



***Fostering Governmental Support for Open
Educational Resources Internationally (FGSOERI)***

Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and UNESCO

First Regional Policy Forum
The Caribbean
25-26 January 2012

SUMMARY REPORT

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Background

As part of the project *Fostering Governmental Support for Open Educational Resources Internationally (FGSOERI)*, six regional policy forums will be held, one in each UNESCO region, between January and May 2012.

The objectives of these forums are to reach a worldwide audience of government policy-makers in order to: 1) give Member States more ownership of the project; 2) raise awareness about the transformative potential of OER for education; 3) enrich the information Member States provided in response to the COL/UNESCO questionnaire survey on OER policy; and 4) provide input to the draft Declaration that will be debated at the UNESCO World OER Congress in June 2012.

A first (sub)-regional policy forum was organized in Barbados for the Caribbean Commonwealth countries and the five British Caribbean territories from 25-26 January 2012.

Although the Caribbean is part of the Latin America and the Caribbean region (LAC) in UNESCO's framework, an ICT in Education Leadership Forum in the Caribbean, jointly organized by COL, UNESCO, Microsoft and the Commonwealth Secretariat in Barbados, offered a good opportunity to bring together senior education officials from this sub-region to inform them of the project and seek their input. These countries sometimes feel excluded by country size and language when they attend LAC meetings with their Hispanophone and Lusophone neighbours.

The Forum brought together Permanent Secretaries and Senior ICT in Education Policy Leaders from across the Caribbean for the ICT in Education Leadership Forum, the first of its kind. The Forum was a multi-stakeholder event and included, in addition to COL and UNESCO, the Commonwealth Secretariat and Microsoft. Organisational support was provided by the Malta-based COMNET-IT.

The Forum focused on the theme ‘*Teachers’ Creativity and Innovation: a Key to Success in the Caribbean*’, and explored how ICT is being integrated into teaching and learning with local examples such as Guyana, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Trinidad & Tobago. It discussed the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (CFT), a comprehensive curriculum structure gaining wide acceptance in the Caribbean, and available course materials such as the ones developed for Guyana and adapted in St. Vincent & the Grenadines and COL’s Commonwealth Certificate for Teachers’ ICT Integration (CCTI), which is mapped on to the UNESCO CFT and allows teachers to gain a local recognised qualification for the skills they acquire. Discussion focused on how each country could best harness the UNESCO CFT and the COL CCTI in support of its strategy for teacher development for the integration of ICT into the schools.

While teacher development for ICT integration was the primary focus of the two-day meeting, UNESCO and COL took advantage of this important gathering to conduct a mini version of a regional policy forum on the FGSOERI project. Project Director Sir John Daniel and Senior Consultant Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić set the scene for the OER project in their introductory remarks to the ICT in Educational Leadership Forum. Then, at the end of the main Forum, a session was devoted to introducing and receiving feedback on the FGSOERI UNESCO-COL joint project. Participants were introduced to the first draft of the Declaration that is being developed for the World Congress on Open Educational Resources that will be held at UNESCO, Paris on June 20-22, 2012 and their comments were sought.

Participants

The following eleven countries participated in the Forum: Antigua & Barbuda, The Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & The Grenadines and Trinidad & Tobago.

Present also were six British territories: Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks & Caicos Islands.

The countries and territories were represented by high policy officials (amongst which 12 Permanent Secretaries).

The following organisations were represented: Caribbean Development Bank, CARICAD, CARICOM, COL, Commonwealth Secretariat, COMNET, EU Delegation to the Eastern Caribbean, Microsoft, Open Text, UNESCO, Caribbean Telecommunication Union, CIDA and USAID.

(Annex I: List of participants)

OER project: Introduction

The Forum was opened by The Honourable Ronald Jones, MP, Minister of Education and Human Resources Development, Barbados, who welcomed participants, wished them a

successful meeting and a pleasant stay in the country and emphasized the importance of ICT in education, especially in the Caribbean.

The Minister's remarks were followed by an introductory address by Sir John Daniel, President and CEO of COL, and Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić, Senior Consultant for the project, entitled *ICT in Education in the Caribbean: Achievements and Challenges*. (<http://www.col.org/resources/speeches/2012presentations/Pages/2012-01-25.aspx>).

The first part of the presentation explored the achievements in the Caribbean in ICT in Education based on a survey conducted by COL. The second part introduced the project *Fostering Governmental Support for Open Educational Resources Internationally* and explained its three interlinked activities: 1) a survey of all the world's governments, being conducted collaboratively by COL and UNESCO, to find out whether they already have, or intend to develop, policies on OER; 2) Regional Policy Forums such as this one in the Caribbean and, 3) the drafting of a Declaration on OER that will be presented to the World OER Congress in Paris in June. A preliminary text for the Declaration was developed in December after a meeting of the project's International Advisory and Liaison Group and it will be refined at each of the regional policy forums. The aim of the Declaration is to get greater buy-in from governments to the promotion of OER and to the principle of making educational materials produced with public funds available under open licenses.

Following these introductory remarks Mr Janis Karklins, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information (ADG/CI), UNESCO, presented the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers. It provides a solid curriculum structure for programmes such as COL's Commonwealth Certificate for ICT Integration that lead to certification. An urgent task is to provide learning materials to help teachers to master this content. OER have great potential to respond to this challenge.

OER project: Information base and interaction

Two publications produced by UNESCO and COL were made available to the participants at the meeting: *Guidelines on OER in Higher Education*, which addresses six stakeholder groups in HE, and *A Basic Guide to OER*.

On-line versions are available at:

<http://www.col.org/OERGuidelines>
<http://www.col.org/OERBasicGuide>

In addition, all participants had, as part of their Conference packages, the first draft of the Declaration, a background note for the project and a flyer for the 2012 World OER Congress. A dedicated web-space (<http://oercongress.weebly.com>) has been created for the project and will be regularly updated.

During one of the breaks, the Project Director and the project team interacted with the Permanent Secretaries to draw their attention to the focus of the project on government

policies. Four countries from the Caribbean had replied to the survey sent out by COL by the time of the meeting. Their responses noted the following:

- **The Bahamas** is the only country of the four that reported having an ICT in Education strategy that makes provision for the inclusion of OER. However, the movement is driven by pockets of individuals who favour OER because of their cost efficiency and because they offer open and flexible learning opportunities; particularly relevant for citizens in remote islands – an area of need. An Education Portal to share resources is planned. The ICT in Education Strategy 2010-2013 is part of the IADB INSPIRE project.
- **Grenada** reports that it is interested in OER but has no policies yet. It wants explicit initiatives and an action plan and is in favour of an integrated regional approach to OER through the Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). It is public policy for the Government to provide free textbooks for all schools. The Government is enthusiastic about the benefits that OER can offer for the education system.
- **St Vincent & the Grenadines** has no OER strategy and is not yet active because of connectivity and bandwidth issues. However it sees the cost-efficiency benefits of OER. The first requirement is to train teachers to use ICTs and develop an action plan.
- **Trinidad & Tobago** has no Government policy on OER. However, institutions are active in this field because of the openness and flexibility that OER offer. The country's postsecondary institutions are active in the international OER-based project, the *Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth*, and the *National Open School of Trinidad and Tobago* is working with six African countries to create a senior secondary curriculum as OER. However, more awareness is needed. The National Research Network could support policy development and research on OER.

After the discussion other countries said that they would respond to the questionnaire shortly and some wished to revise their earlier replies based on new information gathered at the conference. The UK Territories expressed their wish to be included in the survey (COL has now sent them the Survey with a deadline of 15 March for replies).

OER session: Issues, Discussion and Conclusions

The last session of the Conference, devoted to OER, gave an opportunity for a more in-depth discussion. Sir John Daniel introduced the information package available to participants and urged them to ask questions and have an open discussion on the theme. He also reminded participants of the *Virtual University of Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)*, a creation of Ministers of Education which includes all the Caribbean countries present and provides a growing pool of OER resources for use in the tertiary education system.

Janis Karklins, ADG/CI, UNESCO, presented UNESCO's OER activities, reminding delegates of the 2002 Conference at which the term was coined, describing the different components of the UNESCO OER Platform, underlining the benefits of OER, mentioning research conducted by the two UNESCO OER Chairs and informing them of UNESCO's shift towards open licenses for its own publications.

He gave examples of products such as the UNESCO Model Curricula for Journalism Education and the pedagogical use of the General History of Africa, piloted by the University of Namibia, which will be made available as OER by UNESCO.

During the ICT in Education Leadership Forum, Neil Butcher, a South African consultant who had helped with the implementation of the CFT framework and the CCTI in Guyana, had given a concrete example of the use of OER in the Caribbean. The Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE), which was charged with developing learning materials for teachers to support the CFT and CCTI, had found that by taking existing OER from a variety of sources and adapting them to Guyanese needs they had greatly reduced both the cost and the time required to offer good materials to the teachers. Moreover the faculty of the CPCE had found their engagement with OER a very satisfying professional activity.

This concrete and successful example of the local use of OER helped the participants to see OER less as an abstract concept and more as a practical benefit. A general reaction by participants was that OER was a great movement, as is the open source software movement that inspired it, and that it is potentially a most transformative development for education. They emphasised that at a time when knowledge is changing rapidly, designing one's own content and being part of the knowledge creation process was extremely important. In that respect, the following issues were raised:

- How to foster collaboration at regional level, particularly collaboration among teachers;
- The need to change mindsets and introduce a culture of sharing among teachers;
- How to measure the impact of OER and who will do it;
- Issues of Intellectual Property Rights;
- The cost implications of the creation of OER need to be further clarified and understood as a basis for investment of resources;
- How to ensure multidirectional flows of OER given the limited capacity in the Caribbean and the desire to be producers as well as users;
- Examining what has already been done in the Caribbean to uncover success stories ("We don't know that we already have our successes and some are using OER without realising it - e.g. the VUSSC");
- Focus less on planning, look at what has been done, find success stories and build on them;
- Quality assurance and quality control – how do we find OER of quality?
- The region needs to speak with one voice about OER through the CARICOM Council of Ministers.

Conclusions

1. Further discussion demonstrated that there was a wealth of literature advocating the business case for OER. The impact of OER has already been measured in parts of the world and there are examples of multidirectional, multinational flows of OER: e.g. from Ghana to the US (KNUST, Ghana – University of Michigan, USA, tropical diseases) and between African countries (see the COL/UNESCO *Basic Guide to OER*).
2. With the continued development of the technology of OER and wide access to information, Governments have a new opportunity to embrace OER with low production costs, making institutions responsible for quality control.
3. In the Caribbean OER policy development should be linked to strengthening teacher training by using the UNESCO ICT Competency Framework for Teachers and the COL Commonwealth Certificate for Teacher ICT Integration.
4. It is important for the Caribbean region to work together, teaming up and setting priorities using regional bodies such as CARICOM (Council of Ministers) and OECS (Curriculum Reform Unit) but not forgetting that individual initiatives are vital and must be taken into account.
5. Finally, there is a need to develop strategies for the Caribbean region within a comprehensive document to avoid fragmentation. The region counts on the support of its partners such as COL and UNESCO to be part of the developmental process of OER and ICTs in Education.

OER project: next steps

The session urged that the Permanent Secretaries who have not already done so should reply to the Survey questionnaire so that their responses can be included in the final report. Governments will begin the regional preparations for the June OER Congress where the Caribbean will be given an opportunity to present its views on strategies for policy development for OER.

UNESCO and COL will continue to support and interact in the process leading up to the World OER Congress.

Annex I: List of participants

Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić
Senior Consultant
2012-02-05

Annex 1
List of Participants

Anguilla Ministry of Health & Social Development	Ms Chanelle Petty Barrett, Permanent Secretary
	Ms Dawn Reid, Education Services Planner
Antigua & Barbuda Ministry of Education, Sports, Youth and Gender Affairs	Mr Jessel Edwards, Permanent Secretary
	Mrs Stacey Payne-Mascalls, Leader Teacher IT
Barbados Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development	The Hon Ronald Jones, Minister Education
	Mrs Cecile Humphrey Permanent Secretary
	Dr Roderick Rudder, Senior Education Officer, Planning, Research & International Relations
	Mr Paul Murphy, Programme Director
	Ms Vaneisha Cadogan, Senior Education Officer Curriculum & Assessment
	Mr Burkley Lowe, Acting Programme Director, Education Enhancement Unit
The Bahamas Ministry of Education	Mrs Michelle Sears, Professional Development Officer
	Ms Bernadette Murray, Education Officer, Computer Studies
Bermuda - Ministry of Education	Mrs Wendy McDonell, Commissioner of Education
	Mrs Patricia Callender, Education Officer
British Virgin Islands Ministry of Education and Culture	Mr Allen Hodge, Education Officer/Technical and Vocational Education & Training
Cayman Islands Ministry of Education, Training & Employment	Mrs Mary Rodrigues, Permanent Secretary
	Mark Ray, ICT integration Specialist
Dominica Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development	Mr Stephenson Hyacinth, Chief Education Officer
	Mr Timothy Lavinier, ICT representative
Grenada Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development	Mrs Arlene Buckmrie-Outram, Permanent Secretary
	Mrs Andrea Phillip, Deputy Chief Education Officer, Curriculum
Guyana Ministry of Education	Ms Delma Nedd, Permanent Secretary
	Ms Kim Spencer, National Centre for Educational Resource Development
	Ms Marcia Joy Thomas, ICT Coordinator/Senior Subject Specialist, National Centre for Educational Resource Development
Jamaica Office of the Prime Minister and Minister of Education	Dr Canute Thompson, Senior Education Officer, Tertiary Unit
	Dr Ashburn Pinnock, Principal of Sam Sharpe Teachers' College
Montserrat	Mrs Daphne Cassell, Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Education, Health, Community Services, Youth Affairs and Sport	Mrs Cherlyn Hogan, Principal, Montserrat Sececondary School
St Kitts and Nevis Ministry of Education and Information	Mrs Ionie Liburd-Willett, Permanent Secretary
	Mr Quinton Morton, Education Planner
St Lucia Ministry of Education and Culture	Dr Rufina Frederick, Permanent Secretary
	Mr Ron Isaac Project Co-ordinator, Education Enhancement/ICT
	Mrs Cathy Gill, Curriculum Specialist, ICT
	Mr Royston Emmanuel Lecturer, Sir Arthur Lewis Community College
St Vincent and the Grenadines Ministry of Education	Mrs Nicole Bonadie-Baker, Permanent Secretary
	Mr Nigel Scott, Deputy Director, SVG Community College
Trinidad and Tobago Ministry of Science, Technology & Tertiary Education (MSTT) and Ministry of Education (ME)	Ms Kathleen Thomas, Permanent Secretary (MoE)
	Ms Karen Rosemin, Director, The Distance Learning Section (MSTT)
	Ms Angela Sinaswee-Gervais, Deputy Permanent Secretary (ME)
	Ms Gaynelle Holdip, Director Curriculum Development (Ag.) (ME)
Turks & Caicos Islands Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture	Dr Beatrice Fulford, Permanent Secretary
	Mr Mark Garland, Deputy Director of Education
Caribbean Development Bank	Ms Deidre Clarendon, Portfolio Manager, Social Sector Division, Projects Department
	Dr Idamay Denny, Operations Officer, Social Sector Division
	Dr Martin Baptiste, Operations Officer (Education)
Caribbean Telecommunication Union	Mr. Trevor Prevatt, obo/Ms. Bernadette Lewis, Secretary General
CARICAD	Mrs Jennifer Astaphan, Executive Director
	Mr Andre Griffith, E-Government and ICT Adviser
CARICOM	Ms Patricia McPherson, Deputy Programme Manager, Education
CIDA	Ms Lianne Garceau-Bednar, A/Consuelo (Development) and Deputy Director, Operations, Caribbean Programme
Commonwealth of Learning	Sir John Daniel, President and CEO
	Ms Trudi van Wyk, Education Specialist: eLearning
Commonwealth Secretariat	Mr Max Everest Philips, Director, Governance & Institutional Development Division
	Mr Anthony Ming, Adviser (Informatics) Governance & Institutional Development Division

	Mr Naveed Somani, Programme Officer (ICT Research & Support) Governance & Institutional Development Division
	Mr Neil Butcher, ICT in Education Strategist
COMNET	Ms Sandra Hyzler, Business Development Manager
Delegation of European Union to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean	Mr Zissimos Vergos, Head, Social Development Sector
	Mr Stephen Boyce, Project Officer (Education &IT)
GEMFORD Consultancy Services Inc.	Ms Glenda Melford, Managing Director
International Council for Open and Distance Education	Dr Monica Masino, Programme Coordinator, Academic Programming and Delivery (APAD), UWI on behalf of Principal, Professor Hazel Simmons-McDonald
Microsoft Caribbean	Mr. Greg Butler, Worldwide Education Strategy Director
	Mr Darren Mohammed, Education Sector Manager - West Indies (T&T)
	Mr Pedro Julio Uribe, International Organisations, Director for Latin America
	Mr Terrence Philip, Public Sector Director - West Indies (T&T)
OER Project	Ms Stamenka Uvalic Trubic, Senior Consultant
Open Text	Mr Alex Benay, VP, Government Relations
University of West Indies	Dr Susan Herbert, Head of Department & Lecturer, School of Education
	Dr Dianne Thurab-Nkhosi, Teacher Training Facilitator
	Mr Nazir Alladin , Director, Campus IT Services
UNESCO	Mr Janis Karklins, Assistant Director-General Communication and Information
	Ms Zeynep Varoglu , Programme Specialist, ICT in Educ. Knowledge Societies Division Communications and Information Sector
USAID	Sophia Cave, Development Program Assistant