

PREFACE

There will be little disagreement with the view that the effective management and administration of educational systems is of crucial importance if education is to make a sustained contribution to national development in member countries of the Commonwealth. This is all the more critical as the demand for educational services grows against a background of declining expenditure on education, the slowing down of educational expansion and the harsh economic realities of the present decade. In this context, the need to improve the efficiency of educational management and its capacity to deliver relevant and quality education has assumed considerable urgency.

Over the past decade, Commonwealth co-operation in education has devoted considerable attention to the provision of specialised training for middle and senior level education managers, and strategies for assisting Commonwealth countries with such training have included regional workshops and training courses organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the publication of training handbooks. However, it has long been recognised that such occasional Commonwealth inputs, limited as they are by the available quantum of resources, do not match the enormous need felt in most member states. One strand of response to this situation is clearly to assist the growth and development of indigenous national and regional training facilities in Commonwealth countries.

In welcoming such a response, the Eighth Commonwealth Education Conference held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1980, urged the Secretariat to undertake such initiatives as will improve and expand existing training capabilities in educational administration in the various regions of the Commonwealth. One of these initiatives was a meeting to Facilitate the Establishment of a Commonwealth Regional Training Programme in Educational Administration for the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Held in Jamaica from 5-7 July 1982, the meeting addressed itself to the regular and long term training needs of the region; in particular, it sought the establishment of a programme which, with Commonwealth assistance, would offer training facilities to member countries in order to develop and supplement existing national training programmes. Representatives of fourteen Commonwealth Caribbean countries at the meeting unanimously recommended that a Commonwealth Regional Training Programme for Educational Administration should be established and that an invitation should be extended to the University of the West Indies to host the Programme. On the basis of this and other recommendations which specify objectives, priorities, strategies, funding and a programme for implementation, the Commonwealth Secretariat has now set in train measures designed to carry forward the recommendations of the meeting.

A summary of the major recommendations appear on pages 1-4. The meeting which was organised by the Education Division (now the Education Programme of the Human Resources Development Group) was funded by the Secretariat's Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation (CFTC). Its success derived much from the hosting facilities provided by the Government of Jamaica through its Ministry of Education. The meeting itself gained a strong impetus from the inaugural address of the Honourable Minister, Dr Mavis Gilmour, whilst the practical and professional needs of all representatives at the proceedings were diligently provided by Dr Yvonne Mahy, Director of the Education Development and Demonstration Centre, the host institution, and Mr Leo Goodin, Assistant Chief Education Officer (Primary), Jamaica, who chaired the proceedings. To them and ultimately to the wider Commonwealth, this Report is offered as a step towards the objective of better and more effective management of the educational enterprise in member countries.

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