establishment of appropriate training and assistance for teachers and support personnel. In the presentation on the Caribbean education system's response to the learning needs of disabled communities, Dotsie Bacchus noted that there must be the provision for the development of human resources including the exposure of all teachers to special education training in order to better prepare teachers for an inclusive environment. The Ministry of Education of Barbados held a training program in association with Mt. St. Vincent College to enhance

in teachers a basic understanding about and skills to address the needs of children with disabilities in a regular school system. It was suggested by the presenters that special education categorical courses be replaced by those that emphasize student needs, learning theories, and best instructional practices. Presenters further suggested that special education teachers also need training not only to update their knowledge and skills but also to help prospective teachers and to act as mentors, consultants and support workers in the creation of inclusive settings. In this respect, the curriculum of teacher training must provide an understanding of special education, and knowledge of the range of strategies and techniques. Presenters underlined that teacher training should not target specific cases. Instead, it was recommended that teachers should be trained to support students with a variety of disabilities according to their individual needs and not according to their label. Despite the progress with new training programmes to address such issues, participants noted that teachers still brought with them the old mindset, sometimes due to a lack of confidence in a new unknown system. Last, and possibly most important, all educators need to be involved in the planning and implementation of an inclusionary programme. Avril Daley, a teacher in Jamaica, pointed out that without careful and systematic planning and coordination from all involved personnel, inclusion is sure to fail.

Presenters observed that developing students' skills within special education settings, though having some positive effects on children's learning, on the long run had greater negative consequences for those involved. Participants argued that special education most often meant segregating special needs students from their peers in regular classes. The example of Happy Haven School joint woodwork project with members of the community and regular school students demonstrated that providing skills training to all students in an inclusive environment was advantageous because the children's different strengths and weaknesses complemented each other, allowing for everyone's needs to be met. A Happy Haven School teacher's experience, as quoted by Dotsie Bacchus, a representative of CAMRODD, illustrates the importance of inclusive education and its benefits to all:

"I learned that adults are the ones who cause chaos in the minds of children. I also learnt that children who worked and socialized together learnt to live together. Each person was an important and accepted member in that camp. It created a sense of belonging and provided a diverse stimulating environment in which the students were able to learn and grow together. It evolved feelings of being part of a group that enabled the students to develop friendships. For the students coming from the regular school, this camp helped them to develop an appreciation that everyone has unique beautiful characteristics and abilities. It developed sensitivity towards others' limitations, a feeling of empowerment and the ability to make a difference. Finally it developed empathetic skills and gave them the opportunity to put their feet in another child's shoes. It helped me as a teacher to recognize that all students have strengths, talents and that school staff, students and parents must work together in partnership to make inclusion a reality. When everyone is included children look beyond labels and make friends naturally."

2. TEACHING IN AN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM[123]

Approaches, Scope and Content

Social inclusion and EFA

In the context of the session *Teaching in an inclusive education system,* inclusive education was addressed through the concepts of social inclusion and education for all (EFA). Inclusive education as an approach was referred to as addressing the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion, and as a way to ensure the presence, participation and achievement of all students in education. The principle of inclusive education was presented at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) and reaffirmed at the Dakar World Education Forum (2000). According to the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, Inclusive education means that "…schools should accommodate all children regardless of their

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[123] The information in this section was adapted from presentations given by Ms Elaine Foster-Allen, Principal, Shortwood Teachers' College, Kingston, Jamaica, *What Pedagogy for Inclusion?*; Ms Sharon Warner, Caribbean Union of Teachers, and member of the Barbados Union of Teachers, *Diversities in the classroom: What challenges and opportunities for teachers?*; and Ms Angelita Arnold, Director, Mico College Child Assessment and Research in Education (C.A.R.E.) Centre, *What mechanisms for early assessment and intervention? How can we ensure access to an effective continuum of guidance, counselling and referral services?*, as part of the session titled "Concurrent Thematic Sessions" at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston, Jamaica, 5-7 December 2007.

physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups."[124] Presenters noted that such an approach indicates the moral responsibility to ensure that those groups that are most at risk are carefully monitored.

During this session, presenters recognized the practice of social exclusion in the Caribbean region and restated the importance of addressing it. Jamaica was given as an example where social exclusion hinders the learning of social skills to live and work in diverse places. According to Elaine Foster-Allen, underperformance of boys, violence in society and schools, poverty – urban and rural, children with various challenges and abilities, class, colour/shade, ethnically diverse backgrounds, children living with HIV/AIDS…are all grounds for alienation from the education process.

Public Policies

Evidence-based and participatory policy-making and its challenges

Presenters put forth the concept of evidence-based policy making. Accordingly, inclusion is concerned with identification and removal of barriers – collecting, collating and evaluating information from variety of sources in order to plan for improvements in policy and practice, using evidence to stimulate creativity and problem solving. Participants recognized that there were challenges to policy making in terms of policy resources. In Barbados, although the present policy stipulates that each child should receive education in an equitable manner, participants noted a lack of infrastructural change, which is needed to implement a successful shift towards inclusive education. The Jamaican case illustrates both participatory policy-making and resource constraints. Jamaica has an inter-sectoral policy process for education policies that involves parents,

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[124] Ms Elaine Foster-Allen, Principal, Shortwood Teachers' College, Kingston, Jamaica, *What Pedagogy for Inclusion?, with reference to* UNESCO. *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality. Salamanca, Spain, 7-10 June 1994. http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/SALAMA_E.PDF

teachers, nurses, social workers, psychologists, clinical psychologists, educational psychologists, school psychologists, and speech pathologists, among others. Resource challenges were exemplified by the progressive decrease of Dutch funding[125] for the establishment of a formal Special Education Programme, in Jamaica, in order to allow the Jamaican government to take over. Finally, presenters suggested that the countries of the Caribbean region should take steps to ensure all children's presence, participation and achievement in inclusive education. In particular, this session emphasized the importance of diagnostic and therapeutic services, which allow for early assessment and interventions to prepare special needs children to access the school system.

Systems, Links and Transitions

Curricular changes for an inclusive curriculum

Presenters suggested that key curricular elements need to change in Caribbean education systems as a way to develop inclusive education: (a) Definition of broad learning goals for all children, including the knowledge, skills and values to be acquired; (b) Provision of flexible and diverse opportunities for performance in terms of content, methods and level of participation; (c) Assessment based on individual progress; and (d) Recognition and valuing of learners' cultural, religious and linguistic diversity in relation to the content, knowledge and skills to be developed in the curriculum. For example, as a challenge related to students' assessment, Jamaica's curricula was noted to currently focus on passing examinations, and literacy tests and not on social skills and abilities.

Participation for an inclusive environment

"A revolutionary concept cannot work without a revolutionary context"[126]. Presenters emphasized the importance of a participatory approach to creating inclusive settings. Jamaica exemplifies a participatory process. Presentations referred to the importance of

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[125] Through a development co-operation agreement entered into by the Government of Jamaica and the Dutch Government in 1975, assistance was received from the latter for the establishment of a formal Special Education Programme in Jamaica. Ministry of Education, Youth & Culture, Jamaica. http://www.moeyc.gov.jm/divisions/ed/specialeducation/history.htm

[126] Ms Sharon Warner, Caribbean Union of Teachers, and member of the Barbados Union of Teachers.

including parents in the process of creating an inclusive setting. Presenters pointed out that this comes with its own challenges as many parents are in denial of their children's special needs. Additionally, Elaine Foster-Allen underlined that schools should act as social institutions and people there (teachers, principals…) are social actors. However, according to participants, institutions are not empowering teachers and principals to engage in the process of education. Schools as institutions have to change to create social inclusion. Furthermore, school infrastructures need to change. The issue of space is not addressed. In order to cater to diversities, teachers need space for students to practice their differences as well as space for students to tolerate differences. Presenters underlined the need for resources, a range of tools available to develop students' capabilities. As observed by Sharon Warner, these tools are not only pedagogy, but physical equipment is important.

Learners and Teachers

Presenters emphasized the need for teachers to have a certain mindset when designing curriculum, which takes into consideration all the children with all their diversities. To quote Elaine Foster-Allen, "pedagogy must be conceived as shared learning; pedagogy should help children and teachers to confront oppressive elements in content, strategies etc.; pedagogy should draw on reflections on children's lived experiences; pedagogy should draw on an understanding of the challenges of the de-humanizing experiences of violence; pedagogy should be humanized."

Presenters remarked that teachers are predominantly female in the Caribbean education system. Presenters noted how this female predominance is a result of society's reproduction of expected female roles in combination to women's lack of access, among other marginalized groups, to other employment opportunities.

Additionally, the lack of support services to teachers hinders inclusive education and social inclusion. For example, in Barbados, teachers who take into account the diverse needs of learners are often denied praise when it comes to recognizing effective teachers.

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While supporting the idea of creative teaching as a strategy to address the diverse needs of learners, presenters recognized the strong obstacles caused by negative perceptions of teachers supportive of inclusive education approaches. Finally, the lack of resources adds to the challenges of inclusive education. Indeed, timetabling, teacher to student ratios, and lack of support of services are all tensions affecting the teachers.

Social intolerance of learners hinders inclusive education

During this session, presentations addressed the problem of social intolerance of learners and its challenge to inclusive education. For example, in Jamaica, during school lunches, the children do not want to eat with the same utensils used by the special needs children. Additionally, children with special needs were demonized because of their challenging behaviour. During this session, presenters referred to a study about violence and schools, which concluded that children are bringing violent learned behaviors from the community. Violent intolerant environments were seen as contradicting integrated and inclusive educational settings in which the needs and capabilities of special need students are positively welcomed. Presenters pointed out that intolerant environment lead to developmental challenges, poor social skills, lack of self esteem, and social apartheid. A present lack of resources further hinders the ability of schools and teachers to attend to special needs students in mainstream schools, and poverty prevents parents from placing their child in special units. Presenters concluded that there multiple problems to address with respect to learners before inclusive education can succeed in the Caribbean region.

3. GENDER BASED EXCLUSION IN CARIBBEAN SCHOOLS[127]

Approaches, Scope and Content

Gender based inclusion

In the context of the session *Gender based exclusion in Caribbean schools,* inclusive education was addressed through the lens of gender-based inclusion. According to presenters, gender in Caribbean schools is constructed in classrooms influenced by initial judgments and stereotypes which teachers and students bring with them. Patriarchal societies, like in Jamaica, predispose boys and girls to engage differently in learning. According to Myrna Bernard, boys are severely disadvantaged because they think that they can fend for themselves and thus stay away from school. Presenters observed that, in Guyana, while there are more boys than girls in Grade I, by Grade VI girls outnumber boys. The example of Penwood high school in Kingston, Jamaica also illustrates the predominance of girl students. Presentations gave emphasis to the notion that education is not only the transmission of knowledge, but that it should play a major role in shaping character and in the internalization of values which are essential to survival in society. According to presenters, gender-based discrimination in society in the Caribbean region is the root cause of this gender-based exclusion in schools. These social factors imply differences in socialization, poverty-driven crime, and division of labour leading to status, power and privileges. Nevertheless, presenters underlined that gender-based exclusion can also affect certain categories of girls, especially teen mothers. The latter are excluded from the regular school system whereas the male is not. This gender-based exclusion denies teen mothers the opportunity to complete secondary education and restricts their preparation for the labour market. With regards to teen mothers, but also more generally, presenters approached inclusive education as a way to reduce insularity,

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[127] The information in this section was adapted from presentations given by Prof. Hyacinth Evans, Institute of Education, UWI Mona, *Issues of gender and gender equality in Caribbean Schools*; Mr Zara Heron, Penwood High School, Kingston, Jamaica, *Practicing the gender reality within the classroom: lessons learned from a teacher's experience*; Ms Myrna Bernard, Director, Human Development, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, *Recommendations from the CARICOM/UNICEF meeting on boys and education, Belize, November 2007*; Ms Zoe Simpson, Director of Field Operations, Women's Centre, Jamaica, *Teenage Pregnancy from an education and human development perspective: what challenges, what responses?*, as part of the session titled "Concurrent Thematic Sessions" at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston, Jamaica, 5-7 December 2007.

increase self worth, guide students to make wise choices, and position students to make positive contributions to society.

Public Policies

Policy recommendations

The presenters agreed that there were no public policies in place to concretely address gender-based exclusion. They emphasized a need to find appropriate and relevant strategies to bring about "change from within". During this session, it was recognized that the nature of the problem faced by men and women had to be considered in terms of structural determinants, and that corrective measures could not be enacted without reference to wider social considerations. Presenters made numerous general policy recommendations to address this gap:

(a) Implement an evidence monitoring and evaluation system: analyze the opportunity cost of boys under-participation in the education system; analyze available data to deepen knowledge about the profile of out-of-school boys and girls; develop and strengthen sub-regional knowledge networks and monitoring and evaluation systems; document and disseminate information on existing models - such as those of the Tumul Kin Centre of Learning[128], and the University of the West Indies' Change from Within programme[129] - and identify other best practices across the Caribbean.

(b) Increase and strengthen advocacy and partnerships: increase inter-sectoral dialogue on the issues and solutions at national levels utilizing national Councils for Human and Social Development (COHSODs); engage policy makers and education administrators and practitioners at all levels by synthesizing research and presenting them with the evidence and workable solutions; establish a taskforce to develop a plan of action on

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[128] Tumul Kin Centre of Learning: non-government organization in Blue Creek, Belize. For more information, view pp. 13-26. http://www.sharingindigenouswisdom.org/presentations/PowerPoints/ FilibertoPenados.pdf

[129] The programme started in 1992, when the late Sir Phillip Sherlock, then former Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, set up an ad hoc committee of university educators, to look into the rising levels of crime and violence within the society and to find out how education could provide solutions. http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=24856&URL_DO=DO_PRINTPAGE&URL_SECTION=201.html

quality education for all, with an emphasis on boys education for presentation to the Ministers of Education; engage the public on issues regarding gender and education; support the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) plan of action to roll out curriculum review; and further develop teacher training and assessment of gender socialization models over the next five years.

(c) Social protection and investments: review labour laws and employment policies to make them more family friendly, with an emphasis on promoting mothers and fathers or female/male involvement in child care and rearing; increase overall investments in early childhood development and boost early childhood education investment to at least 20% of national education budgets; develop and implement an incentive scheme to encourage the private sector to provide on site facilities and services to support families (ex: day and after school care); develop an early warning and multi-service response system for vulnerable children (link to enabling school environments); develop or expand and strengthen social protection systems (inclusive of conditional cash transfers, means tested scholarships and other mechanisms to reduce educational costs) aimed at keeping children in schools; and adopt and implement "child friendly schools" as a Caribbean-wide policy with the development of regional criteria.

(d) Address male/female perceptions: take a more strategic approach to promoting boys' achievements; de-link girls' successes from boys' difficulties; recognize that contemporary dominant masculinities are problematic; re-associate masculinity with education and academic aptitude; engage more fully with peer group dynamics; and support research into masculinities, masculine taboos and peer group dynamics.

More specific policy recommendations were also put forth by presenters with regards to teen mothers. It was noted that the Women's Centre of Jamaica Foundation's mandate is to return teen mothers to the regular school system after they have had their babies. However, participants saw room for much work to overcome this gender-based exclusion. Among their recommendations, they suggested: (a) preserving her space within the school system; (b) regularizing reintegration; (c) sanctioning schools that

refuse placement for teen mothers; (d) decriminalizing teen pregnancy; (e) providing scholarships where needed; and (f) providing youth friendly health services for contraceptive methods/counseling. Additionally, suggestions for policy were made with a male focus to support teen mothers. These included instituting a Caribbean wide social change communication campaign to promote positive male involvement in all aspects of a child's life; instituting strategies to recruit and retain qualified male teachers throughout the education system with a particular focus on schools in high risk/deprived areas, and organizing a Caribbean wide communication campaign promoting fathers or males reading to children.

Systems, Links and Transitions

Current Caribbean school system and obstacles

Presenters noted that the curriculum is marked by strong gender divisions. In Guyana; females dominate the humanities while males dominate the sciences, and although their performance is comparable, ethnicity has strong association on performance. Participants observed a male peer culture operating in schools and gender-based treatment of students. In Jamaica, it was reported that more males than females felt that they were unfairly treated due to low academic performance, teacher favouritism and family connections; males engaged in sports were favoured, however resources favoured females in regards to extracurricular activities. Presenters pinpointed gendered responses to curriculum, where differences in treatment and subject choices linked to occupations meant that a gendered curriculum leads to gender inequality, unequal participation, unequal access to knowledge, widening of achievement gap, and inequality in the construction of academic self-concept.

Recommendations for educational reforms

Presenter Myrna Bernard suggested a number of school transformation and curricular reforms to create child-friendly environments. For example, she suggested accelerating the implementation of Caribbean Early Childhood Development (ECD) Learning Goals

and Outcomes (2004) in curricula in the region with a focus on the active engagement of boys. Accordingly, the ECD teaching models need to be expanded to the age of 8. Additionally, Health and Family Life Education policy must be adopted in all CARICOM countries and effectively implemented as part of school curriculum at all levels. In this framework, curriculum must be reviewed and retooled with interactive methodologies that cater to the needs of boys and girls and that foster in children positive self-esteem and character building. Ms Bernard also suggested developing and implementing inter-cultural bilingual education programmes, and implementing alternative methods for discipline control in all schools. She also recommended providing opportunities for engaging children, especially boys, in the creation of their own learning opportunities, including peer group interactions and students' involvement in school governance, especially in relation to student conduct. Education reforms should also design and implement a minimum package of interventions aimed at keeping boys in the education system, and develop and implement criteria for school effectiveness based not only on academic performance but also on other enabling factors such as inclusiveness, safety, protective environment, participation of students and parents. Finally, reforms should include gender socialization approaches in parenting education and support services/interventions in cooperation with regional agencies such as Parenting Partners Caribbean, and expand and strengthen parent outreach programmes with emphasis on engaging fathers and other males as mentors and role models.

Learners and Teachers

Changing teachers' preconceptions

In this session, participants underlined that the teacher is central to the process of creating a gender construction that can initiate gender-based inclusion. In Jamaica, teachers have tried to introduce certain changes. It was observed that teachers bring their own cultural assumptions and develop certain approaches for student behaviour and students bring their own assumptions as well. Hyancinth Evans found that teacher expectations of

students in a class influence the methods they will use. According to her presentation[130], more than 70% of teachers had higher expectations for girls than boys and also made more positive evaluations of girls over boys. Presenters made recommendations for teacher training and development. For example, gender sensitization training for education policy makers, managers and teachers should be offered. Developing and implementing a counseling and support system for teachers is also needed. Furthermore, teacher training in early childhood is needed, as well as ensuring that a gender socialization perspective is included in child development, children learning, and management of the learning environment to ensure an equitable access to education by boys.

Shaping a learner's identity

Participants emphasized the importance of schools, along with the home and society, in shaping identities of boys and girls. The school was seen as a critical point in developing notions of self. A learner's identity is created through school practices; for example, they influenced in this by a teacher who is a person of authority who sets rules and monitors and sanctions. Presenters stressed that teacher-student interaction is the foundation for anything that happens and it is critical to attempt to practice inclusiveness. Presenters also highlighted five indicators impacting student achievement and completion: socio-economic status, parental education, early experiences, parental stress, and reading books to children. According to the presentations, positive environments play a significant role in students' performance, and socialization has a strong influence on the development of abilities.

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[130] Prof. Hyacinth Evans, Institute of Education, UWI Mona, *Issues of gender and gender equality in Caribbean Schools.*

4. INDIGENOUS POPULATION, CULTURAL MINORITIES AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE CARIBBEAN[131]

Approaches, Scope and Content

Social inclusion and inter-cultural education for all

In the context of the session *Indigenous population, cultural minorities and inclusive education in the Caribbean,* inclusive education was addressed through the concept of social inclusion and inter-cultural education for all. Presenters shared the history of indigenous populations in Guyana to critically question the use of paternalistic homogeneous educational practices and the challenges to the inclusion of indigenous populations. According to Hon. Desiree Fox[132], in the past, integration of indigenous populations into mainstream society in Guyana meant assimilation and a loss of indigenous culture and languages; a discriminatory practice which is still present. Accordingly, this exclusion encompassed all things indigenous, including indigenous knowledge, values, world views, cultural knowledge, and participation in decision making. Presenters used the example of Guyana to illustrate the negative consequences of "forced inclusion"[133]. Dr. Filiberto Penados[134] explained that the education system in Belize still tends to homogenize education, especially in the establishment of exclusive notions that determine what is valid knowledge and education; this approach stems from the perception of a homogenous society. In contrast, participants addressed inclusive education as a way to address social inclusion of indigenous people through inter-cultural education as noted by Dr. Penados– education based on "equality as difference – treating different things differently", a shift from the former notion of "equality as sameness –

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[131] The information in this section was adapted from presentations given by Hon. Dr. Desrey Caesar Fox, Minister within the Ministry of Education, Guyana, *Inclusion of Indigenous Populations and Cultural Minorities in Caribbean Education Systems: Why is it an issue…?*; Dr. Filiberto Penados, Lecturer, Education and Development Studies for Indigenous Populations, Galen University, Belize*; Former Chair and co-director of the Central American Indigenous Council, *Towards Inclusive Education: Lessons learned from the experience of indigenous peoples in Belize*, as part of the session titled "Concurrent Thematic Sessions" at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston, Jamaica, 5-7 December 2007.

[132] Hon. Dr. Desrey Caesar Fox, Minister within the Ministry of Education, Guyana, *Inclusion of Indigenous Populations and Cultural Minorities in Caribbean Education Systems: Why is it an issue…?*

[133] Hon. Dr. Desrey Caesar Fox

[134] Dr. Filiberto Penados, Lecturer, Education and Development Studies for Indigenous Populations, Galen University, Belize

treating different things the same". Presentations showed that this vision of inclusive education challenges the foundations of education, and the predominant notions of statehood and national identity.

Public Policies

Past and current strategies for inclusive education and cultural diversity

Presenters agreed that the Caribbean region is experiencing a shift in education when focusing progressively on the different cultural contexts of the region. Indigenous education has become very important, contributing many resources to inclusive education processes. Presentations illustrated past strategies to encourage the education of indigenous populations. For example, in Guyana in the 60's a scholarship program was established for indigenous populations. Nowadays, Guyana has a Minister dedicated to Amerindian affairs, and there are several programs in this country to support universal education such as school feeding programs, building secondary schools in remote areas, creating learning resource centres such as libraries, and teaching children in their own language. In Cuba, scholarships benefited 56 Amerindian scholars. In Belize, in 2000, there was a pilot project on bilingualism at the infant level, initiated by Qeqchi Council of Belize in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Although this program was discontinued, new initiatives are challenging the Ministry to engage in dialogue about these issues. A final example was a 2007 initiative in Belize by the National Garifuna Council and Maya Leaders Alliance, involving the Ministry of Education as part of an oversight committee and technical team funded by UNICEF. Its purpose was to improve the quality and responsiveness of the education offered (at infant level) to students in three schools and generate a knowledge base for informing national policy and planning for inter-cultural education in Belize.

Looking forward

Presenters emphasized that there should be a focus on increasing indigenous people's access to education opportunities. Suggestions on how to achieve this included having

primary schools in every community; providing text books in primary schools; opening centres for employment training; increasing the number of trained teachers; offering transportation for high school students. Participants observed that the state is playing a limited role at the moment, giving the example of Belize. Dr. Filiberto Penados pointed out that inclusive initiatives with regards to cultural diversity and education are a result of efforts coming from outside the education system, for example international agencies. Presentations underlined that policy will change with practice – giving the examples of Gulisi Community Primary school[135] and Tumul Kin Centre of Learning[136], in Belize, as good starting points as they have a committed management, which is engaging/challenging the established system.

Systems, Links and Transitions

Curriculum initiatives

Presenters gave a few examples to illustrate initiatives to change the formal education curriculum to address the needs of indigenous populations. The previously mentioned 2007 initiative in Belize undertaken by the National Garifuna Council and Maya Leaders Alliance aimed to contribute to the development intercultural bilingual education in Belize as a way of improving the quality of education and promoting a more inclusive society. The purpose of this initiative was to transform schools in Belize by adopting an inclusive approach to school curriculum, teaching, physical and social environment, and community and parental participation. The Tumul Kin Centre of Learning, in Belize, initiated in 2001 a program strategy focusing on cultural identity issues through intercultural education, training, and research that fuses Mayan values, knowledge and philosophy with contemporary science and technology. The purpose was to transform pedagogy by decolonizing the curricula – challenging what is considered to be valid knowledge. For example, Belize already offers an African and Maya history curriculum. Participants suggested that the curriculum should also include for example, Mayan mathematics, agriculture, medicinal plants, cosmology, but without displacing the other

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[135] http://www.governmentofbelize.gov.bz/press_release_details.php?pr_id=4726
[136] Tumul Kin Centre of Learning: non-government organization in Blue Creek, Belize. For more information, view
        pp. 13-26. http://www.sharingindigenouswisdom.org/presentations/PowerPoints/ FilibertoPenados.pdf

regular subjects. Presenters underlined the importance of being more critical when examining the curriculum. The need for transforming the physical and social environment, transforming pedagogy, challenging those who 'know' as a pedagogy, and increasing role of parents and community was highlighted. Presenters concurred that curricular issues make sense and emerge in that context. They called for a national strategy in the counties of the Caribbean region, to change school curriculum and pedagogy to incorporate both forms of knowledge – that of mainstream society and indigenous people. Presenters noted that there was increasing support for curriculum change. For example, parents are interested in becoming literate in their own language, and there are high levels of enthusiasm in middle management technical officers of the Ministry of Education.

Learners and Teachers

Indigenous teachers

Participants observed that there were high levels of enthusiasm in teachers who are themselves indigenous to change the curriculum and create an inclusive setting. Teacher training is being adapted and providing distance education, like at Georgetown Teachers College in Guyana, to cater to indigenous teachers.

Indigenous learners

According to Dr. Filiberto Pena, the challenges faced by indigenous learners - with the example of Maya people in Belize- lead to low education achievement, low participation and low literacy rates. In addition to not addressing needs of indigenous learners in the education system, Hon. Desiree Fox identified the challenge of reaching remote indigenous learners, in addition to doing so with tailored approaches in relation to their language diversity. Presenters emphasized the need to address the varied needs of indigenous learners by providing a flexible curriculum and interactive pedagogies that adapt to such needs.

5. INCLUSION OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV AND AIDS WITHIN CARIBBEAN EDUCATION SYSTEM[137]

Approaches, Scope and Content

Social inclusion and access to education

In the context of the session *Inclusion of people living with HIV and AIDS within the Caribbean education system,* inclusive education was addressed as a commitment to educate every child in the mainstream school system. This involves bringing the support services to the child and classroom, rather than moving the child to the services. Reference was made to UNESCO's Guidelines for inclusion, in which inclusive education is addressed as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education."[138] Presentations focused on the issue of stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS, which leads to social and educational exclusion in the Caribbean region. Presenters noted that this exclusion was due to social intolerance resulting from fear, lack of information, misinformation, myths surrounding the illness, prejudice against 'others', and moral and religious beliefs. Presenters underlined that HIV and AIDS not only limited or denied a person access to educational, health and social services, but also infringed upon their humans rights. For example, in St. Lucia, there were cases of children being barred from attending school based on their actual or alleged HIV status or that of their parents or other family members. In cases when they are physically present they are unable to maximize their potential because they lack the relevant social support. Participants emphasized that HIV and AIDS were not a learning disability, but while infected and

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[137] The information in this section was adapted from presentations given by Ms. Sophia Edwards-Gabriel, Executive Chair, Caribbean Education Sector HIV & AIDS Coordinators Network (EDUCAN)*, Towards the development of a comprehensive education sectors' response to HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean: Main orientations, challenges and lessons learned;* Mr Christopher Dorsett, Chairman, Caribbean Regional Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CRN+), *Inclusion of persons living with or affected by HIV and AIDS: What still needs to be done?*, as part of the session titled "Concurrent Thematic Sessions" at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston, Jamaica, 5-7 December 2007.

[138] Guidelines for inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All. Paris: UNESCO, 2005. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001402/140224e.pdf

affected learners may not have a physical disability or may not need special education, they may need the social and economic support to access education.

Education's new challenge

Presenters observed that in the past, HIV and AIDS were regarded as health issues and therefore it was the responsibility of the health Sector to respond. More recently, countries in the Caribbean region have come to the realization that HIV and AIDS transcend the boundaries of the health sector and impact all aspects of our society. The impact on the education sector includes demand and supply of education, quality of education provided, and limited access to education by those who are infected and affected. Ms. Sophia Edwards-Gabriel noted that the increasing HIV incidence among younger and younger sections of the population increases the need for reaching more young people sooner – in short – for education.[139]

Public Policies

Past and current policy responses – a comprehensive approach

During this session, presenters provided examples of policy initiatives addressing HIV and AIDS exclusion in education. The development of education sector HIV and AIDS policies based on a human rights approach has taken place in both Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. Jamaica is credited for being the first Caribbean country to provide this policy framework. Other countries are learning from them and at least three more countries, namely St. Lucia, Guyana and Suriname, will follow suite next year. Another example of progress is the establishment of the Caribbean Education Sector HIV and AIDS Coordinators Network (EDUCAN), whose mission is to advocate for a comprehensive, coordinated and sustained regional response to HIV/AIDS by Caribbean education sectors. The network aims to strengthen the following responses: the Caribbean education sector's policy and programme response to HIV/AIDS; the development and

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[139] Ms Sophia Edwards-Gabriel, Executive Chair, Caribbean Education Sector HIV & AIDS Coordinators Network (EDUCAN)*, Towards the development of a comprehensive education sectors' response to HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean: Main orientations, challenges and lessons learned.*

implementation of HIV/AIDS policies for the education sector in Trinidad & Tobago and Jamaica; the support of orphans and vulnerable children (St. Lucia and Guyana); and the hiring and training of HIV/AIDS program coordinators. In St. Lucia, the education sector is responsible for those with HIV/AIDS who are accessing schools as well as for those who are providing education. In order to facilitate inclusive education, The Ministry of Education advocates a comprehensive approach as a way to respond to HIV/AIDS, which has four components: curriculum, enabling environment, providing care and support and policy development and implementation. According to presenters, several countries have developed programs to assist HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) to access educational services. In St. Lucia, the Ministry of Education has collaborated with the Ministries of Health and Social Transformation to develop a referral system and to assess the needs of OVC. Such a program also exists in Guyana.

Policy challenges and recommendations

Despite the above policy initiatives to address social exclusion of HIV and AIDS affected people, participants highlighted the following obstacles. There is a lack of empirical data to inform program development, insufficient human, technical and financial resources for program development and implementation, and a lack of political will and administrative support in some countries. The need to overcome stigma and discrimination, secure the buy-in of school staff, and the need for a designated person and unit to develop and implement the HIV/AIDS program in the education sector were also emphasized. In this session, presenters made several recommendations: (a) the hiring of a Focal Point to coordinate program development and implementation in the education sector in a number of countries including Grenada, St. Vincent, Trinidad, Barbados, Guyana, St. Lucia and in Jamaica; (b) Ministries of Education need to develop and implement policies which not only address the needs of students but those of other stakeholders; (c) the need for mobilization, sensitization and education at all levels in the education sector including officers, administration, teachers, ancillary staff, parents, and students; knowledge alone does not change behavior, therefore focus must also be placed on behavior change communication strategies; (d) strategies for fighting stigma and discrimination in the education system should ensure representation of persons living with HIV at key

decision-making tables, engaging them in policy, research, development and monitoring of education systems; and (e) policies need to address issues such as managing HIV and AIDS in schools and at work, and the rights of persons who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

According to presenters, several Caribbean countries are already using these recommendations to develop programs in response to HIV/AIDS. Participants stressed the imperative of networking among countries in the Caribbean region to share knowledge, experiences and resources to advance toward inclusive education.

Systems, Links and Transitions

Social support, education and curriculum

Presenters pointed out that an enabling environment for inclusive education is one which is free of stigma and discrimination, respects the rights of learners and caterers to the diverse needs of all stakeholders including teachers, students, and administrators. This would require a paradigm shift from existing structures and systems. According to participants, traditional methods of teaching and learning are no longer adequate. Schools have to become flexible and accommodating. In some Caribbean countries, like St. Lucia, schools are offering services such as school feeding programs, book bursaries and transportation assistance which assists in making education more accessible for orphans and vulnerable children. Additionally, Guyana and Belize have been able to tailor health care services to meet the needs of young persons by providing youth friendly health centres. In Guyana for example, the youth friendly health centres are equipped with support services for teenage parents, who can come to the centres with their children who will be supervised and entertained while their mothers make use of the centre services. The staff are young and trained to ensure the comfort of the clients. Health education classes are facilitated by nurses at the centre for schools and individuals. Additionally, a resource room at the centre, equipped with internet service and other resources, is available to learners both in and out of school. Presenters also mentioned the importance of providing education and training for fighting stigma and discrimination in the

education system, including an HIV/AIDS curriculum for adolescents. This is aimed at reducing the fear of casual HIV/AIDS transmission, and ensuring access for both boys and girls with HIV/AIDS to primary and secondary education. Additionally, expanding high quality youth-friendly information and sexual health education and counseling service, and creating a supportive environment at the educational institutions for persons living with HIV and AIDS were also noted as essential.

According to presenters, one of the key ways of addressing HIV/AIDS in the education sector is to do so as part of existing school subjects. In the Caribbean this is done mainly through Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) curriculum under the themes of Sexuality and Sexual Health and Interpersonal Relationships, using an interactive, life skills approach in the delivery of the content. This effort is supported by CARICOM[140], which now has a regional framework for HFLE, which is currently being tested in four Caribbean countries. Participants noted that this curriculum is supported with teacher training, which focuses on HIV/AIDS education in addition to the practical component of life skills delivery. It was also noted in this session that there were insufficient reference materials to supplement this curricular approach.

Learners and Teachers

Teacher training and sensitizing

Presentations revealed that extensive teacher training is being conducted across the Caribbean region. Through this training, all teachers (mainstream and special education) are taught about the basics of HIV and AIDS, stigma and discrimination, universal precautions and lesson delivery. For example, in St. Lucia, special education teachers have been trained to provide Voluntary Counseling and Testing services to their learners. This assists in reducing stigma and discrimination, and in educating students about their rights within an overall development of an enabling and inclusive environment. Presenters observed that some negative attitudes and perceptions of teachers and other staff members persist and that the quality of education is at stake if teachers are not given the necessary support and training to work with persons who are infected and affected.

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[140]   Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Similarly, it was noted that when teachers themselves are infected, there is need for adequate workplace support for them if they are to deliver quality education for all.

Support for learners

According to presenters, many countries involve and engage students in HIV and AIDS programs. Some countries, like Suriname, have implemented peer education programs in schools; others have involved students in planning and programming. Some examples of interventions include Haiti's television series developed and hosted by students for students; Jamaica's secondary school debate competition on the content of HIV and AIDS education in schools; the inclusion of students on district HIV and AIDS committees in St. Lucia; youth friendly health services facilitating sexual health education in Guyana, and various competitions including jingles, posters and essays in most of the countries. Participants referred to research by UNAIDS in 2003 which shows that education in prevention and protection tends to protect young people against HIV infection; adolescents with more years of schooling are less likely to have casual partners and more likely to use condom than their peers with less schooling. Finally, presenters underlined that the children with well-rounded exposure to ideas, who receive support at school and at home, value themselves more and are less prone to sexual risk-taking.

6. INCLUSION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION[141]

Approaches, Scope and Content

Equal access to early childhood education

In the context of the session *Inclusion in early childhood education,* presenters set forth the idea that equal access to quality inclusive early childhood education (ECE) should be

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[141] The information in this section was adapted from Ms Patricia McPherson, Senior Programme Officer, Education, CARICOM Secretariat, *What Challenges for Inclusion in Early Childhood Education in the Caribbean?* ; Ms Beverly Leblanc, AEO/Early Childhood Education (ag.), Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Sports and Youth Affairs, Commonwealth of Dominica, *Programming for Early Childhood Education in a context of increasingly diverse settings: Lessons learned from the Commonwealth of Dominica*; Dr. Marigold Thorburn, Chair, Parenting Partners Caribbean, *Inclusion of children with special needs in early childhood settings: is it just about resources?*, as part of the session titled "Concurrent Thematic Sessions" at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston, Jamaica, 5-7 December 2007.

a basic right of all children. However, presentations highlighted that in reality, in most societies of the Caribbean (Grenada is an exception), children have no chance to attend ECE because it involves the payment of fees. According to presenters, unless governments commit 20% of their national budget to ECE, barriers to access early childhood education cannot be overcome. Participants made special referral to the implications for children with disabilities. According to Marigold J. Thorburn[142], it is essential for young children with disabilities to have early intervention, parent involvement and inclusive education. "Quality education is what children with disabilities need to be included in regular classrooms"[143]. Additionally, participants stated that equal access to ECE is hindered by the fact that ECE services are mainly offered by private providers. For example, in Guyana, 83% of ECE services are provided by the private sector, churches and community organizations and 17% by government.[144]

Public Policies

Policy guidelines and goals

Presentations mainly addressed the urgent need to strengthen and enable inclusive learning environments by policy, legislation and monitoring and evaluation to ensure equity and quality in ECE. Presenters put forth guidelines for developing policy, regulation and standards in early childhood and development services. For example, in Guyana, these guidelines were created through national consultation and inter-sectoral consultation with the health sector. They included essential requirements for the following: desired outcomes, minimum standards, necessary elements and processes involved, management and administration, registration and licensing quality assurance and technical/ administrative competence organizational structure. According to the presenters, policy goals should address the varying standards of care and quality. Indeed, many providers, especially private ones, do not have a theoretical base for operating, and do not know the essentials of ECE, including a lack of resources to ensure an enabling

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[142] Dr. Marigold Thorburn, Chair, Parenting Partners Caribbean, *Inclusion of children with special needs in early childhood settings: is it just about resources?*

[143] Dr. Marigold Thorburn, Chair, Parenting Partners Caribbean.

[144] Ms Patricia McPherson, Senior Programme Officer, Education, CARICOM Secretariat, *What Challenges for Inclusion in Early Childhood Education in the Caribbean?*

learning environment. Additionally, there is an absence of national standards, a preponderance of small undercapitalized operators, and there are low levels of training among caregivers. As a result, participants recognized urgent needs to ensure equity and quality in the Caribbean community. They also underlined the need for strong advocacy and communication to ensure that there is some degree of equity in the provisions of education. For example, the CARICOM led working group was set up to strengthen advocacy and communication. According to participants, this needs to be taken further through the collaboration between government and civil society to integrate health, nutrition, education, social and economic development.

Systems, Links and Transitions

Participatory approach and curriculum challenges

Presenters underlined the importance of actively involving parents and families in early learning programs of children. For example, to reinforce this participation, it is necessary to encourage and assist all parents in becoming knowledgeable about the cognitive value for children of knowing more than one language and, provide them with strategies to support, maintain and preserve home language learning. Participants provided examples of inclusive early education programs in Jamaica, run by the Jamaican Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MLSS), the NGO '3D' and Rural Services for Children with disabilities (RSCD). Examples included the Parenting Partners Caribbean Early Stimulation programme, the Early Intervention in Jamaica for Children with Disabilities: Early Stimulation programme, and well as setting up inclusive preschools. These programmes are meant to help children with disabilities early on to improve their transition into mainstream schools. Among the challenges these programmes face, presenters emphasized the need to create bilingual learning environments as these are the most developmentally appropriate for children's growth, learning and development. Additionally, it was noted that inclusive settings must provide opportunities for children to explore their surroundings with age appropriate activities, and blend traditional child-rearing practices and cultural beliefs with evidence-based approaches. The Education for

All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report, 2007[145], which focused on Early Childhood Care and Education, emphasized that children in early childhood must be supported and taught in their first language in order to develop sufficient confidence before beginning to acquire a second language.

Learners and Teachers

Teacher training: the challenge of diversity

Participants noted that it is important for teachers to become more knowledgeable about how to relate to children and families whose linguistic or cultural background is different from their own. Accordingly, educators should stop and reflect on the best ways to ensure appropriate educational and developmental experiences for all young children so the unique qualities and characteristics of each individual child are acknowledged and fully developed. This would help educators recognize that all children are cognitively, linguistically and emotionally connected to their native language and culture, and know that children can demonstrate their knowledge and capabilities in many ways. Presenters stressed that teachers need professional preparation and development in areas of culture, language and diversity. Teachers must make an effort to understand the languages and cultural backgrounds of young children, support and preserve home language use, and develop and provide alternative and creative strategies for children's learning. In Dominica, teachers were not observed to be creating opportunities to discuss similarities and differences with children or to be taking care to establish rules for fair treatment of others. According to presenters, such behaviour is due to challenges of addressing diversity in the classroom. First, there is a lack of resources for training early childhood educators in additional languages, or for recruiting additional staff who can speak the language already. Second, teachers are not presently equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond to the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity. Third, teachers have no training in managing problem behaviour and there is minimal understanding of techniques to facilitate learning. Fourth, classroom sizes are very large and there is a tendency of teachers and parents to use negative methods of behavioural management. To

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[145] http://www.unesco.org/education/efa_report/final_report_consutlation2007.pdf

address these challenges, presenters pointed out that early childhood workers need training support to develop learning and behavioural management strategies in the context of social diversity.

Addressing learners' diversity

Presenters noted that linguistic specialists argue that children who learn in their mother tongue for the first six to eight weeks of their lives perform better on test scores and develop higher self esteem than those who have to cope with learning in the official language from an early age or who make the transition from mother tongue to official language too soon. This session focused on increasing diversity of learners in the classroom and the need for schools to address it in an inclusive manner. Participants countered the argument made by some against including diversity in the classroom, seen as divisive and creating intolerance, by pointing out that exposure to diversity allowed children to understand the equity of different languages and cultures, and enhance their tolerance and support for one another through play and learning. Beverly LeBlanc[146] exemplified this discussion with the case of successfully inclusive early childhood centres in Dominica. According to her presentation, it was observed that, in 2000, most centres made adequate provision of materials and toys reflecting diversity in cultures, races, ages, abilities or gender. These inclusive centres would make sure that the inclusion of diversity was part of daily routines and play activities (for example, foods of different culture are a regular part of meals and snacks, and music tapes and songs from different cultures are included). These centres would also ensure activities to promote understanding and acceptance of diversity (for example, parents are encouraged to share family customs with children; many cultures are represented in holiday celebration). Additionally, more books, pictures and materials showing people of different races, cultures, ages, abilities and gender in non stereotyping roles were made accessible to learners. Participants also demonstrated that smaller classes and more self-directed

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[146] Ms Beverly Leblanc, AEO/Early Childhood Education (ag.), Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Sports and Youth Affairs, Commonwealth of Dominica, *Programming for Early Childhood Education in a context of increasingly diverse settings: Lessons learned from the Commonwealth of Dominica.*

learning allowed learners to improve their performance, giving the example of summer schools in Jamaica.

7. VIOLENCE AND EXCLUSION[147]

Approaches, Scope and Content

Violence and education

In the context of the session *Violence and exclusion,* presenters set forth the idea that exposure to violence is the single most common factor leading to aggression in children. The impact of violence on education includes decline in children's school attendance, reduction in teachers' attendance to school, decrease in teaching quality, and reduction in resources to schools in most troubled communities. Participants noted that violence in the Caribbean region is commonplace and that 1 child in every class in school would have lost a family member or family friend as a result of violence. Thus, there is a certain level of adjustment that children have to do as violence increases potentially children's behavioral risk towards violence, and affects their learning process.

Public Policies

Policy recommendations

Presenters made several policy recommendations for formal, non formal education and community settings in relation to violence. For example, suggestions included the following lines of action: (a) Interventions to reduce children's exposure to violence must address all areas: community violence, corporal punishment at home and at school and witnessing of domestic violence; (b) Interventions to reduce the effect of children's

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[147] The information in this section was adapted from Prof. Maureen Samms-Vaughan, Executive Chairman, Early Childhood Commission, Jamaica, *Violence and its impact on underachievement and drop-out;* Ms Sylvia Passley, Inmate Welfare Coordinator, Rehabilitation Unit, Department of Correctional Services, Ministry of National Security, Jamaica, *What education services for inclusion and rehabilitation in prison settings*, as part of the session titled "Concurrent Thematic Sessions" at the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education, Kingston, Jamaica, 5-7 December 2007.

exposure to violence must occur at 2 levels: primary prevention of violence exposure and secondary prevention of the effects of violence. Secondary prevention must include cognitive behaviour therapy as the effects of violence on behaviour and achievement are significantly mediated through cognitive processes. Primary prevention is considerably less expensive; (c) Early identification and intervention for academic underachievers and the referral of underachievers for behaviour evaluation. This policy suggestion calls for the training of teachers to identify behavioural problems and the development and use of behavioral screening instruments in community clinics and educational institutions. In the context of non formal education, Jamaican prisons demonstrated the need for educational services for inclusion in prisons. Recommendations for inclusive education in prison settings included empowering inmates through education and training. Presenters noted that such provisions would allow for the inclusion of those members of society who had been excluded from mainstream education.

Systems, Links and Transitions

Challenges and creative teaching methods for non formal education settings

In this section, Sylvia Passley[148] further discussed the challenges to inclusive education in informal settings, especially in prisons, as well as the creative teaching methods to address diversity in such an environment. She noted that challenges included lack of resources – personal and financial; poor physical structure; the setting not always being conducive to rehabilitation; and undercapitalization of programmes. Programmes offered in Jamaican prisons include for example, academic/ educational, vocational, agricultural, life skills training, and prison radio programmes. Literacy and numeracy programmes are compulsory for juveniles, but optional for adults. According to participants, such rehabilitation programmes facilitate social reintegration. Furthermore, as with any inclusive education setting, teaching methods need to be adapted to social diversity. For example, the Jamaican Department of Correctional services (DCS) is trying to find innovative ways of reaching its diverse inmate population. In June 2007, FREE F.M

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[148] Ms Sylvia Passley, Inmate Welfare Coordinator, Rehabilitation Unit, Department of Correctional Services, Ministry of National Security, Jamaica, *What education services for inclusion and rehabilitation in prison settings.*

(88.9) which was funded by UNESCO was launched at the Tower St. Adult Correctional Centre (TSACC)[149] and is now being expanded to St. Catherine Adult Correction Centre (SCACC) and Forte Augusta Adult Correctional Centre (FAACC). DCS intends to outsource the development of texts which are 'culture sensitive' so that teaching may be done via radio broadcasts and inmates can follow within their cells.

Learners and Teachers

Diversity of teachers and learners

In this section, Sylvia Passley addressed the education settings in prisons, with attention to the degree of social diversity in both teachers and learners. As the prison population is mixed with regards to education levels, inmates having higher levels of academic qualification are usually selected to be teachers. Trained teachers, instructors and Correctional Officers offer training to inmates and wards. Some Correctional Officers receive certification from the Human Employment and Resource Training Trust / National Training Agency (HEART Trust / NTA)[150], and are able to offer courses at a certification level. Wards and inmates can then become HEART certified. Diversity also creates challenges for learners, such as low self esteem among men in prisons and hiding their true selves.

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[149] TSACC is the largest correctional centre in all of Jamaica, housing (as of June 22nd, 2007) 1,703 inmates, all male, both juveniles and adults. TSACC was called the General Penitentiary before the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) made an attempt to focus on the correctional side of their duties over the punitive side.

[150] HEART Trust/NTA is a statutory organization of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture, Jamaica. It is the facilitating and coordinating body for workforce development in Jamaica. We provide access to training, competence assessment and certification to all working age Jamaicans and offer career development and employment facilitation services island-wide.

8. POVERTY AS EXCLUSION[151]

Approaches, Scope and Content

Poverty and inclusion

In the context of the session *Poverty as exclusion,* inclusive education was mainly addressed as a way of ensuring socio-economic inclusion among the most underprivileged groups, including street youth and school drop-outs; HIV/AIDS, teenage parents, at-risk students, and street children. According to presenters, social exclusion refers to a multidimensional process whereby persons are unable to fully participate in social activities and institutions; when they are unable to realize their rights of citizenship and are spatially and socially distant from other socially advantaged groups. Thus, the approach in this session emphasizes "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education"[152]. Representatives of UNICEF underlined the necessity of educating and including the poor segments of society as they tend to be the most vulnerable when it comes to natural disasters.

Public Policies

Education for the reduction of poverty

Presenters emphasized the role of education and training in the reduction of poverty and as a way of promoting social inclusion. Education was addressed as a necessary but not

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[151] The information in this section was adapted from Prof. Andrew S. Downes, Professor of Economics and University Director of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, *Poverty and Exclusion: Can education break the cycle;* Ms Clover Barnett, Chief Technical Director, Human Employment and Resource Training Trust / National Training Agency (HEART Trust / NTA), Jamaica, *What programmes and partnerships for ensuring socio-economic inclusion among the most underprivileged groups;* Ms Sharon Anderson-Morgan, Senior Lecturer, Head of the Special Education Department, Sam Sharpe Teachers' College, St. James, Jamaica, *Outreach programmes for street youth and school drop outs: Some lessons learned and issues to be answered;* Ms Heidi Peugeot, Preparedness/Early Warning, Emergency Operations UNICEF Geneva, *Preparing Education Sector's response to inclusion during natural disasters and emergency situations*, presented in the Caribbean Symposium on Inclusive Education", Kingston, Jamaica, 5-7 December 2007.

[152] UNESCO. 2005. Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All. Paris: UNESCO "Inclusive Education" is critical to workforce training, development and competitiveness in the new global economy

sufficient requirement for poverty reduction in the Caribbean region.[153] Given the high levels of poverty in some Caribbean countries[154], poverty reduction and enhancement of health, education and equity are central elements to the Caribbean's Millennium Development Goals. According to participants, educational policies must be complemented with other public policies to overcome poverty and exclusion. Education for All and inclusive education provide a foundation for the provision of basic education for all children, youth and adults. Some other measures mentioned by presenters include social infrastructure development, production diversification and growth, business development, social protection schemes, labour market reforms, and community development. For example, HEART Trust / NTA's Lifelong Learning[155] initiative is an important complement to lifelong learning goals of this agency and of the Jamaican Ministry of Education. Presenters also noted challenges to policy making, including adequate funding for implementation of educational endeavours. Thus, Clover Barnett[156] emphasized that there must be boldness and will to provide funds to address the low numeracy and literacy levels of applicants/participants to the Human Employment and Resource Training (HEART). He also underlined the need to engage the minds of facilitators in understanding and appreciating diversity in the education and training system. Additionally, representatives of UNICEF made special policy suggestions in the context of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) actions to promote the children's right to education at all times. Heidi Peugeot[157] recommended: (a) the integration of DRR best practices, tools and experiences in schools as carried out by national, international, governmental and non governmental organizations; (b) to identify, compile, systematize and disseminate these tools at the regional level and in all partner

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[153] Prof. Andrew S. Downes, Professor of Economics and University Director of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, *Poverty and Exclusion: Can education break the cycle.*

[154] Antigua 18.4% (2005/6), Belize 33% (1996), Dominica 39% (2002/3), Jamaica 14.8% (2005), St Lucia 28.8% (2006), Trinidad & Tobago 17% (1997)—percentage of the population below the poverty line (reported by Prof. Andrew S. Downes, Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados).

[155] HEART Trust/NTA is a statutory organization of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture, Jamaica. It is the facilitating and coordinating body for workforce development in Jamaica. We provide access to training, competence assessment and certification to all working age Jamaicans and offer career development and employment facilitation services island-wide.

[156] Ms Clover Barnett, Chief Technical Director, Human Employment and Resource Training Trust / National Training Agency (HEART Trust / NTA), Jamaica, *What programmes and partnerships for ensuring socio-economic inclusion among the most underprivileged groups.*

[157] Ms Heidi Peugeot, Preparedness/Early Warning, Emergency Operations UNICEF Geneva, *Preparing Education Sector's response to inclusion during natural disasters and emergency situations*

countries[158]; (c) to improve capacities of the national education sector in all partner countries to assist local DRR preparedness and response initiatives; and (d) to increase resilience in selected communities. Ms. Peugeot also called for inclusive disaster education strategies that can help to provide a 'safe environment' by increasing the need to prevent, mitigate risk, and to be prepared for disasters.

Systems, Links and Transitions

Challenges and Recommendations

Presenters noted a number of challenges to inclusive education in the Caribbean region. These include low completion rates at the secondary level – high drop outs, low levels of certification and skills needed for the labour market – low school achievement/attainment and lack of basic skills. Furthermore, there are questions relating to the quality of teaching and materials needed to enhance the learning process, a mismatch between the labour market and the education system. Indeed, there is inadequate/inappropriate output at the tertiary level, and an inability of some groups to access educational opportunities (disabled, ethnic groups). The lack of funds – transportation, lunch, books and uniform – prevent children from attending school/absenteeism. This has increased pressure on government finances to provide universal access at all levels. Other issues include the role of the private sector in educational provision/funding (high levels of public debt exist), and gender/sex inequality in the school and university system. Prof. Downes[159] noted a call for early childhood education for all children with special attention to those from low socio-economic backgrounds. This in order to remedy the unequal education output, and social inequity as persons from low socio-economic backgrounds are the ones who leave the school system uncertified, which perpetuates the poverty cycle/underachievement of students. Participants proposed that education systems should be flexible, open, well articulated and inclusive to the development of nations' human capital. Additionally, physical facilities need to be adequately resourced to create access

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[158] Six Central American governments: Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala
[159] Prof. Andrew S. Downes, Professor of Economics and University Director of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, *Poverty and Exclusion: Can education break the cycle.*

for persons with special needs. Ms. Peugeot made further suggestions for structural and non-structural measures to address special needs and special circumstances. In terms of structural measures, schools must be in a safe location, designed and adapted to specific needs, as well as possess infrastructure and evacuation plans adapted to specific needs. Non-structural measures suggested including disaster risk reduction issues in curricula (formal / non-formal education), and adapt curricula development to special needs, vulnerabilities, and cultures. UNICEF advocated for a "risk reduction inclusive"[160] curriculum at all education levels, as well as drills, first aid training, and public awareness campaigns. It was noted that the development of awareness material should be adapted for specific needs and cultures, and be useful for teacher training. An example of a programme addressing poverty-related exclusion is the Jamaican High School Equivalency Programme (HISEP). The programme, developed by HEART Trust/ NCTVET[161] provides an opportunity for adults to learn, and receive a high school diploma that will certify that they possess competencies that are equivalent to five years of in-school secondary education. This is considered to be a bridge to employment and education for a large group of individuals who left school without any qualifications.

Learners and Teachers

Social context and public awareness

According to Sharon Anderson-Morgan, "the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he or she finds him or herself"[162]. The outcomes of the Sam Sharpe Centre for Child and Adolescent Development, in Jamaica, illustrate that positive attention and a positive inclusive environment can make a difference. Presenters observed that outcomes included opportunities for building self esteem/self confidence, contributing to a healthy lifestyle,

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[160] Ms Heidi Peugeot, Preparedness/Early Warning, Emergency Operations UNICEF Geneva, *Preparing Education Sector's response to inclusion during natural disasters and emergency situations*

[161] National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training. http://www.nqrjamaica.org/ nationalregister/generalinfo/main.aspx

[162] Ms Sharon Anderson-Morgan, Senior Lecturer, Head of the Special Education Department, Sam Sharpe Teachers' College, St. James, Jamaica, *Outreach programmes for street youth and school drop outs: Some lessons learned and issues to be answered.*

developing personal and social skills, and improving academic performance. Additionally, teacher training was called for to bring about awareness in teachers, learners and the community, of the impact of poverty on education and the social exclusion that is associated with it in the Caribbean region.

VI. CONCLUSION - REGIONAL ROAD MAP: RECOMMENDED ACTIONS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

After discussion within six international groups of sixteen countries of the English-speaking Caribbean, the following Regional Road Map is presented in preparation for ICE 2008. In line with ICE 2008 sub-themes discussion of the working groups addressed the following strategic components of inclusive education: concept; policy and legislation; finance; institutions; curriculum design and implementation; teacher training; awareness and UNESO's role in inclusive education for the region.

THE CONCEPT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:

- An overall agreement among participating countries was presented in relation to UNESCO's definition of inclusive education as presented in the Guidelines for Inclusion, Ensuring Access to Education for All, UNESCO, 2005: "*Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of al learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children*" (p.13).

- Issues discussed regarding the scope, approach and content of inclusive education pointed out as well to an understanding of an inclusive education in terms of an education system where everyone in the society receives a quality education regardless of their physical, intellectual, economic or social condition.

- The concept of inclusive education, approached as a new concept, can be further developed, clarified and sustained by training main stakeholders on the concept and practices of inclusive education (e.g. teachers and principals, parents); this

would lead to self-reflection and a changing attitude necessary for inclusive education reforms.

- Society in general, needs to better understand the concept of inclusive education.

- The excluded should also be involved in inclusive education policy-making and implementation.

- Inclusive education should be supported by national and local discussion fora.

- The concept of inclusive education will be better understood if sustained by research- based information and strategies aiming to reduce exclusion.

- The Caribbean is a diverse region that it requires a general framework of inclusive education that can be embraced at national levels. Thus, participatory countries are in agreement with UNESCO's definition of inclusive education.

- When the concept is in the process of being defined, awareness and a learning process about the subject is set in motion. A SWOT analysis needs to be undertaken to identify common strengths and differences across the region.

- Inclusion goes beyond just placing special needs students in mainstream schools.

- As the concept of inclusive education needs to be better understood in the various Caribbean societies, there is a call to identify exclusion factors, with the aim of achieving an inclusive society.

- The concept of inclusive education involves a whole revision of education systems and an overall socio-cultural change aiming to increase tolerance.

POLICY/LEGISLATION:

- Countries recognized that there are a number of conventions, agreements that provide a framework for national legislations addressing inclusive education. These conventions need to be ratified and national legal frameworks revised and aligned with these instruments. There is a need of empowering the right holder and strengthening the capacity of duty bearer to provide inclusive education.

- Promote the establishment of a policy observatory and along with a protection system for inclusive education practices. Policies should be periodically revised.

- There was an overall claim in the region calling for policies to be implemented and laws to be enforced with the goal of preventing inclusive education to remain only as a rhetorical device of education reform.

- There should be education policies in place supportive of a free and compulsory early childhood education, primary and secondary education. Access to quality education should be for all and not for elite groups.

- Policies should actively discriminate in favour of disadvantaged groups: equity instead of equality.

- Policies should also have as a priority life-long learning for individuals.

- Education policies should attend to the needs of students starting from early childhood education; such an education deserves a focused attention of state funding.

- Teenagers who are pregnant should not be excluded from schools.

- Policy revisions should include a language that promotes definite rather than probable actions; there is still discriminatory language in laws and policies that should be revised.

- There needs to be an improved articulation between special needs education as part of inclusive education.

FINANCE:

- An increase of budgetary allocations is required for inclusive education.

- Transparency, accountability and auditing are needed in relation to the allocation and spending of educational financial resources.

- Allocation of financial resources should be preceded by a financial analysis examining advantages and disadvantages of such costs (i.e. understanding relationship between inclusion and economic and social benefits).

- Allocation and control of financial resources at local school levels was called for.

- Funding of School Feeding Programs was noted as an advantage to reach inclusive education goals.

- Countries have also to consider settling their high debts at the same time that there is competition for scarce resources among the various state sectors.

- There is a need of an equitable and efficient allocation of financial resources according to identified needs.

- There was an overall claim calling for the involvement in and linkage of the private sector with education. Also, non-governmental and religious organizations were called upon to participate in inclusive education.

- Partnerships with developed countries regarding financial support should be pursued. Donor agencies should be better informed about allocating funding to inclusive education purposes.

- Poverty is a main barrier when considering priorities of inclusive education.

- Policy planning should involve the identification of priorities clearly followed by appropriate resources on a long term basis. A lack of political will and a lack of vision are factors to consider in a revised policy planning.

INSTITUTIONS:

- Inclusive education requires a system wide reform, including the revision of the school management system; training of education administrators is necessary in the context of inclusive education.

- Inter-ministerial collaboration, and also coordination among all education sectors, are necessary to carry out inclusive education reforms.

- Schools' physical infrastructure needs to change in order to welcome children with disabilities.

- More coordination is needed at local levels regarding the involvement of private and public actors to support school action towards inclusive education; community participation should be increased and community service learning should be explored as a tool to further develop inclusive education objectives.

- Physical school infrastructure should be improved to become more accessible and child friendly.

- Parents' organizations and community groups should be involved in inclusive education policy-making.

- The role of the school was defined as assisting to develop the full potential of all children regardless of their differences. Schools need to promote acceptance and diversity among students.

CURRICULUM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION:

- Curricula should be revised to recognize and address multiple intelligences; it should be child centred, encourage active learning and be relevant to and inclusive of the diversity not only of learners but also of teachers.

- Classroom activities should highlight the accomplishments of differently enabled students.

- The importance of an early childhood education, as essential for basic education, and attending to the diverse needs of students, was reiterated as key for inclusive education goals.

- Overall, there was a strong call for revising assessment methods and standards. Keeping a curricular agenda of high standards and "testing" is a form of exclusion. Pluralize the standards and assessment (e.g. anecdotal records), preventing them from becoming hegemonic. Assessment should be continuous linking all education levels.

- A curriculum in line with inclusive education has to be flexible, dynamic and adjustable not rigidly presented by curriculum units.

- Bilingual education is a key issue to address within inclusive education. Legal frameworks should support it and it should be included in the UN declaration for the rights of indigenous peoples.

- Reading across the curriculum should be promoted in primary and secondary schools.

- It is highly important to lower teacher child-ratio in classrooms in order to provide to provide quality education that is inclusive of all kinds of learners.

- Inclusive education pedagogies should explore and test modifications/use of assistive devices.

- The role of Information Technology should be further explore to advance inclusive education objectives.

TEACHER TRAINING:

- Overall, teacher training in the Caribbean was identified as not conducive to inclusive education, and thus, in need of various reforms. As a starting point, values and attitudes underlying teaching objectives and practices should be revised in light of inclusive education. Common standards in teacher education programs regarding inclusive education should be considered, aiming to highlight commonalities in the region.

- As an identified disadvantage, participants noted how there are a few teachers coming from excluded teachers – there should be more diversity within the teacher population and institutions.

- Overall, the teaching profession has to be more highly valued in society.

- Move away from idea that one teacher can provide everything.

- Engage the private sector in the discussion of teachers' certification.

- Teacher training is focused too much on the objective of standards and exams instead of doing so on flexible curricular practices of inclusive education. Teachers should be trained in skills for individual learning styles, using positive approaches and behavioral management techniques.

- Assessment techniques should be improved to enable teachers to tailor programmes for students and their various needs.

- The collaboration between regular education teachers and special education teachers/schools should be increased.

- There is the proposal of a Joint Board of Accreditation for Teachers' certification in the Region (with common standards).

- Review pre-service and in-service teacher training programs; refocus the role of special education teachers; provide incentives to competencies required from teachers during their training processes.

- Teacher training programs should be compensated by the government; for example, with the provision of scholarships for those teachers involved with inclusive education; motivation for teachers to be involved with inclusive education.

AWARENESS:

- Establish national commissions on inclusive education.

- Develop associations focusing on advocacy for inclusive education with special attention to reach out to parents and teachers.

- Regional awareness in preparation for ministerial representation in Geneva 2008; regional conferences on inclusive education should be considered for the future. (E.g. CARICOM suggest regional ministerial meeting).

- Document real-life examples of inclusive education and submit to journals and newsletters.

- Promote an understanding of inclusive education among media groups and personnel (education of media personnel on relevant issues and terminology so that they can in turn inform the community).

- Share and celebrate successful best practices in order to network effectively inter and intra-regionally.

- Involve likely opponents in promotion of inclusive education.

- Advocacy and communication to change society's perception of marginalized groups; terminology should be changed to be more positive.

- Emphasize in public media positive aspects of inclusion.

- There should be incentives for institutions that are actively involved in inclusive education as an example to others; we should disseminate research findings to better inform those involved in inclusive education; research-based information.

- There is usefulness in having internet tools that facilitate an ongoing discussion and learning process at a regional level about inclusive education practices.

- "We ourselves can take the lead in increasing awareness by establishing diversity circles of discussion" (e.g. town hall meetings are proposed as a venue for local level discussions).

UNESCO'S ROLE:

- UNESCO should provide an internet portal for sharing and disseminating information, support research.

- UNESCO should provide financial support for establishing national commissions on inclusive education.

- UNESCO should continue furthering the public awareness of the value of human rights as necessary for inclusive education.

- UNESCO should become a communication link for the international community; also, it should provide technical support to discuss inclusive education at governmental levels (e.g. advocacy and training); helpful as a clearinghouse involving feedback from all the territories.

- UNESCO should proactively engage UNESCO commissions and chief education officers in the dissemination and discussion of inclusive education.

- UNESCO should support research-based policy proposals based on evidence and not on perception.

- Inter-agency collaborative work should be pursued (e.g. collaborationbetween UNESCO and UNICEF).

- There was an overall claim calling for more research studies in the area of inclusive education.

VII APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

<u>AGENDA</u>

"CARIBBEAN SYMPOSIUM ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION"

HILTON KINGSTON

KINGSTON, JAMAICA

5-7 DECEMBER 2007

Wednesday, December 5, 2007
- Les Ambassadeurs Room, 18th floor -

16.00:-16.30   Registration

<u>Opening Session</u>

Sign Language Interpretation provided by Ms Carol Robertson
Jamaica Association for the Deaf

Chair: The Honourable Ms Desrey Caesar Fox, Minister within the Ministry of Education, Guyana

- **Welcome address:**

    Mr Paolo Fontani, Officer-in-Charge and Education Programme Manager, UNESCO Office for the Caribbean

- **Opening remarks:**

16:30-18:00   Dr Rebecca Tortello, Senior Advisor to the Minister of Education, representing The Honourable Mr Andrew Holness, Minister of Education, Jamaica

    Ms Myrna Bernard, Director, Human Development, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat

- **Introductory speech**:

    Mr Renato Opertti, Coordinator of the Capacity Building Programme, UNESCO International Bureau of Education (UNESCO-IBE), *A New Vision for Inclusive Education*

- **Keynote address***:*

    Dr. Carol Hordatt Gentles, Lecturer, Institute of Education, University of the West Indies, Mona, *Rights-based approach to inclusive education in the Caribbean: myth or reality?*

18:00 - 19:30   Reception

08:00 – 08:15   **Welcome Coffee**

08:15 – 09:00   **Welcome Address and participants' introduction:**

[Chair: Ms Myrna Bernard, CARICOM Secretariat]

- Mr Renato Opertti, Coordinator of the Capacity Building Programme, IBE-UNESCO, *The structure and objectives of the symposium*

- Ms Jill Van den Brule, Section for Inclusion and Quality Enhancement, Division for the Promotion of Basic Education, UNESCO Headquarters, *A human rights framework for inclusion*

09:00- 10:15   **SESSION 1.1 – The concept and practice of Inclusive Education in the Caribbean: Short presentation of country reports:**

Country reports and presentations to follow the structure of ICE 2008:
       (v)   Approaches, Scope and Content
       (vi)   Public Policies
       (vii)   Systems, Links and Transitions
       (viii)   Learners and Teachers

[Moderator: Mr Renato Opertti, IBE]

Anguilla: Ms Sandra Fahie, Education Officer, Curriculum

Antigua and Barbuda: Ms Edrys Joseph, EFA Coordinator

Bahamas: Mr Ross Smith, Superintendent, North East District

Barbados: Ms Jessica Browne, Senior Education Officer

Belize: Ms Maud Hyde, Chief Education Officer

10:15- 10:30   Coffee Break

10:30– 12:00   **SESSION 1.2 – The concept and practice of Inclusive Education in the Caribbean: Short presentation of country reports:**

[Moderator: Mr Renato Opertti, IBE]

British Virgin Islands: Ms. Lorna Dawson, Special Education Officer

Cayman Islands: Ms Angela Martins, Chief Education Officer

Commonwealth of Dominica: Dr. Jeffrey Blaize**,** Senior Education Officer, Secondary Schools

Grenada: Ms Agnes St. John-John, Teacher, Special Education Needs, attached to the Ministry of Education

Guyana: Hon. Dr. Desrey Caesar Fox, Minister within the Ministry of Education

Jamaica: Ms Salomie Evering, Deputy Chief Education Officer, Curriculum and Support Services

12:00 – 13:00   Lunch

13:00 – 14:15   **SESSION 1.3– The concept and practice of Inclusive Education in the Caribbean: Short presentation of country reports:**

[Moderator: Mr Renato Opertti, IBE]

St. Christopher and Nevis: Ms Ruth Thomas**,** Director, Curriculum Development Unit

St. Lucia: Ms Cynthia Weekes Education Officer - Special Needs

St. Vincent and the Grenadines: Ms Laura Browne, Permanent Secretary

Suriname: Ms Prya Hirasingh, Chief Education Officer and EFA Coordinator

Trinidad and Tobago: Mr Steve Williams, Manager, Student Support Services Division, and Coordinator of the Inclusive Education Team

14:15 - 15:30   **SESSION 2.1 – The concept and the practice of Inclusive Education: Which are the core themes for the discussion in other regions?**

[Moderator: Mr Everton Hannam, Secretary-General,
Jamaican National Commission for UNESCO]

- **Dr. Mariano Palamidessi**, Academic Coordinator, Master of Education, University of San Andres, Argentina, *Lessons learned from Latin America*

- **Dr. Susan Elizabeth Miles**, Programme Director, Master of Education in Special and Inclusive Education, School of Education, University of Manchester, UK, *The Anglo-Saxon perspective on inclusion*

15:30 – 15.40   Coffee Break

15:40 – 16:30   **SESSION 2.2 – Working session to identify common trends, challenges and opportunities for the Caribbean**

[Moderator: Ms Carolina Belalcazar, IBE]

18:30-19:30   *- In association with the University of the West Indies -*

Public lecture

Prof. Barry Chevannes
Professor of Social Anthropology, UWI Mona

"Percy the Chick: Education and male socialization in the Caribbean"

Venue: Undercroft of the Senate Building, UWI Mona Campus

Friday, December 7, 2007

08:00 – 08:30   **Welcome Coffee - Les Ambassadeurs Room, 18th floor –**

08:30 – 10:00   *CONCURRENT THEMATIC SESSIONS*

[Presentations of 10 minutes each, followed by a debate with participants]

SESSION 3.1 - <u>Access of persons with disabilities to quality education</u>

- Les Ambassadeurs Room, 18th floor -

*Sign Language Interpretation provided by Ms Michelle Baker,
Jamaica Association for the Deaf*

[Moderator: Mr Hixwell Douglas, Education Officer, Braille and Large Print Programme,
Ministry of Education, Jamaica]

- Ms Dotsie Bacchus, Vice-President, Caribbean Association for Mobilizing Resources and Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities (CAMRODD), *Caribbean Education Systems' response to the learning needs of disabled communities: Are we on the right pathway?*

- Ms Kaye Sargeant, Education Officer in charge of special needs, Ministry of Education, Barbados, *Integrating students with special needs within mainstream schools: lessons learned from recent experiences in Barbados*

- Ms Avril Daley, Special Education Department, Mico Teachers' College, Jamaica, *Special education institutions or mainstream schools... what implications for curriculum development and teacher training?*

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SESSION 3.2 - <u>Teaching in inclusive education systems</u>

- St. Ann's Meeting Room, 2nd floor -

[Moderator: Ms Angela Martins, Chief Education Officer,
Ministry of Education, Cayman Islands]

- Ms Elaine Foster-Allen, Principal, Shortwood Teachers' College, Kingston, Jamaica, *What Pedagogy for Inclusion?*

- Ms Sharon Warner, Caribbean Union of Teachers, and member of the Barbados Union of Teachers, *Diversities in the classroom: What challenges and opportunities for teachers?*

- Ms Angelita Arnold, Director, Mico College Child Assessment and Research in Education (C.A.R.E.) Centre, *What mechanisms for early assessment and intervention? How can we ensure access to an effective continuum of guidance, counselling and referral services?*

10:00 –10:15   Coffee Break

10:15 – 11:45   *CONCURRENT THEMATIC SESSIONS*

[Presentations of 10 minutes each, followed by a debate with participants]

SESSION 4.1 - <u>Gender-based exclusion in Caribbean schools</u>

- Les Ambassadeurs Room, 18th floor -

[Moderator: Prof. Barbara Bailey, Regional Coordinator, Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS), University of the West Indies (UWI)]

- Prof. Hyacinth Evans, Institute of Education, UWI Mona, *Issues of gender and gender equality in Caribbean Schools*

- Mr Zara Heron, Penwood High School, Kingston, Jamaica, *Practicing the gender reality within the classroom: lessons learned from a teacher's experience*

- Ms Myrna Bernard, Director, Human Development, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, *Recommendations from the CARICOM/UNICEF meeting on boys and education, Belize, November 2007*

- Ms Zoe Simpson, Director of Field Operations, Women's Center, Jamaica, *Teenage Pregnancy from an education and human development perspective: what challenges, what responses?*

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SESSION 4.2 - Indigenous populations, cultural minorities and inclusive education in the Caribbean

- St. Ann's Meeting Room, 2nd floor -

[Moderator: Ms Anna Lucia D'Emilio, Regional Advisor, Excluded Populations, UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean]

- Hon. Dr. Desrey Caesar Fox, Minister within the Ministry of Education, Guyana, *Inclusion of Indigenous Populations and Cultural Minorities in Caribbean Education Systems: Why is it an issue…?*

- Dr. Filiberto Penados, Lecturer, Education and Development Studies for Indigenous Populations, Galen University, Belize*; Former Chair and co-director of the Central American Indigenous Council, *Towards Inclusive Education: Lessons learned from the experience of indigenous peoples in Belize*

11:45-13:00   *CONCURRENT THEMATIC SESSIONS*

[Presentations of 10 minutes each, followed by a debate with participants]

SESSION 5.1 - Inclusion of people living with HIV and AIDS within Caribbean education systems

- St. Ann's Meeting Room, 2nd floor -

[Moderator: Ms Myrna Bernard, Director, Human Development, Caricom Secretariat]

- Ms Sophia Edwards-Gabriel, Executive Chair, Caribbean Education Sector HIV & AIDS Coordinators Network (EDUCAN)*, Towards the development of a comprehensive education sectors' response to HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean: Main orientations, challenges and lessons learned*

- Mr Christopher Dorsett, Chairman, Caribbean Regional Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CRN+), *Inclusion of persons living with or affected by HIV and AIDS: What still needs to be done?*

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SESSION 5.2 - <u>Inclusion in early childhood education</u>

- Les Ambassadeurs Room, 18th floor -

Moderator: Ms Sian Williams, Sub-regional Advisor on Early Childhood for the Caribbean, UNICEF Jamaica

- Ms Patricia McPherson, Senior Programme Officer, Education, CARICOM Secretariat, *What Challenges for Inclusion in Early Childhood Education in the Caribbean?*

- Ms Beverly Leblanc, AEO/Early Childhood Education (ag.), Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Sports and Youth Affairs, Commonwealth of Dominica, *Programming for Early Childhood Education in a context of increasingly diverse settings: Lessons learned from the Commonwealth of Dominica*

- Dr. Marigold Thorburn, Chair, Parenting Partners Caribbean, *Inclusion of children with special needs in early childhood settings: is it just about resources?*

13:00 – 14:00   Lunch

14:00 – 15:30   *CONCURRENT THEMATIC SESSIONS*

[Presentations of 10 minutes each, followed by a debate with participants]

SESSION 6.1 – <u>Violence and inclusion</u>

- St. Ann's Meeting Room, 2nd floor -

[Moderator: Mr Paolo Fontani, Education Programme Manager, UNESCO Office for the Caribbean]

- Prof. Maureen Samms-Vaughan, Executive Chairman, Early Childhood Commission, Jamaica, *Violence and its impact on underachievement and drop-out*

- Mr Sylvester Anderson, President, National Parent Teachers' Association of Jamaica (NPTAJ), *Reducing domestic and school-based violence: What mediation between schools, children and parents?*

- Ms Sylvia Passley, Inmate Welfare Coordinator, Rehabilitation Unit, Department of Correctional Services, Ministry of National Security, Jamaica, *What education services for inclusion and rehabilitation in prison settings*

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SESSION 6.2 – <u>Poverty as exclusion</u>

- Les Ambassadeurs Room, 18th floor -

[Moderator: Ms Laura Browne, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, tbc]

- Prof. Andrew S. Downes, Professor of Economics and University Director of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, Cave Hill Campus, Barbados, *Poverty and Exclusion: Can education break the cycle?*

- Ms Clover Barnett, Chief Technical Director, Human Employment and Resource Training Trust / National Training Agency (HEART Trust / NTA), Jamaica, *What programmes and partnerships for ensuring socio-economic inclusion among the most underprivileged groups?*

- Ms Sharon Anderson-Morgan, Senior Lecturer, Head of the Special Education Department, Sam Sharpe Teachers' College, St. James, Jamaica, *Outreach programmes for street youth and school drop outs: Some lessons learned and issues to be answered*

- Ms Heidi Peugeot, Preparedness/Early Warning, Emergency Operations UNICEF Geneva, *Preparing Education Sector's response to inclusion during natural disasters and emergency situations*

15:30 – 15:45   Coffee Break

15:45-18:30   **SESSION 7 – Further development and finalization of regional roadmap - ICE 2008**

- **- Les Ambassadeurs Room, 18th floor -**

Moderated by:

- Mr Renato Opertti, Coordinator of the Capacity Building Programme, IBE-UNESCO
- Ms Jill Van den Brule, Section for Inclusion and Quality Enhancement, Division for the Promotion of Basic Education, UNESCO HQ.

18.30-19:00   Closing remarks

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

"CARIBBEAN SYMPOSIUM ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION"

HILTON KINGSTON

KINGSTON, JAMAICA

5-7 DECEMBER 2007

Anguilla

Ms Sandra Fahie	Education Officer, Curriculum, Ministry of Education
Mr Worrel Brooks	Education Planner (Acting), Ministry of Education

Antigua and Barbuda

Ms Edrys Joseph	EFA Coordinator, Ministry of Education
Ms Cynthea Crump	Ministry of Education

Argentina

Dr Mariano Palamidessi	Academic Coordinator, Master of Education, University of San Andres, Argentina

Bahamas

Mr Ross Smith	Superintendent, North East District, Ministry of Education

Barbados

Ms Jessica Browne	Senior Education Officer, Ministry of Education
Ms Kaye Sargeant	Education Officer - Special Needs, Ministry of Education
Ms Sharon Warner	Caribbean Union of Teachers, and member of the Barbados Union of Teachers
Prof. Andrew S. Downes	Professor of Economics and University Director of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES), Cave Hill Campus

Belize

Ms Maud Hyde	Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education
Ms Dativa Martinez	Director, National Resource Centre for Inclusive Education
Dr Filiberto Penados	Lecturer, Education and development studies for indigenous populations, Galen University

British Virgin Islands

Ms Carolyn O'Neal Williams	Secretary-General, British Virgin Islands' National Commission for UNESCO, Ministry of Education
Ms Valentine Lewis	Education Officer - Examinations, Ministry of Education
Ms Lorna Dawson	Education Officer - Special Needs, Ministry of Education

Cayman Islands

Ms Angela Martins	Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education
Mr Vaughan Carter	Deputy Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Education

Commonwealth of Dominica

Dr Jeffrey Blaize	SEO/Secondary Schools, Ministry of Education
Ms Beverly Leblanc	AEO/Early Childhood Education (ag.), Ministry of Education
Mr Christopher Dorsett	Chairman, Caribbean Regional Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (CRN+)

Grenada

Ms Agnes St. John-John	Graduate Teacher, Special Education Needs (MA), attached to the Ministry of Education
Ms Michelle Brathwaite	Deputy Principal, School for the Deaf

Guyana

Hon. Dr. Desrey Caesar Fox	Minister within the Ministry of Education
Ms Bibi Shariman Ali	Curriculum Development Officer, National Centre for Educational Resource Development, Ministry of Education
Ms Myrna Bernard	Director, Human Development, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat
Ms Patricia Mac Pherson	Senior Programme Officer, Education, CARICOM Secretariat

Jamaica

Dr Rebecca Tortello	Senior Advisor to the Minister of Education
Ms Salomie Evering	Deputy Chief Education Officer, Curriculum and Support Services, Ministry of Education
Dr. Jennivie Tracey	Senior Education Officer - Curriculum Specialist, Ministry of Education
Mr Hixwell Douglas	Education Officer, Braille and Large Print Programme, Ministry of Education
Mr Everton Hannam	Secretary-General, Jamaica National Commission for UNESCO

Dr Carol Hordatt Gentles	Lecturer, Institute of Education, University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona Campus
Prof. Barry Chevannes	Professor of Social Anthropology, University of the West Indies, Mona Campus
Ms Avril Daley	Special Education Department, Mico Teachers' College, Kingston
Ms Elaine Foster-Allen	Principal, Shortwood Teachers' College, Kingston
Ms Angelita Arnold	Director, Mico College Child Assessment and Research in Education (C.A.R.E.) Centre, Kingston
Prof. Barbara Bailey	Regional Coordinator of the Centre for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS), UWI
Prof. Hyacinth Evans	Institute of Education, UWI Mona
Mr Zara Heron	Penwood High School, Kingston
Ms Beryl Weir	President, Women's Center
Ms Zoe Simpson	Director of Field Operations, Women's Center
Dr Marigold Thorburn	Chair, Parenting Partners Caribbean
Prof. Maureen Samms-Vaughan	Executive Chairman, Early Childhood Commission
Mr Sylvester Anderson	President, National Parent Teachers' Association of Jamaica (NPTAJ)
Ms Sylvia Passley	Inmate Welfare Coordinator, Rehabilitation Unit, Department of Correctional Services, Ministry of National Security
Ms Clover Barnett	Chief Technical Director, Human Employment and Resource Training Trust / National Training Agency (HEART Trust / NTA)
Ms Sharon Anderson-Morgan	Senior Lecturer, Head of the Special Education Department, Sam Sharpe Teachers' College, St. James
Mr Steven Kerr	Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ)
Mr. Frank Weeple	Executive Director, Education Transformation Team, Ministry of Education
Ms Celia Champagnie	Citizenship Education Programme Manager, Ministry of Education
Prof. Lawrence D. Carrington	Director, School of Continuing Studies, UWI Mona
Ms Karen Hewitt-Kennedy	Principal, Portmore Community College
Prof. Marcia Stewart	Administrator, Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE), Institute of Education, UWI Mona
Dr. Kay Anderson	CITE (Consortium of Institutions for Teacher Education) St. Joseph Teachers' College
Dr Ethley D. London	University Council of Jamaica
Mr Ransford Wright	Director, Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities
Ms Antonica Gunter Gayle	Director, Early Stimulation Programme, Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities
Mr. Ricky Pascoe	President, Jamaica Network of Seropositives (JN+)
Ms. Olive Edwards	Jamaica Network of Seropositives (JN+)

Mr Barrington Perry	Jamaica Foundation for Lifelong Learning
Ms Alison Anderson	Chief Executive Officer, Child Development Agency
Ms. Deborah Duperly-Pinks	Consultant
Prof. Neville Duncan	Director, Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES), UWI Mona
Ms Gerlin Bean	Executive Director, 3D Projects
Ms Lilly Roberts	3D Projects
Ms Grace Duncan	Executive Director, Jamaica Association for Persons with Mental Retardation (JAPMR)
Ms Grace A. Taylor	Managing Director, Abilities Foundation
Ms Iris Soutar	Chief Executive Officer, Jamaica Association for the Deaf
Ms Melissa Rattray	Deaf Adult Services Officer, Jamaica Association for the Deaf
Ms Carol Robertson	Sign Language Interpreter, Jamaica Association for the Deaf
Mr Conrad Harris	Director of Programmes, Jamaica Society for the Blind
Dr. Nancy George	Dr. Nancy George & Associates
Mr. Howard Gough	Richmond Fellowship Jamaica
Ms Michelle Golding Morris	Salvation Army School for the Blind, Head, Integrated Programme
Mr Robert Williams	Student - Integrated at Jamaica College
Mr Dennal Shim	Student - Integrated at Calabar High School
Mr Dwayne Gramham	Student - Integrated at Calabar High School Alister Mclean
Ms Lushane Myles	Student - Integrated at Mona High School
Mr Jason Rickett	Student - Integrated at Meadowbrook High
Ms Samoya Jordan	Student - Integrated at Meadowbrook High
Ms Cheyanne Lester	Student - Integrated at Queens High School

St Christopher and Nevis

Ms Ruth Thomas	Director, Curriculum Development Unit, Ministry of Education
Mr Vernon Benjamin	Coordinator, Measurement & Testing, Ministry of Education

St. Lucia

Ms Cynthia Weekes	Education Officer - Special Needs, Ministry of Education
Ms Sophia Edwards-Gabriel	Executive Chair, Caribbean Education Sector HIV & AIDS Coordinators Network (EDUCAN), and St.Lucia HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Project, Focal Point, Ministry of Education and Culture

St Vincent and the Grenadines

Ms Laura Browne	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
Ms Deborah Bacchus	Senior Education Officer, Curriculum Development Unit, Ministry of Education

Suriname

Ms Prya Hirasingh	Chief Education Officer and EFA Coordinator, Ministry of Education
Mr Andre Kramp	Senior Policy Advisor and Coordinator Educational Reform Project, Ministry of Education

Trinidad and Tobago

Mr Steve Williams	Manager, Student Support Services Division, Ministry of Education, and Coordinator of the Inclusive Education Team Component in the Seamless Education Plan
Ms Cheryl Ann Grant	Inclusive Education Specialist, Ministry of Education
Ms Dotsie Bacchus	Vice-President, Caribbean Association for Mobilizing Resources and Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities (CAMRODD)
Ms Karen Sealey	Regional Director, UNAIDS Caribbean

United Kingdom (UK)

Dr Susan Elizabeth Miles	Director, Master of Education in Special and Inclusive Education, School of Education, University of Manchester

World Bank

Ms Chingboon Lee	Leader, Human Development Sector, World Bank, The Caribbean
Ms Cynthia Hobbs	Senior Education Specialist, World Bank, The Caribbean

UNAIDS

Ms Miriam Maluwa	Resident representative, UNAIDS

UNICEF

Ms Anna Lucia D'Emilio	Regional Advisor, Excluded Populations, UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
Mr Garren Lumpkin	UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the

	Caribbean
Ms Heidi Peugeot	Preparedness / Early Warning, Emergency Operations UNICEF Geneva
Ms Sian Williams	Sub-regional Advisor on Early Childhood, UNICEF Jamaica
Mr Bertrand Bainvel	Resident representative, UNICEF Jamaica

UNESCO

Mr Renato Opertti	Coordinator of the Capacity Building Programme, UNESCO International Bureau of Education (UNESCO-IBE)
Ms Carolina Belalcazar	Capacity Building Program, UNESCO International Bureau of Education (UNESCO-IBE)
Ms Jill Van den Brule	Section for Inclusion and Quality Enhancement, Division for the Promotion of Basic Education, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris
Mr Paolo Fontani	Programme Manager, Education, UNESCO Kingston, Cluster Office for the Caribbean
Mr Matthias Lansard	Programme Specialist, Education, UNESCO Kingston, Cluster Office for the Caribbean
Ms Oraine Russell	Education Secretary, UNESCO Kingston, Cluster Office for the Caribbean
Ms Lucet Montgomery	Education Secretary, UNESCO Kingston, Cluster Office for the Caribbean