

TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE  
COMMONWEALTH  
CARIBBEAN:  
CHALLENGES AND  
PROSPECTS

Belize City, Belize Dec 2007

# INTRODUCTION

- Welcome the opportunity given by Belize
- Views of an Oldster Leaving the Scene
- Conversation with the next Generation
- Young Countries in Transformation
- Need to Learn from the Collective Experience of the Caribbean region
- Whitehead's Dictum

# TEACHING OCCUPATIONS IN THE CARIBBEAN

- Pre-School Teachers in Community Schools
- Primary and Prep School Teachers
- Secondary School and College Teachers
- University Teachers

# TEACHERS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- Started in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century
- Subsumed under elementary school teaching
- Revived as a area of teacher preparation in the 1970s
- Bachelor Degree Programme at Shortwood
- UWI Masters Programme

# TRAINING OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

- In early stages of Infancy
- Post Graduate Diploma at University of Technology, Jamaica
- Instructional Development Unit at UWI
- Most University Teachers have no formal training in teaching

# TRAINING OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

- First college in the Caribbean 1830
- In 1955 only 7 to 45 per cent of primary school teachers trained in Caribbean countries
- Teachers' College major part of tertiary provision in colonial period
- Major developments began in the 1950s
- Bahamas and Barbados leads the region

# TRAINING OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

- First Programme UWI 1953: Diploma in Education
- Training of Secondary School Teachers in Three-Year Diploma Programmes
- Training of Secondary School Teachers in Four-Year Bachelor Degree Programmes

# DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CARIBBEAN IN LAST 50 YEARS

- Re-alignment of Primary Teacher Training within the Education System
- Emergence of Different Institutional Frameworks to Train Teachers
- A Wide Variety of Programmes of Initial Teacher Training
- In-service Used as a Means of Delivering Formal Teacher Training



# DEVELOPMENTS CONTINUED

- Upgrading of the Standard of Output from Teacher Education Programmes
- Establishment of Quality Assurance Mechanisms at the Certificate, Diploma and Associate Degree level
- Use Colleges Training Teachers as the Loci of Interventions related to Education Reforms: ROSE and the Caribbean CETT

# CURRENT CHALLENGES FACING TEACHER EDUCATION

- Decline of the Status of Teachers
- Change in the Role of Teachers: From Sage on the Stage to Guide by the Side
- Shrinking Public Resource: Do more with Less
- Globalising and Regionalising World and CSME
- Advances in Information and Communication Technology

# CHALLENGES CONTINUED

- High Attrition Rate of College Trained Teachers
- Global Shortage of Teachers
- Recruitment of Caribbean Teachers by Industrialised Countries
- No Quality Assurance at the Bachelor Degree Level
- Social Decline

# CHALLENGES CONTINUED

- Breakdown of Social Order
- Need for More Foreign Language Teachers
- Some persons in Teacher Education not properly prepared as Teacher Educators

# PROSPECTS: ASSETS

- Institutional Framework that can be Expanded, Re-Designed and Upgraded
- Long and Successful Experience in Producing Teachers: Caribbean Brand
- Supply of Qualified Applicants from the Secondary School System
- Quality Assurance Mechanism that can be extended
- Regional Corporation through JBTE
- UWI Capacity to Train Teacher Educators

# RPOSPECTS: APPROACH

- Adopting a Comprehensive Long-Term and not a Short-Term Crisis Perspective
- Building on Past Accomplishments instead of Wiping the Slate Clean and Attempting to Start from Scratch
- Planned and not Ad Hoc Actions
- Systematic and not Impulsive Interventions

# PROSPECTS: APPROACH CONTINUED

- Collaboration among Institutions instead of One-up-man-ship between Institutions
- Regional Collaboration instead of nationalistic measures
- Caribbean Driven Initiatives instead of Donor-driven Adoptions and Adaptations
- Confidence in ourselves instead of doubt in Caribbean capacity to succeed

# FINAL STATEMENT

- **Utilising the assets that the region has developed and possessed of the approached outlined I am confident that teacher education in the Caribbean can produce by 2020 appropriately educated and trained graduate teachers sufficient to fully supply the needs of all primary and secondary schools and to also supply some of the teachers needed by Caribbean students living in industrialised countries.**