



## **GRENADA**

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### **Background:**

Grenada, as a member territory of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and of the CARICOM, has traditionally located its educational agenda and strategic perspective within a regional context. That being a reality, the Strategic Plan for Educational Enhancement and Development (SPEED) 2006-2015 (under review) of Grenada, coupled with the OECS Education Sector Strategy (OESS) 2012-2021 are the policy documents that provide a pathway for action in education into the next decade, for this island territory.

‘Open and Distance Learning’ has always been viewed as a critical issue, more so now, with the use of emerging and new technologies, and as Grenada seeks to maximize its efforts in education, while lowering the unit cost of education across the sector. Leveraging relationships across the sub-region of the OECS, the wider Caribbean region and the world beyond, has therefore become of particular importance to Grenada. It is to be noted that collaborative developmental work in the region, across geographical distances, has been historical, spanning some two decades. This has been accomplished through the harmonizing initiatives of the OECS Education Development and Management Unit (EDMU), formerly the OECS Education Reform Unit (OERU), with the OESS 2012-2021 being the third decade-long regional, strategic policy document for educational development. A large number of educational products have been delivered through all regional collaboration. These now take on new flavor and potential, given the power and reach of the contemporary Open and Distance Learning concept.

*Within the recent past, ODL has been used for a number of initiatives in Grenada,* particularly within the Education sector and particularly at the tertiary level. Such initiatives include but are not limited to the following:

- Training of teachers, education administrators and specialists, public officers, nurses and other professionals up to the bachelor’s and master’s degree levels through the Open Campus of the UWI.
- State administrated, World Bank-funded delivery of customized degrees in Education, via a blended modality, through the Open Campus (UWI) targeting the building of capacities of selected groups of teachers, in Literacy and Mathematics & Science.
- Short and medium term delivery of Continuing Professional Development courses in diverse areas through the aegis of developmental partners, through their unique portals and/or platforms e.g. World Bank Institute; ITEN; OAS Portal for Education; UNESCO’s International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP); CCTI; DTOC courses offered through COL.

- Collaborative international discussions delivered through discrete e-platforms e.g. UNESCO IIEP e-forum on Teachers' Codes of Conduct; ITEN webinars on diverse topics in Education.
- Ongoing delivery of tertiary level education through the local community college, the T.A. Marryshow College, with MOODLE being the course management system of choice.
- Networking at a regional level through C@ribNET of the Caribbean Knowledge and Learning Network; limited use of online collaborative tools by teachers and lecturers for enhancement of course and programme delivery.
- Very limited use of mobile technologies in primary and secondary classrooms, dependent on teacher competence and interest and infrastructural readiness of classroom settings.
- Very limited provision of computer hardware, multi-media equipment, by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource, often at the secondary level, through external funding, in satisfaction of 'Special Project' allocations.
- Ongoing piloting and use of open source systems e.g. Open Orange – an IT solution for the modernizing of personnel files within the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.
- Ongoing piloting of an Open Education Management Information System (Open EMIS) through the auspices of the OECS Education and Management Unit (EDMU) and UNESCO.
- Development and use of an EMIS for the management of TVET practitioners, service providers by the recently established Grenada National Training Agency.
- Conceptualizing of and collaboration with developmental partners for the development of an ODL Policy, particularly at an institutional level of the community college.
- Use of an e-government system with e-services for the public, specifically for the Inland Revenue Department of the Ministry of Finance.

**Ongoing challenges:**

- ODL as a contemporary twenty-first century notion is not clearly understood by all educators within the sector in Grenada. This as an emerging issue is often confused with simple online learning.
- Lecturers and administrators at the tertiary level community college make limited use of ODL; the e-learning platform MOODLE although available is underused for course and programme delivery.
- Although an ICT policy is in draft form and will soon be submitted for Cabinet adoption, there remains an absence of a national ODL policy to guide professional practice.
- There is need for widespread training and capacity-building in the areas of policy development, practical ODL use and the transformation capacity of ODL for the education sector.

- Under-utilization of technology for training delivery within the Agricultural and Health sectors and within the National Training Agency.

**Top priority areas for assistance from COL:**

1. Technical assistance for the development of a National ODL Policy to govern all sectors.
2. Training of educational administrators, teachers, health educators, agricultural officers re the integration of ICT in Education and the role of ODL in teaching and learning within the respective sectors.
3. Specific attention to the tertiary institution, T.A. Marryshow Community College for the training of lecturers in the development and use of Open Source materials (OER's), the development of e-texts and the application of ODL for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of all post-secondary and tertiary programmes.
4. Continuation of capacity-building course delivery (Continuing Professional Development), particularly the CCTI and DTOC or their equivalents, for teachers at the primary and secondary levels, with emphasis on the use of mobile and emerging technologies in the classroom and the place for ODL in learning.
5. Orientation and training of TVET teachers and providers, TVET teacher educators in the implementation of flexible & blended, gender-sensitive learning and technology-enhanced course delivery.

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