

**To be used in developing
National Plan for the achievement of 'Education for all Children
who are Blind or Visually Impaired across the Anglophone Caribbean'**

Planning for the Period 2010 - 2014

SITUATION ANALYSIS

**Prepared by:
Frank Bowen and Keva Richards**

WHAT IS EFA-VI CAMPAIGN?

The **Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI)** is a global campaign and program of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) acting in partnership with the World Blind Union (WBU) and endorsed by the UNESCO and UNICEF to ensure that girls and boys with blindness and low vision enjoy the right to education. This campaign and program primarily focus on children in the developing world. The EFA-VI campaign will focus on early intervention and on all preschool and school age girls and boys

with visual impairment. The term “visual impairment” used in this campaign includes blind and low vision children and those children who are deafblind or otherwise multiply disabled.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The EFA-VI campaign will be guided by the following fundamental principles:

1. There is a need to create a demand for education of children with visual impairment
2. The campaign will work within the general framework of education and special education of countries selected for implementation.
3. Girls and boys with visual impairment should be included in the general education system with appropriate support
4. Alternative educational approaches are also necessary considering that some children with specialised needs such as those who are deafblind and multiple disabilities require specialised services.

MODE OF IMPLEMENTATION:

The campaign is being implemented at two levels. A Global Task Force (GTF) is involved in formulating a strategic framework for the campaign and mobilizing technical and material resources. The day-to-day implementation of the Campaign is the primary responsibility of the National Task Force (NTF). The country-level Task Forces will be oriented to take stock of the existing situation in each country before projecting a national plan for implementation. The President of ICEVI, Mr. Larry Campbell, serves as the Chairman of the Global Task Force and Dr. M.N.G. Mani, Secretary-General of ICEVI serves as the Executive Director of the Campaign.

COMPOSITION OF NATIONAL TASK FORCES AND TERMS OF REFERENCE:

The National Task Forces are the most vital units in the implementation of the EFA-VI Campaign and Program. They should consist of all stakeholders of Special Needs Education who have made their contribution directly or indirectly to the development and implementation of National Plans. The National Task Force may comprise the following:

- Government Ministries of Education and other Ministries concerned for the overall ‘Education For All’ Campaign
- Organizations of Persons with Visual Impairment and Parent Organisations where exist
- National and International Non-Governmental Organizations working in the area of Visual Impairment and EFA
- UN Specialized Agencies concerned at the national level.
- Special Teachers and other professionals working in the area of visual impairment
- Professionals in the Eye-Health Care/Vision 2020 Program
- Teacher Preparation Institutes including Universities, which train Teachers for regular schools and for children with visual impairment.

The Terms of Reference of the National Task Force should include:

- Working within the overall framework of existing National Education Plans to ensure that the educational issues of girls and boys with visual impairment including those who are deaf-blind and multiple disabled are adequately addressed
- Making situation analysis and collecting data at the national level
- Developing long-term and short-term goal-oriented Strategic Plans for implementing educational services for all visually impaired children

- Suggesting legislations and regulations for adoption, where not existing, and ensuring that any existing discriminatory clauses are eliminated
- Establishing linkages for the purpose of Networking and Advocacy
- Suggesting development of appropriate Curricula
- Mobilizing and sharing of resources towards convergence of services in order to achieve the EFA Goal.

The National Task Force should meet at least twice a year to review the implementation of the EFA Campaign and assess its progress towards suggesting mid-term refinement, if any. The existing infrastructure of regional meetings of ICEVI and WBU may be used as forums for the National Task Forces to report on the progress of the Campaign at the national level.

[See EFA Guidelines and Principles - for more details – Doc. #4]

1. Introduction

The Caribbean is an archipelago about 2,500 miles long and approximately 160 miles wide. It encompasses the Caribbean Sea, a group of about 7,000 islands, islets, reefs and cays and the surrounding coasts. The region is located southeast of the Gulf of Mexico and Northern America, east of Central America, and to the north of South America. The islands are usually referred to as the ‘West Indies’. A history of conquest and colonization has left the region with four major languages (English, French, Dutch and Spanish); several dialects; and its own unique social and cultural characteristics and experiences.

Politically, “Caribbean” may be centered around socio-economic groupings found in the region. For example, the bloc known as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) contains both the Republic of Guyana and Republic of Suriname, found in South America; along with Belize in Central America, as full members. Bermuda and the Turks and Caicos Islands, which are found in the Atlantic Ocean, are Associate Members of the Caribbean Community; and the same goes for the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, which is a full member.

In the global political landscape, the Caribbean which consists of more than twenty-two (22) independent States, Overseas Departments and Territories, is regarded as a ‘sub-region’ of North America.

For the purpose of this Situation Analysis, however, the area of coverage is restricted to the Anglophone or English-speaking Caribbean.

1.1 Anglophone Caribbean - Political, Geographical and Economic Profile:

(See Table I - below):

Countries	Political Status	Area (sq. km.)	Capital	GDP per capita (PPP)-USD	HDI Rank
1. Anguilla	Overseas Territory of UK	102	The Valley	8,800	n/a
2. Antigua & Barbuda	Independent	442.6	St. John's	19,000	57
3. (The) Bahamas	Independent	13,940	Nassau	28,600	49
4. Barbados	Independent	431	Bridgetown	19,300	31
5. Bermuda	Overseas Territory of UK	53.3	Hamilton	69,900	n/a
6. British Virgin Islands	Overseas Territory of UK	153	Road Town	38,500	n/a
7. Cayman Islands	Overseas Territory of UK	262	George Town	43,800	n/a
8. (Commonwealth of) Dominica	Independent	754	Roseau	9,900	71
9. Grenada	Independent	344	St. George's	13,400	82
10. Guyana	Independent	214,970	Georgetown	3,900	92
11. Jamaica	Independent	10,991	Kingston	7,400	101
12. Montserrat	Overseas Territory of UK	102	?	3,400	n/a
13. St. Kitts/Nevis	Independent	261	Basseterre	19,700	54
14. St. Lucia	Independent	616	Castries	11,300	72
15. St. Vincent and The Grenadines	Independent	389	Kingstown	10,500	93
16. Trinidad & Tobago	Independent	5,128	Port-of-Spain	18,600	59
17. Turks & Caicos Islands	Overseas Territory of UK	430	Cockburn Town	11,500	n/a
TOTAL	-	249,368.9	-	-	-

2. Anglophone Caribbean: Demographic Profile:

[See Table II – below]

Country	Population	Life Expectancy	Literacy Rate
1. Anguilla	13,477	80.64	95
2. Antigua and Barbuda	87,506	74.76	85.8

3. The Bahamas	327,000	65.78	95.8
4. Barbados	293,000	73.94	99.7
5. Bermuda	64,000	80.43	98
6. British Virgin Islands	22,016	77.26	97.8
7. Cayman Islands	51,900	80.44	98
8. Commonwealth of Dominica	72,000	75.55	88
9. Grenada	108,000	65.95	96
10. Guyana	739,000	66.68	99
11. Jamaica	2,667,000	73.53	79.9
12. Montserrat	4,488	72.76	97
13. St. Kitts/Nevis	48,000	73.2	97.8
14. St. Lucia	166,000	76.45	94.8
15. St. Vincent and The Grenadines	120,00	73.65	88.1
16. Trinidad & Tobago	1,328,000	70.86	98.4
17. Turks & Caicos Islands	30,600	75.42	98

3. Blindness Worldwide:

The WHO Reports present the following picture in relation to blindness and visual impairment, globally:

- Approximately 314 million persons are visually impaired world-wide, with 45 million of them being blind.
- Most people with visual impairment are older, with females being at greater risk, at every age, in every part of the world.
- About 87% of the world's visually impaired live in developing countries.
- The number of people blinded by infectious diseases has been greatly reduced, but age related impairment is increasing.
- Cataract remains the leading cause of blindness globally, except in developed countries.
- Correction of refractive errors could give normal vision to more than 12 million children (ages 5 to 15).
- About 85% of all visual impairment is avoidable, globally.

[WHO Media Center – Key Facts]

3.1 Blindness in the Caribbean:

Blindness in the Caribbean is estimated at 1%, according to the Barbados Eye Study (BES), although this figure may be higher in poor countries, such as Haiti and slightly lower in the more developed territories.

The main causes of blindness in the region are: non-operated Cataract, uncorrected Refractive Error and Low Vision, Diabetic Retinopathy, Childhood Blindness and Glaucoma. Childhood Blindness is not as prevalent, but is a main cause of blinding years in the population. As is the case globally, a high percentage of blindness in the Caribbean is avoidable (preventable or curable).

The Strategic Plan for Vision 2020: The Right to Sight – Caribbean, observed that “visual disability has far-reaching individual, social and economic consequences, impeding development in childhood and productivity in adulthood, with functional and quality of life implications across the whole life spectrum. Cost-effective technologies are available to prevent, control or minimize visual impairment for most disorders”. The Plan emphasizes that “what is needed is political and professional commitment to, and provision of resources for, the delivery and application of these technologies to populations in need”.
 [The Strategic Plan for Vision 2020 – Caribbean Region, pg. 1]

3.2 Blindness and Low Vision in Children of School Age – Anglophone Caribbean: (See Table III - below):

Country	Population of school-aged children (5 - 16 yrs.)	Blindness (1:1000)	Low Vision (Blind x 3)	Total: (B+LV)	No. of b& vi children receiving special education	Service Gap
1. Anguilla	2,833	3	9	12	n/a	n/a
2. Antigua & Barbuda	23,679	24	72	96	6	90
3. (The) Bahamas	72,514	73	219	292	20 (?)	272
4. Barbados	41,496	41	123	164	8 (?)	156 (?)
5. Bermuda	10,013	10	30	40	n/a	n/a
6. British Virgin Islands	4,513	5	15	20	n/a	n/a
7. Cayman Islands	6,390	6	18	24	n/a	n/a
8. Commonwealth of Dominica	17,452	17	51	68	4	64
9. Grenada	30,684	31	93	124	14	110
10. Guyana	165,867	166	498	664	29	635
11. Jamaica	625,888	626	1,878	2,504	114	2,390
12. Montserrat	806	1	3	4	n/a	n/a
13. St. Kitts/Nevis	10,906	11	33	44	n/a	n/a
14. St. Lucia	36,392	36	108	144	35	109
15. St. Vincent & The Grenadines	27,518	28	84	112	n/a	n/a
16. Trinidad & Tobago	239,182	239	717	956	30	926
17. Turks & Caicos Islands	4,433	4	12	16	n/a	n/a
TOTAL:	1,320,566	1,321	3,963	5,284	260 (?)	4,752 (?)

4. The state of Education:

4.1 Education for All (EFA) – Globally:

It is estimated that as many as 93 million of school age are currently out-of-school, and that the majority of them are females, 80% of whom live in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Further, it is emphasized that quality education remains lacking for many of the world’s children “even though it is a fundamental human right enshrined in the international commitments. From the Millennium Development Goals to the Dakar Declaration, countries have repeatedly committed

themselves to achieving universal primary education and eliminating gender disparities at all levels of education by 2015.” (UNICEF – “Basic education and gender equity”).

“Poverty, geographic isolation, gender, language, ethnicity – these are some of the main obstacles blocking the road to school. They all have a common denominator: unequal opportunities”.

“An estimated 75 million children of primary school age world wide are currently out of school with partial projections suggesting that at least 29 million children will still be missing out on their right to an education in 2015. A further 776 million adults, or 16% of the world’s population, lack even basic literacy skills. Two-thirds of these are women” (The UNESCO Courier 2008 Special Issue – “Education: roads closed”).

4.2 Education for All (EFA) – The Caribbean:

“Latin American and the Caribbean stands ahead of other developing regions in Education for All. Most countries in the region have achieved universal primary education (UPE) and are witnessing a rapid expansion of both pre-primary education and secondary and tertiary. However learning achievement levels remain low by international standards. Moreover, while there is little evidence of gender disparity levels at primary level, massive underparticipation by boys exists in secondary and tertiary education.

The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009 finds that disparities based on wealth, location, gender and disability deny millions of children a good quality education.”[Regional Overview:Latin America and the Caribbean]

4.3 Situation of Education Services for children who are blind or low vision in the Caribbean:

“Children with disabilities are among the most marginalized and least likely to go to school. Evidence from household surveys indicates that among children aged 6 to 11 the difference in primary school attendance rates between those with and without disabilities ranges from twenty-eight percentage points in Jamaica to thirty-six in Colombia and fifty-seven in Bolivia. Speeding up the progress towards UPE will require a far stronger focus on public policies facilitating access, and on political leadership to change attitudes” [Regional Overview – Latin America and the Caribbean]

Among children with disabilities, those who are blind or visually impaired are reported to be among the most vulnerable to marginalization and discrimination. They are more likely to experience poor quality education, delivered through inadequate curricula, untrained personnel and under-resourced facilities.

In 2007, Hasan Minto and Petra Van Es conducted a Clinical and Cognitive Assessment of Children in Education Programs for the Visually Impaired in Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago, commissioned by CCB.

Some of the findings of the Assessment, include:

- Coverage in Guyana - 21.6%; Jamaica – 33.3%; Trinidad & Tobago – 62%;
- There was a bias towards males;
- No system of case-finding;
- Children with additional disability varied between 12% to 23%;
- Low Vision Services were not available in Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago;
- Limited availability of low vision devices;
- Low uptake in Guyana of Low Vision Services by children;
- Unavailability of trained personnel to issue low vision devices;
- No systematic program for referral between Education Services and Eye Clinic.

[Report: Clinical and Cognitive Assessment of Children in Education Programs for the Visually Impaired in Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago, 2007]

4.4 Human Resource Development in the Education Sector:

Human Resource Considerations:

4.4.1 Number of Teachers trained to work with children who are blind or visually impaired – by Country and number needed to achieve a ratio of 1-14:

(See Table IV – below):

Country	No. of Children who are blind/lv	No. of Teachers trained to work with children who are blind or visually impaired	No. of Teachers need to be trained to work with children who are blind or visually impaired to achieve a ratio of 1:14	Disparity: Teachers trained/Teachers needed
1. Anguilla	12	n/a	1	1
2. Antigua & Barbuda	96	2	7	5
3. (The) Bahamas	292	6	21	15
4. Barbados	164	1	12	11
5. Bermuda	40	n/a	3	3
6. British Virgin Islands	20	n/a	2	2
7. Cayman Islands	24	n/a	2	2
8. Commonwealth of Dominica	68	1	5	4
9. Grenada	124	3	9	6
10. Guyana	664	0	47	47
11. Jamaica	2,504	18	179	161
12. Montserrat	4	0	?	
13. St. Kitts/Nevis	44	n/a	3	3
14. St. Lucia	144	8	10	2
15. St. Vincent & The Grenadines	112	n/a	8	8 ?
16. Trinidad & Tobago	956	6	68	62
17. Turks & Caicos Islands	16	n/a	1	1
TOTAL:	5,284	45	378	333

4.4.2 Required Training Institutions or Programs by Country or Sub-region:

(See Table V - below):

Country	Training Institution	IE Program	
1. Anguilla	None	n/a	
2. Antigua and Barbuda	None	Yes	
3. The Bahamas	None	Yes	
4. Barbados	None	Yes	
5. Bermuda	None	n/a	
6. British Virgin Islands	None	n/a	

7. Cayman Islands	None	n/a	
8. Commonwealth of Dominica	None	Yes	
9. Grenada	None	Yes	
10. Guyana	May be established to serve the South-Eastern Caribbean	Yes – at two sites	
11. Jamaica	Mico University College	Yes	
12. Montserrat	None	n/a	
13. St. Kitts/Nevis	None	n/a	
14. St. Lucia	None	Yes – at two sites	
15. St. Vincent and The Grenadines	None	Yes	
16. Trinidad & Tobago	None	Yes	
17. Turks & Caicos Islands	None	n/a	

4.4.3 Resource Centers/Resource Units and Schools by Country, District, Province, Parish or Region:

(See Table VI - below):

Country	School	Resource Center/Unit	
Anguilla	n/a		
Antigua and Barbuda	T.N. Kirnon Junior Secondary School	Unit for the Blind and Visually Impaired	
The Bahamas	Erin H. Gilmour School for the Blind		
Barbados	Irving Wilson School for the Blind and Deaf	n/a	
Bermuda	n/a	n/a	
British Virgin Islands	n/a	n/a	
Cayman Islands	n/a	n/a	
Commonwealth of Dominica		* Not a fully equipped Unit	
Grenada	St. Paul's Primary School	Resource Center for the Blind and Deaf	
Guyana	1. St. Rose's High School 2. Wismar Hill Primary School, Linden	1. Resource Unit for the Visually Impaired 2. Resource Unit for the Visually Impaired.	
Jamaica	The Salvation Army School for the Blind		
Montserrat	n/a		
St. Kitts/Nevis	n/a	n/a	
St. Lucia		Resource Center(s) - SLBWA	
St. Vincent and The Grenadines	n/a	n/a	
Trinidad & Tobago	School for the Blind, Santa Cruz		
Turks & Caicos	n/a	n/a	

Islands			
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5. Barriers:

5.1 Barriers to the achievement of education for all children who are blind or visually impaired:

- Absence of case-finding mechanism
- Insufficient number of Specialist Teachers
- Lack of Schools/Resource Centers or Units
- Absence of Specialised Equipment
- Lack of Library Facilities
- Inadequate support/resources for Program

5.2 Barriers to children accessing Education Services:

- Poverty
- Inadequate nutrition
- Poor health
- Language
- Location – residence or school
- Disability
- Inequalities – social, educational
- Religious Beliefs
- Poor to inadequate advocacy activities by Member Organisations of CCB

5.3 Barriers to more Teachers being trained at the Tertiary Levels:

- Inadequate resources for training: number of training opportunities/scholarships
- Inadequate number of Training Institutions/Programs – Colleges, In-Service and Pre-Service Programs;
- Poor salaries and working conditions for Teachers;
- Lack of incentives (financial, promotional opportunities) for Trained Teachers;
- None to poor interventions with Ministries of Education by individuals and Organisations with responsibility for advancing the interests of children with blindness and visual impairments.

5.4 Barriers to more Classroom Teachers being sensitized in On-the Job (In-Service) Training:

- Inadequate In-Service Program;
- Lack of commitment of part of MoE/Government;
- Absence of incentives;
- Failure by Organisations of and for the Blind to facilitate the development and implementation of In-service Training Programs for generic Classroom Teachers.

5.5 Barriers to more Resource Units and Centers being established:

- Insufficient support from the MoE;
- Inadequate number of Specialist Teachers;
- Inadequate/lack of resources for materials and equipment;
- Inadequate/lack of resources for materials and equipment;
- Insufficient leadership by CCB and other Organisations capable of giving guidance to regional and national program development and implementation.

6. Traditional Partners in the development of Education Services for Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired in the Caribbean :

- 6.1 Parents of children who are blind or visually impaired
- 6.2 Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs)
- 6.3 Ministries of Education
- 6.4 Ministries of Health
- 6.5 The Salvation Army (Schools for the Blind)
- 6.6 Service Clubs – Lions, Rotary, etc.
- 6.8 Mico University College
- 6.9 CCB and its Member Organisations

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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