

ARTHUR LOK JACK  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES



CONCEPT PAPER

**DEVELOPMENT OF A CARICOM STRATEGIC PLAN FOR  
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES  
IN THE CARICOM SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY (CSME)**

By

Dr. Didacus Jules

Registrar

Caribbean Examinations Council

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## Acronyms

CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CAPE	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examinations
CCSLC	Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence
CSME	Caribbean Single Market & Economy
CEE	Common Entrance Exam
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualification
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OERU	OECS Education Reform Unit
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education

## 1.0 Introduction & Overview

From the inception of the regional integration movement, the narrative has always maintained the focus on people as central to the process of bringing the Caribbean together and it is vital – if this is to be attained - that an effective functional framework for education and human resource development be constructed.

Given the textured history of regional collaboration, it is important too that this architecture build on that experience and take account of national idiosyncrasies. Some underlying principles that ought to be observed include:

- Functional collaboration in education should start with essential lines of convergence that would add value to the national as well as the regional agenda.
- The agenda, while establishing a minimum common framework, should always allow a window of flexibility within which national authorities can address particular needs.

### 1.1 Philosophical Introduction

This policy paper seeks to address issues in BASIC EDUCATION defined as the continuum of education provision from early childhood to primary to secondary education (incorporating also technical and vocational education). Too often studies of this nature have focused on primary and secondary education and ignored the vital importance of pre-primary or early childhood education in laying the foundation for achievement in later years. Additionally, the pace of globalisation and the impact of the technological revolution have made higher education a developmental imperative and have made it necessary to redefine basic education as inclusive of secondary education. The paper therefore treats basic education as the new minimum but holistic educational standard that the region is expected to deliver to its citizens.

#### *Two philosophical underpinnings*

There are two philosophical postures underlying this strategy and they derive from:

1. *UNESCO Imperatives for Learning in the 21st Century* – learning to learn, learning to be, learning to do and learning to live together encapsulate the critical competencies required for navigating the challenges of this historical era. The table below details the policy and curriculum implications of these learning imperatives for national education systems.

<b>Learn to Live Together</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Conflict resolution</li> <li>• Cultural sensitivity</li> <li>• Multi-lingualism</li> </ul>
<b>Learn to Be</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-esteem</li> <li>• Emotional intelligence</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Cultural awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Learn to Do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Capacity to act</li> <li>• Ability to apply knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>Learn to Learn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solid academic base – reading &amp; numeracy</li> <li>• Comprehension</li> <li>• Ability to research and analyze</li> </ul>

PILLARS & FOUNDATIONS

Source: Jules 2001

2. *Statement of the Ideal Caribbean Person* – This statement, approved by CARICOM Heads in 1996, identifies the essential characteristics of the ideal Caribbean person and ought to be adopted as one of the philosophical aims of education in the region. Like the UNESCO Imperatives, it speaks to the holistic and integral development of the person and the relationship to others and to the environment.

*Some key questions*

The key questions that we need to address at the regional level include:

- *To what extent are our education systems providing the knowledge, skills and competencies required to not just survive but thrive in today's globally competitive environment?*
- *To what extent is education in the Caribbean promoting the ideals of and facilitating the regional integration movement and providing the skills and knowledge vital to its realization i.e. is education assisting in the formation of the Ideal Caribbean Person?*
- *To what extent is education contributing to the eradication of social inequality and providing an avenue for emancipation from poverty of pocket and spirit?*
- *What are the essential elements of an adequate framework for harmonization of education across the region which would add value to national education systems and progressively foster regional integration?*

These issues have been factored into the strategy outlined in this paper.

**1.2 Definition, Scope & Coverage of the Basic Education Sector**

*Comparative charts and statistics*

As a region, basic education coverage in the Caribbean compares favorably with developing countries. The age coverage of the sector across the region ranges as follows:

<b>SECTOR</b>	<b>AGE RANGE</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Pre-Primary	3-4	Almost uniformly ranging from ages 3-4 in CARICOM member states
Primary	5-11	Generally ages 5-11 except for Bahamas (5-10), Belize (5-12), Jamaica (5-10) and Netherlands Antilles (6-11)
Secondary	12-18	Secondary education provision is more textured across the region with spans ranging from a low of 4 years in Belize to 7 years in St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Average span for the region is 5 years.  Mandatory provision reaches as high as the 18 year age cohort in St. Vincent and the earliest provision is for the 11 year age cohort in the Bahamas.

The total pre-primary school age population of the Caribbean is 1,043,445; the total primary school age population is 2,206,043 while the secondary school age population is 2,213,251 (all inclusive of Haiti). Excluding Haiti – which is a major non-English speaking demographic – this population shrinks to 289,832 for the pre-primary age population, 754,759 for the primary age population and 635,701 for the secondary age population.

The fact that the Anglophone Caribbean accounts for 30.76% of the total school age population raises critical policy concerns for a regional basic education strategy which will be explored later.

A World Bank study on “Monitoring Educational Performance in the Caribbean”, after analysing statistics for 10 countries, reported the following conclusions:

- Primary level coverage – was no longer generally a problem in the region.
- Secondary level coverage – coverage and completion was an issue of concern. While great progress has been made in the last five years on access to secondary education, the number of dropouts at that level is the most serious concern.
- Internal efficiency – measured by survival rates to the last grade of secondary and repetition rate is generally low in the region.
- Cost effectiveness – spending on education is substantial, averaging 6% of GDP or more but the attention needs to be paid to the efficiency of this spending and the outcomes that it generates (which tends to vary by country).

More recent statistics (2005) from UNESCO available for 5 CARICOM countries indicate strong governmental financial commitment to education:

- **Public expenditure per pupil as a percentage of GDP per capita** ranged from 11.37% in the British Virgin Islands to **25.97%** in St. Vincent & the Grenadines;
- Public expenditure as a percentage of GDP ranged from 2.79% in the Cayman Islands to 9.67% in St. Kitts and Nevis;

- Educational expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure ranges from 8.76% in Jamaica to 16.91% in St. Lucia.

In terms of public expenditure on education across the region, an average of 3.49% of total public educational expenditure is spent on Pre-primary education, 32.94% on Primary education and 31.91% on Secondary education.

### ***Gaps and deficiencies***

The major gaps and deficiencies in Caribbean education systems include issues of access to Early Childhood Education and the quality of its provision; low levels of school achievement; weak labour force competitiveness and increasing social inequality.

### ***Access to ECE and quality of provision***

Early childhood education is in urgent need of policy attention. International research confirms the value of investment in this sector for laying the foundation for future performance. Across the region, investment in ECE has been largely left to private sector/community and religious initiatives. Standards of provision are lax and only in recent times have efforts been made to introduce a regulatory regime for provision in this area.

Public funding lags significantly behind expenditure on other areas, particularly in the OECS countries. Research worldwide has consistently punctuated the importance of public investment at the early stages of education in order to lay the foundation for accomplishment.



Pre-primary exp. as % of total educational expenditure	
COUNTRY/YEAR	2005
Anguilla	1.94
Antigua and Barbuda	...
Aruba	6.79
Bahamas	...
Barbados	6.25
Belize	...
British Virgin Islands	0.07
Cayman Islands	1.21
Dominica	...
Grenada	...
<b>Guyana</b>	<b>9.35</b>
Haiti	...
Jamaica	4.85
Montserrat	...
Netherlands Antilles	...
Saint Kitts and Nevis	...
Saint Lucia	0.35
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	0.32
Suriname	...
Trinidad and Tobago	...
Turks and Caicos Islands	...

Source: <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/tableView.aspx>

### ***Low school achievement***

At primary school level, repetition rates are low (largely the result of automatic promotion policies at secondary level), the World Bank estimates that approx 25 - 30% "do not acquire the basic cognitive skills to benefit from education at that level".

Performance at secondary level in particular is cause for concern. The World Bank Task Force on Caribbean Education 2020, reflecting on performance in the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) CSEC exams reported that:

*"Of the students who complete the secondary cycle in the CARICOM countries, only approximately 30% qualify to receive certification which would enable them to gain admission to a tertiary level institution. It should be borne in mind that students who attempt the examination at the General/Technical level represent*

*about 50% of the secondary level intake and about 25% of the age cohort. Students show severe deficiencies in mathematics. On average, approximately 35% receive an acceptable grade. Furthermore, an analysis of subject areas being pursued raises questions as to whether a sufficiently large number of students are acquiring competencies in areas which would enable them to function effectively in the twenty-first century, where the knowledge and skills derived from study of sciences, technology, mathematics, foreign languages, and social studies would be important. An analysis of students writing CXC examinations in 1998 shows that less than 20% take science subjects, fewer than 15% foreign languages; just 10% in food and nutrition, and 7% in information technology, an area of importance in the services sector” – (World Bank – Caribbean Vision 20/20)*

The CXC, in its new strategic plan, has developed several new initiatives that seek to address the certification of competence at secondary level, measures to improve performance, revision of syllabuses and their alignment to the world of work and opportunity and instructional support to teachers.

### ***Labor force competitiveness***

A seminal study<sup>i</sup> conducted by the World Bank in 2008 concluded that a major reason for the high levels of youth unemployment in the OECS countries is the mismatch between skills acquired in school and the critical skills demanded by the labor market. Recognizing further that the rapid changes in the global economy and in technology are impacting on the structure of small island and dependent economies, an even greater challenge is posed to the education systems to be more proactive and visionary in preparation for life.

Some important statistics emanating from the World Bank study that punctuate this need include:

- 79% of the GDP of the OECS is produced by the service economy (an almost complete reversal from the reality of 10 years ago);

- 41% of firms in Grenada rated lack of skills and education as a “severe obstacle to their competitiveness”;
- 88% of employers in St. Kitts & Nevis rate attitude to work as vital;
- it takes an average of 14 months for a CXC graduate in St. Vincent & the Grenadines to find his/her first employment.

Initiatives within the new CXC Strategic Plan that include a systematic review of syllabuses in all subject domains, a pilot project with the UWI-ICT on the enhancement of critical thinking skills, and the new Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Learning Competence (CCSLC) are focused on strengthening basic knowledge competencies, boosting critical thinking and highlighting behavioral life skills.

### ***Social Equity***

There is growing evidence that stratification of schools is contributing to social inequality through the marginalization of poorer, less performing students. In the last 10 years practically all Caribbean countries have done poverty assessment studies which provide reasonably detailed guidelines on initiatives which could mitigate poverty impact on education. As the impact on the region from the world economic crisis deepens, these deficits will assume greater prominence and will pose a greater challenge to regional governments in the spheres of social and educational policy.

Governmental policies will therefore need to take account of these realities and severe financial limitations will ironically provide an unprecedented opportunity to converge policies in education, health, poverty intervention, social and community development. Primary and secondary schooling ought therefore to be re-conceptualized in accordance with the aims of the CARICOM Ideal Person. The content and focus of learning, the role of the school as a health promoting institution, the nutritional requirements of students (school feeding), and nurturing new civic mentalities are the essential considerations in this reconceptualisation.

### **1.3 International conventions and obligations**

As an important dimension of convergence, the CARICOM Strategy should incorporate the key elements of the major international conventions and obligations to which member states have subscribed. This process will make it possible to decide which elements are most relevant to the regional reality and facilitate subscription by member states.

The main protocols which ought to be included in this review include the Education for All (EFA) Commitments with their emphasis on universal primary and universal secondary education and their quality imperatives; the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); UNICEF Conventions on the Rights of the Child; global conventions on the Rights of Teachers and the Summit of the Americas commitments.

An essential starting point for this convergence is the provisions of the OECS Education Reform Strategy (OECS-ERS) which represents the most comprehensive education strategy currently subscribed to in the region. This strategy has recorded successes in the harmonization of education law, curriculum convergence, harmonization of primary education and reconfiguration of secondary education.

Attempting to address the multiple obligations of these international obligations as individual requirements can strain the limited technical resources of many ministries of education and divert attention away from national priorities. Incorporating these obligations in a seamless manner in the national Education Sector Development Plans is the most cost effective, least demanding modality of compliance.

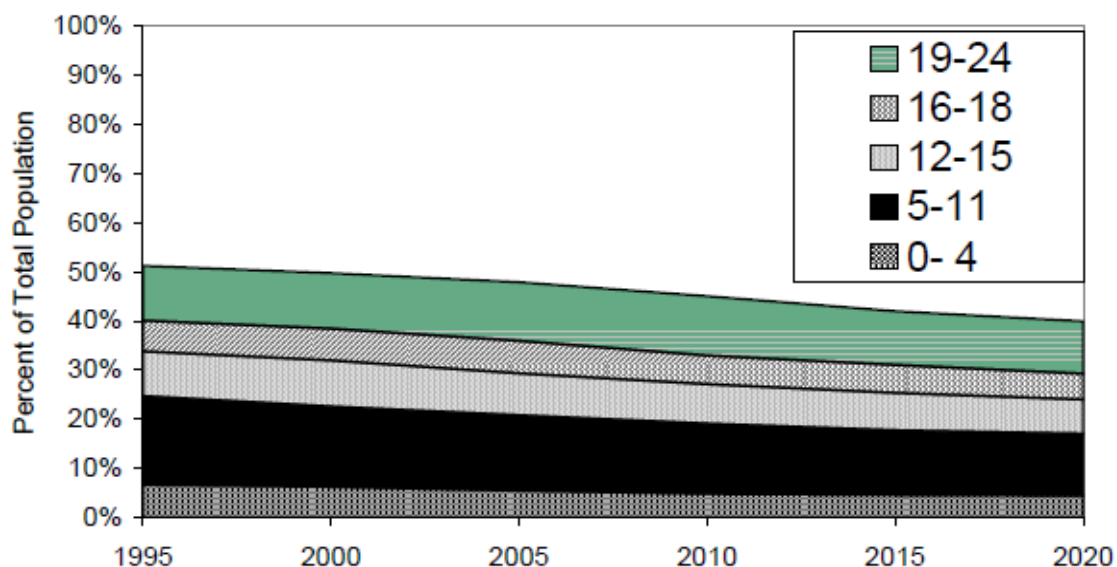
### 1.4 Brief situational analysis

#### *Demographics of education*

Adequate analysis of the situation in education is hamstrung by the absence of reliable empirical data and up to date statistics on which informed decisions can be made. Several initiatives have been undertaken to improve this situation but ultimately any regional data and statistical information system must rely on the commitment and accuracy of participating Ministries to deliver their components.

Available information reveals<sup>ii</sup> declining birthrates in the region with consequent decline in school enrollment in many countries. The graph below demonstrates the progressive decline in school age population in relation to the overall population for some key countries:

**Profile of Child and Youth Population in the Caribbean Region: Age Groups as Percentage of Total Population 1995-2020**



Source: Official estimates, UN ECLAC/CELADE estimates, UN Population Division estimates, 1999, World Bank estimates, 2000.  
 Data for: Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago.

### Financing of Education

Education expenditure, as a percentage of GDP, ranges from 2% in DR to 7% in Jamaica. Average regional expenditure stands at 4% compared with 3.3% for low and middle income countries and 5% for high income ones. In the Anglophone Caribbean as a whole 85% of the financing of education is provided by the public sector.

This high concentration of financing from the public sector opens significant opportunity for leveraging supplementary support from the private sectors in the region.

### SWOT

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong political will to UPE and USE</li> <li>• Expenditure on education comparable with world levels</li> <li>• Gender equality of access at primary level</li> <li>• Strong performance of girls</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient coverage and inequitable access to ECE, secondary and post-secondary education</li> <li>• Low quality of primary and secondary education</li> <li>• Increasing impact of poverty, crime and social disease on education systems</li> <li>• Value for money spent on education questionable/low internal efficiency of the education system</li> <li>• Challenge of boys' performance and participation especially from secondary levels up</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of primary education comparable to some developed countries</li> <li>• Declining birth rates in some countries provide opportunity for improvement of infrastructure</li> <li>• Performance of offshore educational institutions indicate potential for education</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World economic decline and its impact on Caribbean economies threaten ability of Governments to maintain current investment levels in education</li> <li>• Teacher migration from the region to more lucrative placements in developed countries</li> </ul>

<p>as a service export</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for managed migration of teachers within the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing influence of distance education providers and private international schools in national educational landscapes</li> </ul>
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The CARICOM Regional Education Policy 1993 catalogued a range of specific deficiencies in education at different levels which required attention. Since the enunciation of this policy, progress on these fronts has been more limited on the regional than on the national fronts. This is inevitable as education policy is a central arena of national concern with stakeholders holding national authorities highly accountable. It is for this reason that this strategy recommends that the focus of regional collaboration should be an essentialist framework that makes it easy for national authorities to subscribe and which will incrementally build on early successes to progressively extend the agenda from collaboration to harmonization.

## 2.0 Policy Framework for Primary & Secondary Education

### 2.1 Constructing a coherent policy framework across CSME

If the objectives of the CSME are to be realized, the education systems of the region will need to be increasingly harmonized and the aim of this process should be to create a rational architecture that will facilitate the free movement of people and skills within a borderless Caribbean.

#### *Principles guiding the formulation of policy*

The regional policy should be guided by two clearly enunciated principles: convergence and rationalization.

In addressing developmental challenges in the region, there is a tendency towards unnecessary duplication and replication of effort and initiatives.

**Convergence** of objectives, targets and of national and regional goals and the **rationalization** of resources and efforts are essential to guaranteeing the sustainability of policy and ensuring that everything is focused in a synergistic manner. As the global economic situation worsens, both foreign direct investment and aid flows will nosedive and increasingly, developing countries will have to look to their own ingenuity and their own capacity for solutions.

The challenge for the regional education sector is to identify the areas which - through regional collaboration - can add value to national systems, create synergies between national systems, and facilitate global intellectual competitiveness.

This challenge is consistent with the other principle of **evolving functional collaboration from the simple to the complex; from what works to what should be**. The regional strategy, while articulating a broad and amplified vision, should be elaborated through incremental stages of increasing sophistication and tightening convergence. It is about undertaking the small but meaningful initiatives that will provide tangible evidence of the benefits of harmonization and encourage national educational authorities to collaborate on the next steps. It is - as Prime



Minister Gonsalves exhorts – “*doing the small things well, to get the big things right*”.

## 2.2 Essential requirements for a regional, globally competitive basic education sector

The education strategy seeks to establish a regional framework for a globally competitive basic education sector that is reflective of the rich diversity of the Caribbean. There are four (4) key requirements or frameworks for this strategy:

- A universal human resource framework
- A common infrastructure of learning
- A harmonized governance framework
- A creative and shared financing mechanism

### *Human resource requirements*

An education system is only as good as its teachers. Consequently any meaningful education strategy must focus on the requirements of teachers as teachers and as public workers. New standards are needed for professionalisation of teachers that include higher academic benchmarks for employment, scrutiny of the ethical disposition of entrants to the profession, and institution of a licensing regime that will ensure continuous professional development and performance based appraisals. In addition, the conditions of employment of teachers including remuneration, cross regional mobility, preservation of rights and opportunities for continuing professional development, must simultaneously be addressed.

The other major human resource requirement focuses on the management of schools. Just as the quality of instruction is dependent on the capacity of teachers, so is the effectiveness of schools reliant on their leadership capability. School principals are increasingly required to show multifaceted management ability and leadership qualities and need to be empowered to act within policy parameters.

### *Infrastructure of learning*

Over the past 10 years, Governments across the region have been paying increased attention to the infrastructure of learning in their national environments. Upgrading and replacing dilapidated school plant, and modernizing the infrastructure to accommodate broadband and other technologies. This process has not generally kept pace with the challenges posed by rapidly evolving new technologies of learning and of work; and except for a few countries like Trinidad & Tobago, it has not caught up with the significant “maintenance deficit” that has caused deep deterioration of school plant.

Even with major notable investments such as Barbados’ Edutech initiative, the pace of technology infusion in education across the region has not kept abreast of the requirements of this knowledge era. ICT technologies are expensive; maintenance and safe-keeping costs are high; and technology refresh requirements might be beyond the recurrent capabilities of most governments.

Despite these constraints Governments have struggled to increase access recognizing that not only is this necessary to adequately prepare our students for a rapidly transforming world of work but that it is also an imperative if our schools are to move beyond analog modes to retain the interest of students who are increasingly “digital kids”.

The infrastructure of learning must be given the same level of priority as is other essential economic infrastructure as it is the basis for preparation of the most competitive resource that the Caribbean possesses – its intellect. Schools are a ubiquitous social infrastructure and their renovation, modernization and indeed their design reconceptualization is necessary not only to achieve the learning objectives of the new era but also to stimulate public sector investment in difficult economic times.

In several countries of the region, attempts have been made to rethink the design of schools in closer alignment with fresh ideas on learning, sensitivity to our tropical environment and for maximizing their utilization in the community. Such new designs have emerged in Trinidad & Tobago, St. Lucia and Cayman Islands.

Rethinking the school as the nucleus of social infrastructure allows for the rationalization of

facilities such as public internet cafes, libraries, meeting spaces, adult education locations, etc. and will facilitate the maximum utilization beyond the traditional hours of use. A regional initiative in the revitalization and reconceptualisation of the infrastructure of learning can add great value to national efforts in that sphere.

### ***Governance of education: the harmonisation of the legislative framework***

The governance of education is one arena in which meaningful functional collaboration can be pursued – the creation of a common legislative framework is a necessary though insufficient condition for the full harmonization of education. The extent to which this goes can be determined by using the legislative framework as an architectural description of what ought to be accomplished or it can be a roadmap for incremental but progressive steps towards that goal.

The key features required of a harmonized legislative framework include:

- Definition of rights and responsibilities of all key stakeholders in education
- Adjudicating and articulating the relationship between key actors and defining the spheres of accountability (especially in relation to private institutions)
- Pronouncing on the process for establishing and regulating standards in education
- Creating an enabling environment for greater community and parental engagement in education
- Facilitating public participation in educational policy formulation

In such an endeavour there is no need to reinvent the wheel. The OECS countries have had a process for harmonisation of education legislation that has worked successfully over the past 10 years. Draft prototype legislation has been adapted and adopted by various member states with modifications that reflect their particular national idiosyncrasies. A similar approach utilising the experience of the OECS as the starting point for the CARICOM initiative is recommended.

### **Investing in education: creative financing of sector needs**

Caribbean Governments already invest reasonable resources in education and Caribbean taxpayers have a reasonable historical expectation of these levels of allocation. The following table provides an indication of the levels of public expenditure on education:

Public expenditure →	Per pupil	On education	On education
	as% of GDP per capita. All levels	as% of GDP	as% of total government expenditure
YEAR	2005	2005	2005
Anguilla	...	4.03	14.03
Antigua and Barbuda	...	...	...
Aruba	16.60	4.83	15.43
Bahamas	...	...	...
Barbados	...	6.94	16.40
Belize	...	...	...
British Virgin Islands	11.37	3.11	12.45
Cayman Islands	...	2.79	...
Dominica	...	...	...
Grenada	...	...	...
Guyana	16.50	8.13	14.53
Haiti	...	...	...
Jamaica	...	5.29	8.76
Montserrat	...	...	...
Netherlands Antilles	...	...	...
Saint Kitts and Nevis	...	9.67	...
Saint Lucia	14.47	5.49	16.91
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	25.97	7.97	16.09
Suriname	...	...	...
Trinidad and Tobago	...	...	...
Turks and Caicos Islands	...	...	11.76

Source: <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/tableviewer/document.aspx?ReportId=143>

Several of the UN agencies (UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank), spearheaded by UNICEF, have proposed a financing formula to ensure the adequate allocation of resources to social development. A compact between developing and industrialized countries, the 20/20 Initiative calls for the allocation of, on average, 20 per cent of the budget in developing countries and 20 per cent of official development assistance to basic social services.

In the context of the current world economic crisis, and its evolving impact on the region, it is

imperative that consideration be given by regional governments to subscribing to this initiative in order to preserve the social gains achieved by the region in the post-Independence period. The 20/20 Initiative should form the basis for a regional compact on education financing that is focused on renovation of school plant (in conformity to new design specifications) and enhancing the environment for learning.

### **2.3 Opportunities in primary and secondary education**

In order to take advantage of opportunities in basic education, the regional strategy must create an accommodating framework for public-private partnerships; school and community integration and state and religious collaboration. The exercise of parental choice in the education of their children is becoming an increasingly prominent feature and this choice is principally exercised over religious preferences, institutional reputation and performance record, affordability and perceptions of competitive advantage. In this context, private and international schools are a growing emerging sector which is also beginning to attract local - as distinct from expatriate - students.

#### ***The emergence and growth of international schools in the region***

In the past decade the number and type of private and international educational institutions operating in the Caribbean has grown. Most of this growth has been in the tertiary education sector and in particular in the market for off-shore medical education. The success of institutions such as St. Georges University (Grenada) and Ross International University (Dominica) has spawned many imitators, many of whom do not demonstrate the commitment to quality of these precursors. As Tewarie (2009) has recommended, a strong regional policy needs to be articulated that will ensure that "offshore" educational institutions of dubious reputation are not allowed to dominate the "for-profit" sector of higher education in the region, that indigenous educational institutions need to learn from the experience of the more successful models and that more productive partnerships be forged.

In the basic education sector, a new phenomenon is the emergence of international schools catering to the more affluent sectors of the local and expatriate populations and pursuing forms of certification that are external to the region.

While their presence adds a vital diversity to the educational experience in the region, there is need for a more coordinated regulatory regime that will monitor quality, guarantee some equity of access, and ensure some conformity with national or regional curricula. Even if their programs might follow an international prescription, national policies should prescribe a minimum adherence to core Caribbean subjects such as Caribbean History or Caribbean Studies certified by CXC. Such measures will also reinforce the new strategic direction being taken by the Caribbean Examinations Council which is seeking to internationalize its certification by initial expansion to the Caribbean Diaspora and through partnerships with some of the leading international examination bodies.

## **2.4 Institutional Requirements**

(Inter)Governmental and Regional structures should refocus on being the supporting architecture for harmonized national initiatives. The regional strategy should concentrate on a couple vital interventions which would help create this supporting architecture.

### ***Managing the TRAINING, CONDITIONS OF SERVICE and MOVEMENT OF TEACHERS ACROSS THE REGION***

One such area is addressing the urgent but insufficiently recognized issue of the conditions of work and service of teachers (including their training and professional development) and the management of their migration across and beyond the region.

The problems affecting teacher quality and retention affect all countries of the region and with the CSME, teachers will gravitate towards those countries (whether within or beyond the region) where working conditions and remuneration are most favorable. Tackling these issues require a recognition of the interdependencies between these 3 dimensions and the necessity for a common regional framework to address them that would encourage the retention of teachers within the region, improve and harmonize their conditions of service (allow for their service across national jurisdictions to be unified); require continuous professional development and periodic re-certification.

### ***Forms of partnership***

The other critical institutional support structure required is a new foundation of Civic support to education. It is necessary to define new community and parental modes of support that can be strengthened by a regional framework and to empower these modes (ensuring also that the harmonised legislation does this) to engage in a more amplified manner than the traditional areas of involvement of parents and community in the life of schools.

### 3.0 The Continuum of Education: cross sectoral linkages

For regional harmonisation of education to be successful, it should incorporate the following features:

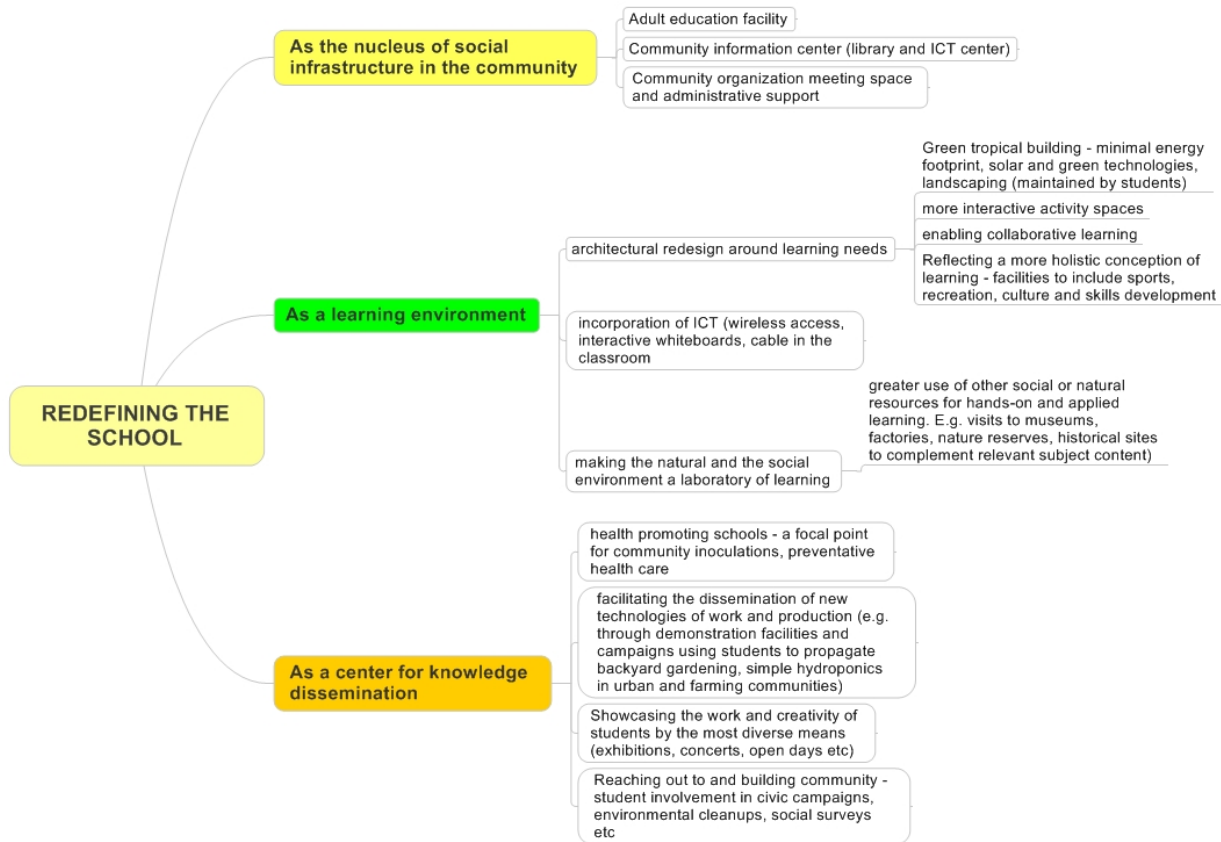
- recognize that education is a continuum and that policies articulated within any sub-sector and at any level have ramifications and should be articulated with other subsectors;
- take an integrated and strategic perspective that prioritizes the actions that need to be undertaken and which starts with simple efforts and builds incrementally on accomplishment towards more complex forms of collaboration;
- keep the administrative and bureaucratic structures of support as minimal as possible and leverages relevant existing structures to maximize the impact of the interventions;
- facilitate cross sectoral linkages as widely and as broadly as possible. No opportunity should be missed for enriching the education reform agenda by joining forces with other sectors to address social issues which also impact negatively on educational outcomes (such as HIV-AIDS, hunger, indiscipline, etc.).



#### 4.0 Constraints: From Inhibition to Enabler (how to turn adversity to advantage)

The current world economic crisis, while debilitating for developing countries, also presents unprecedented opportunities for bold and different approaches to education. Severe limitations on the resources available to governments will necessitate a more rigorous examination of value for money issues and returns on investment in education, trigger the search for more cost effective and sustainable ways of achieving the objectives defined, facilitate intersectoral linkages and maximization of impact across traditional silos.

The diagram below illustrates these possibilities using the example of the proposal already described for re-inventing the infrastructure of learning:



## 5.0 Recommendations

The following are the main recommendations for a regional strategy in Basic Education:

ARENA	RECOMMENDATIONS
5.1 Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for a coherent education reform strategy – the OECS Education Reform Strategy would constitute a good starting point</li> <li>• Start simple and expand incrementally - building on functional accomplishments</li> <li>• Framework must respect national sovereignty but create a minimal architecture of collaboration</li> <li>• Alignment with the OECS Education Reform Strategy ... use as the basis for shaping a wider regional agenda</li> <li>• Alignment with international protocols in education and provision for articulating regional positions on these</li> </ul>
5.2 Early Childhood Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional partnership between Governments, major donors and private providers to extend the range and provision of ECE</li> <li>• Adoption of regional regulatory standards for ECE provision</li> <li>• Improvement of delivery modes through best practice networking among providers</li> </ul>
5.3 Primary Education Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renewed attention to learning basics – focus on quality of primary education</li> <li>• Articulation of common remediation strategies to guarantee achievement</li> </ul>
5.4 Secondary Education Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal adoption of the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC) as secondary school diploma in all countries – creating new opportunities for certification of core competencies emanating from secondary education</li> <li>• Concerted campaign to improve performance at secondary level involving partnership between school, parents, civic organizations and key educational stakeholders</li> <li>• Enrichment of secondary education experience through incorporation of life skills (related to CCSLC) and new innovative pedagogies</li> <li>• Greater incorporation of ICT at secondary level</li> </ul>
5.5 Integrative Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating mechanisms for the use of the school as a medium of intervention on preventative health issues, skills enhancement, civic responsibility and entrepreneurship</li> </ul>
5.6 Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amalgamation of teacher certification and professionalisation</li> </ul>

ARENA	RECOMMENDATIONS
	<p>initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of a regional professional standard for teachers under the Regional Accreditation mechanism. Minimum qualifications to be a Bachelors of Education (with specialization) PLUS professional licensing subject to renewal every 5 years. Licensing should take the form of a mixed portfolio of professional development courses pursued in interregnum and record of performance (student passes, innovations in pedagogy, etc.)</li> <li>• Regional teacher mobility – common framework for conditions of service, transferability of service record, terms of employment, protocol for free movement of teachers across CSME</li> </ul>
<p>5.7 Educational Governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition of clear standards and a regulatory regime for private educational institutions. International schools should be required to follow some Caribbean options in their curriculum (e.g. CSEC or CAPE Caribbean History, Social Studies or Caribbean Studies, Caribbean Literature)</li> <li>• Formal recognition and establishment of Student Councils and definition of meaningful ways of teaching responsibility by giving greater responsibility to students</li> <li>• Adoption and modification of OECS draft Education Act to meet needs for harmonization of education in the region</li> </ul>
<p>5.8 Financing Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocation of 20/20 principle in national budgeting</li> <li>• Exploration of possibility of a regional infrastructure fund for renovation of educational facilities (and linked to stimulus for construction industry across the region)</li> </ul>

## 6.0 Bibliography

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## **Appendix 1: CARICOM STATEMENT OF THE IDEAL CARIBBEAN PERSON**

The Ideal Caribbean Person should be someone who among other things:

is imbued with a respect for human life since it is the foundation on which all the other desired values must rest;

is emotionally secure with a high level of self confidence and self esteem;

sees ethnic, religious and other diversity as a source of potential strength and richness;

is aware of the importance of living in harmony with the environment;

has a strong appreciation of family and kinship values, community cohesion, and moral issues including responsibility for and accountability to self and community;

has an informed respect for the cultural heritage;

demonstrates multiple literacies independent and critical thinking, questions the beliefs and practices of past and present and brings this to bear on the innovative application of science and technology to problems solving;

demonstrates a positive work ethic;

values and displays the creative imagination in its various manifestations and nurture its development in the economic and entrepreneurial spheres in all other areas of life;

has developed the capacity to create and take advantage of opportunities to control, improve, maintain and promote physical, mental, social and spiritual well being and to contribute to the health and welfare of the community and country

nourishes in him/herself and in others, the fullest development of each person's potential without gender stereotyping and embraces differences and similarities between females and males as a source of mutual strength

[http://www.caricom.org/jsp/communications/meetings\\_statements/citizens\\_21\\_century.jsp?menu=communications](http://www.caricom.org/jsp/communications/meetings_statements/citizens_21_century.jsp?menu=communications)

## Appendix 2: STRUCTURE OF CARICOM NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

COUNTRIES	AGES																
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Anguilla																	
Antigua & Barbuda			P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S1	S1	S1	S2	S2			
Bahamas	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	S1	S1	S1	S2	S2	S2			
Barbados	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S		
Belize	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	S	S	S			
British Virgin Islands	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	P								
Dominica	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	S	S	S	S			
Grenada	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	S	S	S	S			
Haiti	PS	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	S1	S1	S1	S2	S2	S2		
Jamaica	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	S1	S1	S1	S2	S2	S2			
Montserrat	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	S	S	S	S			
Netherlands Antilles		PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	S	S	S	S	S			
St. Kitts and Nevis	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S1	S1	S1	S1	S2	S2		
St. Lucia			P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S1	S1	S1	S2	S2			
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S1	S1	S1	S1	S1	S2	S2	
Suriname																	
Trinidad & Tobago	PS	PS	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	S1	S1	S1	S2	S2			
Symbols:																	
PS - Pre-Primary																	
P - Primary																	
P1 - Primary first cycle																	
S - Secondary																	
S1 - Secondary first cycle																	
S2 - Secondary second cycle																	

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McMeekin, R. W. Education Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean. Washington: UNESCO-ORELAC  
Jan. 1998

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### Appendix 3: CARICOM SCHOOL AGE POPULATIONS

COUNTRY/YEAR	Total pre- primary age population	Total Population - Official entrance age.	Total Primary School age population	Total Secondary School age population
	2007	2007	2007	2007
Anguilla	...	...	...	...
Antigua and Barbuda	3,223	1,623	11,289	7,453
Bahamas	11,293	5,792	36,121	36,393
Barbados	6,736	3,424	21,489	20,007
Belize	14,395	7,160	42,156	38,709
British Virgin Islands	...	...	...	...
Cayman Islands	...	...	...	...
Dominica	...	...	...	...
Grenada	4,281	2,224	16,925	13,245
Guyana	32,798	16,709	97,407	68,460
Haiti	734,463	239,824	1,396,511	1,518,223
Jamaica	163,308	54,946	339,448	286,440
Montserrat	130	66	434	255
Netherlands Antilles	4,988	2,578	16,882	17,396
Saint Kitts and Nevis	1,963	993	6,585	4,321
Saint Lucia	5,614	2,754	20,188	16,204
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	4,526	2,210	15,547	12,268
Suriname	19,150	9,567	54,773	59,327
Trinidad and Tobago	36,577	18,118	130,288	114,550
Turks and Caicos Islands	...	...	...	...
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,043,445</b>	<b>367,988</b>	<b>2,206,043</b>	<b>2,213,251</b>

Source: UNESCO - <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/tableView.aspx>

<sup>i</sup> Blom, A and Hobbs, C. (2008) "School and Work in the Eastern Caribbean: Does the Education System Adequately Prepare Youth for the Global Economy?" World Bank: Washington

<sup>ii</sup> diGropello (2003) Monitoring Educational Performance in the Caribbean



## Appendix 4: BIO-SKETCH

### DR. DIDACUS JULES

Currently: *Registrar & CEO, Caribbean Examinations Council, Barbados*

Has been: *Consultant, Arthur Lok-Jack-School of Business, University of the West Indies St. Augustine*

*Vice-President-Human Resources, Cable & Wireless St. Lucia*

*Permanent Secretary – Education & Human Resource Development, Ministry of Education, HRD, Youth & Sports, Government of St. Lucia. (June 1997 – June 2004).*

*Inter-Regional Coordinator, International Literacy Support Service (ILSS). (April 1992-September 1994).*

Responsible for the organization of networking initiatives between regional literacy networks in Africa, Arab region, Asia & South Pacific, the Caribbean, Europe, and Latin America. This included the organization of training seminars in these regions.

*Resident Consultant, National Research & Development Foundation, St. Lucia. (Aug. 1984-Aug. 1988)*

*Permanent Secretary for Education & Culture/Chief Education Officer, People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada (1981-1983); previously Adult Education Organizer (1979-1981) and responsible for organizing the National Literacy Campaign.*

Some of the Major Consultancies conducted for:

World Bank (2000) - Chairman of the Task Force appointed by the World Bank and Caribbean Education Ministers to develop a Caribbean Education Strategy 2020 to guide Bank and IFI lending in the sector of education

OECS (2001) - Member of 3-person Consultancy (Chaired by Prof. Errol Miller) appointed by the OECS Ministers of Education to revise the Education Reform Strategy of the OECS. New revised Strategy "Pillars for Partnership and Progress" approved by the Ministers of Education.

(2005) - Development of a Strategic Plan for the OECS Education Reform Unit

Caribbean Export Development Agency and CARICOM (2005) - Design and delivery of Sensitization Seminar on New Opportunities in Investment in Services within the Caribbean Single Market & Economy. Seminars delivered in Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, St. Kitts, Nevis, Trinidad

Several UN agencies incl. United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America & the Caribbean, UNDP and CIDA, Caribbean Development Bank, Governments of Trinidad & Tobago (new education plan 2020), St. Vincent, Grenada (revisioning of education post Ivan), St. Maarten (education strategic plan).

#### **EDUCATION:**

1995-1997 University of the West Indies, Barbados  
**Executive Masters in Business Administration (EMBA)**

1990-1992 University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA  
**Ph.D. Curriculum & Instruction** (major); **Educational Policy** (minor)

1988-1990 University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA  
**M.Sc. Curriculum & Instruction**

1975-1978      University of the West Indies, Barbados  
**BA (Hons.) English**

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

Numerous articles on educational policy, educational reform and adult education in the Caribbean and in small island states published in refereed journals,

Articles on public sector reform, poverty alleviation, organizational change

Most recent publication – co-edited book “Current Discourse on Education in Developing Nations” published 2006 Nova Science Publishers USA.