

Making Changes

CETT as a Catalyst for Regional Reform of Teacher Education Policies and Practice

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The Centre of Excellence for Teacher Training (CETT) initiative is firmly located in the assertion that well-trained teachers continuously engaged in professional development are key to the delivery of high-quality education. CETT's mission is to identify, adopt, develop, and apply innovative measures to improve the teaching of reading in grades 1 to 3 of primary schools serving disadvantaged populations in the Caribbean. Accomplishing this will result in improving the levels of reading achievement of students who are most at risk of not mastering the fundamental skills of reading, which are so crucial to the mastery of the primary curriculum. CETT joins the growing list of initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean that are directly targeting schools serving disadvantaged populations, seeing this as the most effective means of addressing the issue of equity in high education outcomes of schooling. CETT promotes the high standards/high involvement model of school organization described by Kelley (1997).

Lessons learned after nearly a decade and a half of targeted equity-driven initiatives may be summarized thus (Wolff et al. 2002; Miller 2004):

1. The combinations of “best practices of effective schools” that constitute the content of these initiatives do not work for all schools serving disadvantaged populations.

2. There appears to be an upper limit for improved student performance, which at best does not exceed the level of performance of effective schools.
3. Once this upper limit is achieved, student performance then plateaus, and the initiatives are maintained.

By examining both the successful and unsuccessful schools serving these disadvantaged populations, Caribbean CETT seeks to identify “best practices” so it can build on them, creating new knowledge to fill gaps in the existing research-based evidence. As a centre of excellence, the Caribbean CETT aims not only to reach existing plateaus but to ascend peaks that are yet unconquered. Its aim is to help the unsuccessful schools make the grade even as it boosts the newly and the already successful schools to attain even higher levels of student performance.

CETT’s Five Main Components

The five main components of the CETT initiative are

1. Diagnostic and Performance Measurement
2. Teacher Training
3. Materials
4. Action Research
5. Information and Communication Technology

There is strong research evidence to justify the inclusion of each component. From their analysis, Willms and Somers (2001) concluded that effective schools in Latin America were those that had

- High levels of school resources, including a low teacher-pupil ratio, more instructional materials, a large library, and well-trained teachers.
- Classrooms that were not multigrade, and where students were not grouped by ability.
- Classrooms where students were tested frequently.
- Classrooms and schools with a high level of parental involvement.
- Classrooms that had a positive climate, especially with respect to discipline.

Location of Caribbean CETT

The Caribbean CETT is located at the University of the West Indies (UWI), one of only two regional universities in the world. Fifteen governments of the English-speaking Caribbean finance UWI, which has three main campuses, with university centres in each contributing country. Within UWI, the Caribbean CETT is managed by the Joint Boards of Teacher Education (JBTEs). The mission of the JBTEs is to assure and guarantee quality in teacher education in member countries. The JBTEs are a partnership of ministries of education, teachers associations, colleges training teachers, and the UWI, in which the UWI hosts the secretariats of the JBTEs and holds the chairmanship. The Schools of Education of the various campuses provide the academic and professional expertise required for the operation of the JBTEs. The first JBTE was established on the Mona campus in Jamaica in 1965. The JBTEs therefore have had long and successful experience and have built up considerable social capital in regional cooperation in teacher education. The Caribbean CETT is therefore located in a regional institution and benefits from previous investments made in attempts to improve teacher quality.

The three principal strategies adopted by the Caribbean CETT in executing its mission and mandate may be summarized as follows:

1. Implementing measures designed to improve the quality of the teaching of reading in initial teacher education programmes preparing primary school teachers in the subregion.
2. Establishing a new paradigm for school improvement and teacher development through the creation of professional development clusters comprising colleges training primary teachers, district offices of ministries of education, and the UWI schools of education.
3. Mobilizing support for the colleges and project schools through partnerships with the private sector, school communities, and NGOs engaged in promoting reading.

Each of these three strategies is described below.

Strategy 1: Improving the Quality of the Teaching of Reading in Colleges

The rationale for the strategy of seeking to improve the teaching of reading in colleges preparing primary school teachers in the Caribbean is that if the reform is to be sustained over the long term, then all teachers graduating from initial teacher education programmes should be able to teach reading competently. To achieve this objective it is necessary to build on the strengths and previous efforts of the existing institutions and programmes, while creatively and constructively addressing their weaknesses.

Strengths of Programmes Preparing Primary Teachers

The Caribbean has a long history of primary teacher education dating back to the establishment of the first college in 1836. Accordingly, the subregion has developed a relatively strong capacity in this area.

- Admission to teachers college requires successful completion of high schooling, measured and certified by a regional body, the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC).
- The minimum qualifications required to be employed on the academic staff of teachers colleges is a bachelor's degree, professional training as a teacher, and at least three to five years experience as a teacher. A significant proportion of the academic staff in many colleges exceed the minimum requirements of all criteria, with several holding master's degrees in their areas of specialization, and some doctorates.
- The duration of the programme of initial teacher training varies from two years in the countries of the Eastern Caribbean, to three years in the case of Belize and Jamaica, and four years in the Bahamas. The credentials offered are certificates at the end of the two-year programmes, diplomas at the end of the three-year programmes, and bachelor's degrees at the end of the four-year programmes.
- Many colleges over the last 15 to 20 years have been engaged in some initiative that has successfully implemented, on a limited scale, improvements in some area of teacher preparation.

Weaknesses of Programmes Preparing Primary Teachers

Notwithstanding these relative strengths in Caribbean teacher education, there are important weaknesses that need to be addressed. The weaknesses are as follows:

- There have been no major investments made in initial teacher training in the Caribbean over the last 25 years. Major investments have concentrated on inservice education, with only incidental benefits to pre-service or initial training. Accordingly, colleges do not necessarily have up-to-date libraries, equipment, and other resources needed for teaching and administration. This is remarkable, given that investments in education over the last 25 years have as their major beneficiaries, women, rural residents, and lower socioeconomic groups, who constitute the recruits to primary teacher training.
- Over the last 15 years there have been major reforms in teaching methodologies and the materials used in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools. However, these reforms in schools have not consistently provided for corresponding reforms in the methodologies and materials used in the preparation of teachers. Hence in many instances, teacher trainees are being prepared for new student-focused methodologies in schools with the teacher-centred methodologies traditionally employed in teaching adults. Reflective practice is sometimes taught by means of lectures.
- The competencies required to effectively teach at various levels of primary schooling are not always clearly defined and stated and matched with appropriate instruction in content, methodology, and teaching behaviour.
- While there is a fair degree of cross-fertilization of ideas and practices at the level of principals of teacher education institutions in the various countries, at the level of lecturers and subject teaching, the staffs of colleges training teachers in the various countries operate in virtual isolation from each other. Given that apart from Jamaica and Trinidad, all countries have only one college training teachers, this isolation severely limits professional exchange, collaboration, and growth, which benefit from cooperation between peers in the region. This isolation also severely restricts the sharing and spread of successful practice born out of Caribbean experience and ingenuity.

- Over the last decade there has been a significant turnover of staff within some colleges, with the result that some staff members are relatively inexperienced, and gaps have occurred in particular areas of expertise.
- In many instances, even where students learn new methodologies and teaching strategies in college, they are unable to implement these in the schools in which they are employed because of the poor infrastructure and provisions of those schools. Hence, although capable of teaching differently, they fall back into traditional ways of instruction for lack of both example and tools.

The strengths and weaknesses described above are generic and not restricted to any single subject area, including the teaching of reading. Hence, in implementing initiatives that build upon the strengths while seeking to address the weaknesses, the Caribbean CETT is making changes that, if successful, could serve as a model for similar initiatives in other areas of initial teacher preparation.

Elements of the Strategy

The elements of the strategy being used by the Caribbean CETT to improve the teaching of reading in colleges preparing primary school teachers can be briefly set out as follows:

1. Establishing common standards for the quantum of instruction to be given, the content of that instruction, the competencies the teacher trainees should develop, and the instruments to measure the achievement of the standards. This process was facilitated by the experience of the Joint Board of Teacher Education, Mona, in implementing policies for adequate preparation in primary teacher training to teach reading. These policies had been reviewed in 2000, and with assistance from the IIEQ Project, sponsored by USAID, and executed by the American Institute for Research, the basic courses had been revised to take account of both the Jamaican experience with the effectiveness of teachers to teach reading as well as the latest knowledge on the effective teaching of reading. These revised courses had been implemented in Jamaican colleges in 2002.

2. Providing professional development for the staffs of the colleges teaching the courses on the teaching of reading based on their perceived and stated needs concerning the courses to be taught and new knowledge on the subject and on the training of teachers.
3. Strengthening the colleges' libraries so that they could effectively support the courses taught in the teaching of reading.
4. Establishing a Literacy Resource Centre in each college with the equipment and materials needed to teach reading in the college effectively as well as with the equipment and the materials provided to schools.
5. Using information and communication technology to supplement the face-to-face delivery of professional development courses; facilitate through online means, collaboration and exchange of experience during the periods of course delivery; share materials; and build knowledge in all areas related to teaching teacher trainees to teach reading.
6. Providing graduates of the primary teacher training programmes, employed by schools to teach in grades 1 to 3, with a basic tool kit of materials and equipment to use in implementing the strategies learned in college in teaching their classes.

Strategy 2: Establishing Professional Development Clusters

The current prevailing notions—that schools should provide students with a rich curriculum; that all students should achieve high outcomes, as measured by objective instruments; and that schools are accountable for these—shift the focal point of decision making about learning to schools, and place teachers at centre stage in determining a host of issues related to curriculum, instruction, management, resources, and school-community relations. At the same time, expecting teachers to do all these single-handedly and in isolation is unrealistic. The state, parents, and communities also are responsible for what happens in schools, and should also be held accountable for the outcomes of schooling. They should therefore also participate in the mechanisms to ensure the provision and delivery of the rich curriculum and the desired high outcomes (Miller 1999).

The professional development cluster (PDC) is conceived as a network of collaboration. In this network, the policy implementation capacity of the state through a district or regional office of the Ministry of Education, the teacher education expertise of a college training teachers, the service research capabilities of a university, and the resources of agencies and organizations supporting the work of the schools can be so integrated that they can constructively assist a group of schools to attain the desired high student outcomes.

The essence of the professional development cluster is that

- The teachers and principal in each school determine what needs to be done to achieve high student outcomes in their classes and in that school.
- The teachers and principals in the schools in the cluster collaborate and cooperate in sharing experiences, forming collegial relationships, and building knowledge of successful practice in that community.
- The implementation and supervisory capacity of the Ministry of Education at the regional or district level, the teacher education expertise of colleges training teachers in the region, the service research capabilities of the University and the resources of all the supporting organizations can be marshalled to support the implementation of the teacher-determined interventions.
- These cooperative, collaborative, and collective efforts are consistently applied through repeated cycles of application of appropriate actions until the desired high student outcomes are achieved.
- Each partner's experiences of constructive engagement are fed back into their own operations, so that policies and practices will be refined or even reformulated. Hence, Ministry policies will be refined or reformulated. Teacher training at the colleges will be modified or strengthened. The research tools and knowledge base at the University will be enhanced, enriched, and extended. The policies and practices used by organizations supporting the provision of resources to schools will be refined or reformulated.

To implement the concept and establish the PDCs, the Joint Boards have done the following:

1. Established a Project Implementation Unit (PIU), whose staff are located in the Schools of Education at both the Cave Hill and Mona

Campuses of UWI, whose full-time responsibilities are to serve the PDCs.

2. Promoted strong relationships between the Schools of Education researchers in the teaching of reading on all three campuses of UWI.
3. Established Country Advisory Committees on which all stakeholders and actors are represented, but with the Ministry of Education holding the chairmanship.
4. Promoted strong relationships between the district or regional education officers and the PDCs.
5. Collected and collated all national literacy standards for primary schools developed by Ministries of Education, and worked with the Ministries of Education in the subregion to draft common literacy standards for the Caribbean for grades 1 to 3.
6. Based on the draft standards, determined literacy tests to measure the achievement of the standards at each of the three grade levels, using well-accepted procedures for the development of such instruments, including pilot testing the instrument in six countries.
7. Sought and obtained the involvement of all 10 colleges training primary teachers in Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and established in each college the nucleus of a professional development unit, whose primary function is to deliver services to selected schools.
8. Allowed each college to nominate several project schools based on criteria established for the CETT exercise. Nominated schools were required to commit to full engagement in the exercise.
9. Begun to experiment with Wireless Wide Area Networks (WAN) as a means of providing PDCs with an integrated virtual platform through which the desired collaboration and cooperation can be fostered within and between clusters and with the Ministries and the UWI.

Strategy 3: Mobilizing Support through Private Sector and School-Community Partnerships

Mobilizing resources for schools is by no means either new or novel. Charity to schools has a very long history. Indeed, historically philan-

thropology has been one of the cornerstones in building the education superstructure in all countries. Individuals, churches, corporations, unions, past students, parent-teacher associations, and many such groups can all claim to have made a difference in education through contributions made to schools, students, and teachers in different ways, in diverse places, and at various points in history.

Without claiming any originality, there are four principal issues being addressed in seeking to mobilize private sector and school-community support and partnerships.

1. Most of the schools serving disadvantaged populations are not favourably located to garner support, and in addition, their immediate community is itself generally strapped for resources. The effort to mobilize support for such schools is not only to provide additional resources but to obtain resources for schools that are handicapped in the competition for such resources when compared with schools more favourably located socioeconomically.
2. Disadvantaged or socially excluded populations also suffer from a fair degree of alienation from the mainstream of society. In creating these partnerships, therefore, the end is not only to obtain physical resources in cash or kind but also to build bridges between different social segments of the society.
3. Where schools serving disadvantaged communities are also performing poorly, they are valued mainly for their custodial functions rather than for the quality of education provided. Efforts to upgrade the performance of such schools need companion measures to convince parents and communities that change is on the way and that they should also change their relationship with the schools. Efforts that mobilize resources are the most visible and obvious ways to begin to create the context within which parents and communities served by the schools can be inspired and motivated to make complementary changes in their own engagement with the children and the school.
4. The Caribbean CETT and the PDCs developed are all part of a project funding cycle that will be terminated at some point. Private sector and school community partnership is necessary not only to assist with project implementation but also to create a sustainable basis upon which these efforts can be sustained at some level even after

project funding has ceased. This includes providing goods and services that meet real needs, hence are valued, and are affordable and therefore likely to be supported over the long term.

Implementation of the Three Strategies

All three strategies are at different stages of being implemented. Strenuous efforts have been made to ensure the highest level of integration and interrelationship in their implementation. However, there are major practical and logistical challenges in maintaining schedules and mobilizing all the stakeholders and actors so that the various measures are implemented in a timely fashion and retain the integrity of the conceptual framework.

Implementing Strategy 1

Working with the Joint Board of Teacher Education and the principals and staffs of colleges training primary teachers in the five countries, the following have been accomplished to date:

- a. The Joint Boards have agreed on a common exit standard for all primary teacher preparation programmes in the Caribbean—a minimum of six credits specifically in the teaching of reading. By June 2005, all graduates from such programmes would have met this standard. Because of previous work done in some countries, a significant number of graduates will have met this standard by June 2004.
- b. Five state-of-the-art reviews were commissioned and delivered by American and Caribbean scholars on the reading achievement, learning to read in multilingual contexts, the teaching of reading, and the measurement of reading achievement.
- c. The result of these reviews were used to review the content of the basic courses in the teaching of reading being taught in colleges and the competencies being developed by these courses. Following the reviews, appropriate revisions were made. Colleges have begun to teach the revised courses. Additional courses are also to be developed to meet specific needs of the linguistic context of Belize and St. Lucia.
- d. Immediately following the review of the content and the competencies of the basic courses in the teaching of reading, lecturers teaching

reading at the colleges did a self-assessment at a workshop in June 2003, which resulted in additional or refresher training that they would need in order to competently teach the revised courses. This assessment is one of the main elements guiding the provision of professional development for these trainers of teachers for 2004 and 2005. The first such workshop was held in January 2004. In addition, all lecturers have been provided with materials on CDs, Teaching Academies developed by the University of Texas, which can be of assistance to them in the preparation for teaching various elements of different courses.

- e. Based on the bibliographies selected for the revised courses, the libraries of the colleges are being strengthened by the provision of appropriate reference books and other materials.
- f. Both Moneague and Bethlehem Colleges in Jamaica, through a DFID ([U.K.] Department for International Development) project, had developed Literacy Resource Centres designed to enhance the delivery of instruction in the teaching of reading in those colleges. With this as a starting point, these Centres were expanded to serve the professional development needs of the project schools in the clusters. Further, all colleges have committed themselves to establishing literacy resources centres, providing and refurbishing facilities for these centres. Some equipment for all the centres is being acquired.
- g. The online course management and conferencing application used by the Joint Board, Mona, in project management and course delivery has accommodated online collaboration between all staffs teaching reading in the colleges. Accordingly, the staffs of colleges in Jamaica and Belize collaborated in teaching the common revised course, Foundations of Literacy Development, which was being taught in the January 2004 semester.

Implementing Strategy 2

Schools, colleges, and district or regional offices of ministries of education have worked collaboratively to do the following:

- a. The principals and teachers of all 67 project schools in the 10 PDCs in five countries were asked to identify what needed to be done at

their school to improve reading achievement among students and the teaching of reading in grades 1 to 3. With assistance from the college-based reading specialist for the cluster, the teachers in each school identified problems and designed interventions in the form of action research that they felt would improve reading achievement in the various classes.

- b. In light of the proposed interventions, teachers and principals were asked to identify any additional training that teachers needed to competently execute the proposed interventions. The reading specialists then designed and conducted workshops to meet the training needs identified.
- c. The teachers and the reading specialists in each cluster also reviewed the proposed interventions as to the books, equipment, and teaching and learning materials needed to support implementation of the proposed interventions. These lists were submitted to the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), which then consolidated these lists and ordered the materials.
- d. At the beginning of the school year, in September 2003, all students in grades 1 to 3 in these schools were tested, using the instruments developed to measure literacy standards at each grade level. In several college clusters, teacher trainees, with appropriate instruction, administered the tests to the students in the schools. The PIU marked the tests and returned the results for each class to the teacher and the reading specialists for the cluster. The teachers in each school and the reading specialist reviewed the proposed interventions in light of the test results for their classes, paying particular attention to the extent to which the test data were consistent with the teachers' diagnosis of the major challenges to reading achievement in the particular class. Where there were disjunctures between the data and the diagnosis, appropriate adjustments were made to the interventions to make them consistent with the test data.
- e. The online course management and conferencing application used by the Joint Board, Mona, in project management and course delivery has accommodated online collaboration between the reading specialists in the ten professional development clusters. Hence, the reading

specialists in the ten PDCs are able to collaborate online, as well as receive (PIU) support for activities in their clusters.

- f. Working with the colleges, the PIU began the process of appointing information and communications technology technicians to support the implementation of various elements of the ICT infrastructure needed to make this component operational. In synchronization with the employment of the ICT technicians, the PIU began the phase implementation of the educational management information system (EMIS) in the various clusters. This has been the sequence of implementation: ordering the computers to host the EMIS; establishing the standard configuration procedures to be followed in installing hardware and software in all clusters; training the ICT technicians in these standard procedures; installing the computers and EMIS in each cluster; training a select number of teachers in each school to use the EMIS; and using EMIS in the schools to manage their affairs. Data from each school site is transferred systematically to the central servers set up in the PIU. To date, the EMIS has been set up in six of the ten clusters.
- g. With help from consultants contracted by Creative Associates, the PIU has successfully completed the tender process and begun implementing the Wireless WAN in three PDCs in Jamaica. By the end of April 2004, it was anticipated that the Bethlehem, Mico, and St Joseph's PDCs would be established, with links to the Ministry of Education and the Joint Board, Mona. This network would permit the transmission of voice, video, and data between the project schools, the colleges, the Ministry of Education, and the University, thus allowing the ICT component to support communication, management, teacher training, the distribution of materials, diagnostic and performance testing, and research and evaluation in these three PDCs.

Implementing Strategy 3

Through the good auspices of INMED Partnerships for Children, the Caribbean CETT has been able to establish partnerships with the following corporations:

- Air Jamaica, which has provided tickets for some participants traveling to workshops and events.
- Illuminat, which has been assisting with the creation and maintenance of the Caribbean CETT website.
- Scholastic, Inc., which has donated 50,000 books a year for three years. This donation is being used to provide classrooms libraries with a minimum of 100 books each in every grade 1 to 3 classroom in the project schools as well as demonstration classroom libraries in the Reading Resource Centre in each college. The first allotment of 50,000 books has been received and distributed to each college cluster and to the project schools. Reading specialists have received training in the use of classroom libraries and in the encouragement of independent reading, and are now doing similar training with the teachers. The receipt, distribution, and commencement of the use of these classroom libraries in the project schools have had a huge impact on the students, teachers, and school communities.
- Alcoa, which has donated US\$100,000 over two years to assist with equipping the reading resource centres in the six PDCs in Jamaica.
- National Commercial Bank in Jamaica, which is in the planning stage of helping to provide leadership and mobilize resources to assist the Bethlehem cluster in rural Jamaica, and if this approach is successful, to extend its application to other clusters.
- Cable and Wireless, which has assisted the Caribbean CETT to access computers at greatly reduced costs so that one computer each can be deployed in each of the classrooms in the three clusters in which the Wireless WAN is being installed.

With the appointment of two part-time business advisers by INMED it is expected that more private sector partners will assist the Caribbean CETT.

Challenges in Implementation

The major challenges in implementing a project rooted in school-originated interventions are logistical. It took varying amounts of time for the 67 schools to determine what, in their opinion, was needed to improve reading achievement in their particular setting. Collating the

interventions was thus constrained by those schools that took longer to do this. Once the interventions were collated, it took time to arrange teacher-training workshops as well as identify suppliers, following procedures for quotations and procurement. In addition, all suppliers were not timely in their deliveries. These logistics meant the interventions in the schools did not begin with the first term of the school year as planned, but rather at the beginning of the second term.

This delay in implementing the interventions makes it difficult to determine their efficacy, particularly as much of the materials and equipment had never before been used by the teachers, who would therefore have to go through a learning period before effective usage. Some classrooms have had to be reorganized to make effective use of the materials and equipment.

Further, the application and use of information and communication technology itself is still a work in progress. All five components of the Caribbean CETT were not fully implemented in support of the interventions until the beginning of the following school year.

All these factors must be taken into consideration when evaluating student achievement at the end of the school year.

Caribbean CETT: Significant Accomplishments

Notwithstanding the delays in implementing all five components of the CETT in the project schools to coincide with the commencement of the 2003–2004 school year, in its first 17 months of operation the Caribbean CETT accomplished some significant changes in teacher education and education generally in the Caribbean. These accomplishments include the following:

1. Common existing standards have been developed, agreed on, and accepted regarding the preparation of primary school teachers in the teaching of reading by all colleges training primary teachers in the region. These include the competencies to be developed, the content and quantum of the instruction required to develop these competencies in teaching phonological awareness, phonemics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

2. For the first time, college lecturers from all colleges in the Caribbean in the teaching of a particular discipline have come together to share their expertise, participate in a common programme of professional development, and collaborate in the delivery of their courses. This has extended to the entire region the concept of Boards of Studies that has been developed and practised in Jamaica for several years, but not followed in the rest of the region.
3. Draft standards have been developed for literacy achievement for grades 1 to 3, and these are now before the CARICOM Ministers of Education for adoption as the official standards for the Caribbean. As proposed by the ministries of education, the Caribbean CETT would be asked to facilitate the development of similar standards for kindergarten and grades 4 to 6 so that there would be common Caribbean standards for literacy for primary education. The Caribbean CETT model for developing standards for literacy could be applied to all areas of primary education in which it would be appropriate to develop Caribbean standards.
4. Several ministries of education have shown interest in the tests that the Caribbean CETT has developed for assessing reading achievement in relation to the draft standards. The Caribbean CETT has been asked to consider the feasibility of providing this service to ministries on an annual basis.
5. All ministries of education have examined the Caribbean CETT model of seeking to improve reading achievement and improve the teaching of reading in primary schools. Several ministries have already begun taking steps to implement this model outside of the areas and countries in which the Caribbean CETT is currently operating. St. Lucia has decided to implement the Caribbean CETT model at the kindergarten level. The Government of Guyana/IDB BEAMS Project has adopted the Draft Standards for Literacy for grades 1 to 3 and begun to apply them in their work in schools not served by the Caribbean CETT in Guyana. Trinidad and Tobago invested its own resources to prepare to implement the CETT in September 2004. Grenada is contemplating implementing the CETT model in all its primary schools over the next two to three years.

Threats to Caribbean CETT's Successful Implementation

The Caribbean CETT has abided by the CETT principle of starting small and building on successful implementation. It is constrained by its mandate to work with schools serving disadvantaged populations, particularly poor performing schools. At the same time, as a Centre of Excellence, its mandate is to achieve high educational outcomes for all students, through promoting excellence in the teaching of reading. Further, to attempt to achieve these goals in its particular context, the Caribbean CETT has organized itself on the assumption that the five components must be implemented in a highly integrated manner to achieve the depth of impact needed to transform poor performing schools into high achieving schools.

All of the above strongly suggest that it will take consistent and persistent application over time to achieve the desired results. The early lesson learned so far is that the planned time frame may be over-ambitious, given the circumstances. Threats to the successful implementation of the Caribbean CETT could come from three different directions:

- Given the high pressure and great demand in all school systems within the subregion to achieve the goals prescribed for the CETT, early success in some aspects could lead to premature application of several measures developed by the CETT, before they are adequately tested and proved in a variety of settings. This could compromise the validity of various initiatives by casting doubt on their effectiveness.
- Likewise, in attempting to respond to the needs and demands of countries and schools which push ahead in implementing the CETT model, the Caribbean CETT could spread itself too thin and therefore not provide the in-depth support needed to successfully transform poor performing schools into beacons of excellence.
- Given the possibility of unexpected and tumultuous developments in the world that could siphon off resources away from planned developments, and given the time that it may take to transform poor performing schools into high achieving schools, the Caribbean CETT is vulnerable to not being able to accomplish its mission in its totality.

Concluding Comment

The Caribbean CETT has already demonstrated its potential to transform policies and practices in teacher education, and education generally in the subregion. The extent to which this potential is translated further into reality depends on several factors that cannot be foreseen. The general principle would appear to be that the longer the Caribbean CETT can maintain its focus, sustain its efforts, and remain operational, the more likely that its impact could be widespread and profound.

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