



21st Century Challenges to Caribbean Education: The Impact of Migration on the Region's Curricula

Caribbean Union of Teachers' Conference,
Barbados Union of Teachers, UNICEF
- Teacher Quality and Student Performance

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Current Challenges

- Teacher quality and quantity
- Gender differentials in students' performance
- Relevance of current curricula in the region



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Current Challenges

- Increasing incidents of violence and indiscipline in schools
- Harmonisation of teacher qualifications
- Impact of migration on education



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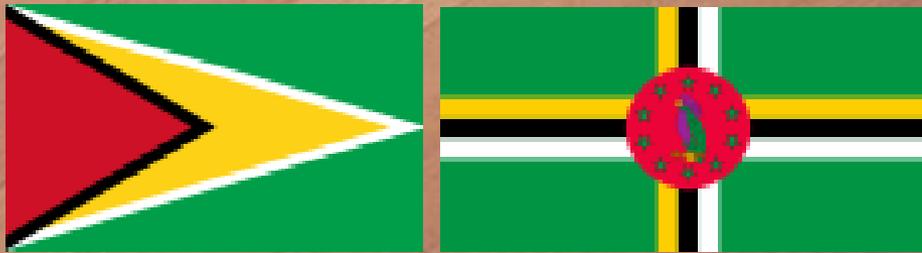
The Impact of Migration on Education and Curricula

- Internal migration of teachers (Guyana)
- Intra-regional migration of teachers (CSME)
- Extra-regional migration of teachers
- In the face of the global financial crisis, the impact of return migration on schools in the Caribbean



Internal Migration

- The gross disparity in the quality of education in Guyana is exacerbated by the migration of teachers from rural to urban areas or from public to private schools.
- In Guyana's interior, 52% of the schools lack running water (PAHO, 2004).
- Economic hardship in Dominica has resulted in internal migration from rural to urban areas resulting in children being inadequately supervised.



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The Dilemma of Educating 'Children Left Behind'

- As many as 20-30 % of Caribbean children do not live with their parents (UNICEF, 2007).
- Psycho-social issues tend to plague 'barrel children' and impact on their education and ability to interact with others.

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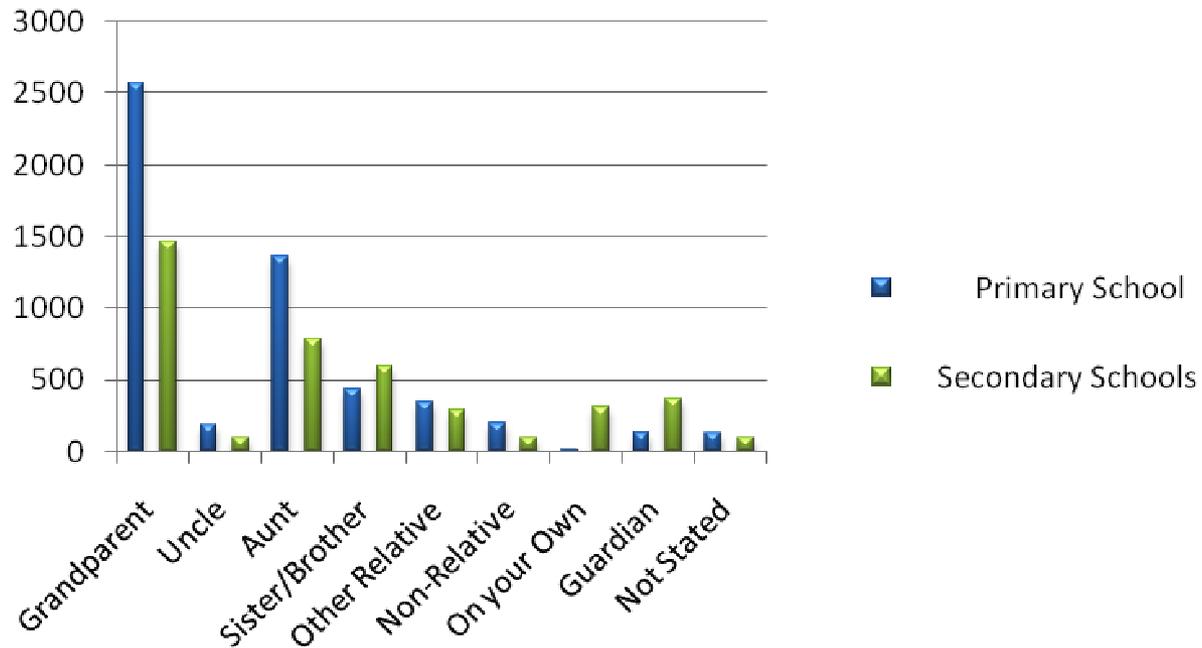


The Dilemma of Educating 'Children Left Behind'

- 'Barrel children' exhibit emotional and behavioural problems including anger, depression, lack of trust, low self-esteem, etc.
- Low attention spans and aggressive behaviour hamper children's ability to learn, particularly among 'barrel children'.
- In 1 study in TnT as much as 10.5% of the school population had a parent or parents living abroad. In 75% of the cases it was the mother who had migrated (Jones, Sharpe, Sogren, 2004).
- In Jamaica, 80% of children in conflict with the law had their mothers absent (Crawford-Brown, 1993).

Dominica Survey (2005)

Relationship of Students of Migrant Parents to Guardian



Additional Risks to Education as a Result of Parental Migration

- Completion of schooling becomes a more difficult task as older children are forced into caregiver roles.
- They are thus more likely to engage in child labour.



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Additional Risks to Education as a Result of Parental Migration

- High dropout rates and reports of absenteeism, incompleteness of schooling, not sitting final examinations as secondary school level children 'wait to migrate' or 'wait for papers'.
- Higher repetition and dropout rates among boys than girls signals a gender differential.



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Child Labour-Belize



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Educating Children of Migrant Populations

- The reality for some Caribbean countries with significant immigrant populations is the allocation of school places at the primary and secondary school level.
- This is perceived as a burden on the country's resources.



Best Practice on Educating Migrant Children in the Caribbean

- In migrant communities in Belize schools have been constructed with EU Social Investment Funding (SIF) to ensure that Guatemalan, Honduran and El Salvadorean children access schooling.



Best Practice on Educating Migrant Children in the Caribbean

- Currently 600 Guatemalan children cross the border by bus to receive an education in English in Belize, at the expense of the Belizean government.
- In Dominica Haitian children do not encounter enrollment problems in schools because of birth registration practices and access to acquisition of Dominican citizenship for children born to Haitian parents.



Response to Challenges

- More pre-emptive approach to dealing with the social costs of parental migration including the establishment of a structured early detection system in schools, e.g. at registration.
- More urgent and focussed education policy reformulation.
- More structured support systems for children and their surrogate caregivers are needed.
- Expansion of psycho-social support services within the Ministry of Education to deal with children who are vulnerable.

Response to Challenges

- An integrated approach to dealing with migration-related problems in schools cross-cutting the Ministries of Health, Education, Social Work and Welfare and Labour.
- Building regional research capacity specific to migration and its direct impact on children and adolescents.
- The necessary links need to be made between parental absence and the incidence of violence in schools, absenteeism, poor academic performance, etc.
- Strengthening the teacher training curriculum to include direct focus on the issues of parental migration.

Conclusion

- In the spirit of the CSME there must be greater collaboration to implement the aforementioned strategies recommended particularly in relation to curriculum development and its expansion to include issues of parental migration and the rights of migrant children to education.

