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TRANSITION OF THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, UWI, MONA

EDUExchange E-DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Date of Discussion:

December 4-6, 2012

Professor Stafford Griffith, the Director of the School of Education, and Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education at University of the West Indies, was the moderator for the recently concluded Jamaica Partners for Educational Progress E-Discussion, EduExchange, held between December 4 and 6, 2012. Members shared their views concerning the CoP's future endeavours as part of the School of Education, UWI Mona. The full discussion is available on the [Jamaica Partners for Educational Progress website](#).

December 28, 2012

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PARTICIPANTS

We received fourteen comments for the discussion, for which we thank the following persons:

- Courtney Brown
- Beverley Bryan
- Karian Cameron - Hamilton
- Joyce Campbell
- Novelette McLean Francis
- Halden Morris
- Rohan Perry
- Claudia Riddell

Contributors belonged to the following organisations:

- Early Childhood Commission
- McCam Child Development Centre
- Ministry of National Security
- Old Harbour Primary School
- Peace Management Initiative
- University of the West Indies
- USAID/ Jamaica Basic Education Project

Authors' Acknowledgments...

Thank you to our moderator, Professor Stafford Griffith. Thank you also to everyone who contributed to the discussion by posting comments and sharing experiences, and resources.

BACKGROUND

Jamaica Partners for Educational Progress began in June 2010 as a USAID funded community of practice (CoP) in basic education. Since then, over 200 education stakeholders have been engaged in several online discussions and in-person events.

In its second year, the CoP has found a new home within the School of Education at the University of the West Indies, Mona. Therefore, it was important to obtain members' views and concerns, which will play a critical role in ensuring continued relevance and improvement. This EduExchange online discussion served to gain inputs from our members as the CoP enters the transition phase.



Fig. 1: CoP members speak with each other at in-person event

Discussant expressed support and enthusiasm for the continuation of the CoP under the auspices of the School of Education, UWI, Mona and welcomed the expansion of the areas of focus beyond basic education. As part of the School of Education, the CoP's potential as a vehicle for mutually beneficial interactions that promote awareness of the most recent research and opportunities to involve stakeholders in education in research work, would be realised. Professor Griffith noted that "EduExchanges will provide us at the School of Education with the opportunity to

"Under the auspices of the UWI, the issue of sustainability will be resolved as thought leaders will continue to create pathways to solutions and point out new ventures and standards of excellence and stimulate a paradigm shift"

Joyce Campbell
Old Harbour Primary School

I served as a member of a team of persons from the Mona Campus of the UWI engaged in discussions with representatives of USAID and the Knowledge-Driven Microenterprise Development (KDMD), which was responsible for the implementation of the Community of Practice (CoP) Project, about finding a new home base for the Community of Practice (CoP). The objective of these discussions was to assure the sustainability of the CoP after the close-out of its management by KDMD.

The School of Education has agreed to assume responsibility for the sustainability of the initiative, with the understanding that the CoP will be broadened to consider not only basic education issues, but also a range of other issues pertaining to various levels of the education system which can benefit from discussion in the Community.

Professor Stafford Griffith
School of Education, UWI, Mona

bring our work closer to members of the Community. It will also provide us with the opportunity to benefit from the views of a larger Community and help to bring a greater degree of relevance and realism to some of the discussions on topical issues in which we engage our students" (Stafford Griffith, December 4, 2012). Ultimately, online discussion and other CoP activities help to promote the utilization of best practices and improve educational outcomes of students in the region.

GOING FORWARD

Vision of the CoP – School of Education Perspective

- Address issues at all levels of the education system;
- Expand membership to include professionals and non-professionals who have an interest;
- Conduct special EduExchanges to explore issues that are of concern to the wider Jamaican and Caribbean community;
- Share research work of the School of Education with the CoP and obtain feedback; and
- Involve the CoP in our research work.

Discussants were keen on having a discussion on issue of safer schools and the reduction in truancy, expulsion and suspensions. Members recognised it as an area of need as it relates to sharing best practices and access to research. The School of Education has conducted and is currently doing research in this area and Professor Griffith noted that one or more EduExchanges may be used to consider associated issues in the future.

This discussion highlights that the CoP is valued and will continue to receive support. Going forward, it is important to recognise that while the focus is on how to overcome the many issues that affect stakeholders in the education system, acknowledgement of success stories are equally important. Through this medium, knowledge and information sharing among this interdisciplinary community can promote culturally relevant, innovative solutions, and empower stakeholders at different levels of the education system to effect change for continued educational progress.

Stakeholder expectations were revealed throughout the three day discussion. Members expect the CoP to:

- Provide opportunities to model/ highlight best practice;
- Facilitate coaching and mentorship relationships;
- Have greater participation
- Have discussions that are of academic quality rather than mere opinions
- Include sharing of anecdotal accounts and personal reflections

Members offered several suggestions for consideration. These include:

- Having a potential list of topics/ areas for scheduled EduExchanges with the flexibility to add more topics
- Having EduExchanges at the small group level e.g. targeted groups for certain discussions
- Highlighting success stories in education.
- Conducting EduExchanges at least once monthly

I am quite interested in seeing the CoP continue. As part of the policy making team in the Ministry of National Security with responsibility for Crime Prevention and Community Safety we have a strong interest in best practices that create safer school environments as well as in practices that increase successful school completion percentages and reduce truancy, expulsions and suspensions. School practices and outcomes have a direct impact not only on the immediate school environment but also on the overall sense of safety in the general population. I look forward to contribute especially to discussions pertinent to the issues stated earlier.

Courtney Brown,
Ministry of National Security