



INQAAHE CONFERENCE 2005

**Quality Assurance of Transnational Education
(TE)**

in the

Anglophone Caribbean

Sandra Gift, Elsa Leo-Rhynie, Jacqueline Moniquette

Quality Assurance Unit

Office of the Board for Undergraduate Studies

The University of the West Indies



CONCEPTS OF TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION (TE)

- ❖ **Internationalization**
- ❖ **Cross-border education**
- ❖ **International trade in education**
- ❖ **Globalization**

In this presentation **TE** refers to **trade in education services** in the context of the **liberalization** of tertiary education



AREAS OF PENETRATION OF FOREIGN PROVIDERS

- ❖ Currently over 100 foreign universities are operating in the Anglophone Caribbean
- ❖ Business, nursing, education, counselling, law, software development, management, accounting, and computer information systems.
- ❖ Certification provided: Associate degrees, BSc, MSc, MBAs, Doctor of Medicine
- ❖ Modes of delivery: largely face to face, but also distance, online and correspondence.
- ❖ Expansion of 'for profit' foreign universities in the Caribbean- most visible expression of globalization in higher education
- ❖ **Positive effects** of the global joint venturing are: creation of greater choice; widening of access through resource sharing resulting in capacity building.



SOME CONCERNS COMMON TO SOME DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

(including the Anglophone Caribbean)

- ❖ Foreign providers not sharing the same national values and priorities since they are motivated by profit
- ❖ Potential for quality to be lowered if low quality providers offer 'canned' degrees
- ❖ Quality education offered by reputable international providers being accessible only to the privileged few who can afford it.

SOME SPECIFIC CARIBBEAN CONCERNS

- ❖ Inferior or irrelevant programmes offered by foreign TLIs
- ❖ Inability of local TLIs to compete in an environment with resources constraints



DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN IN RESPONSE TO THE GROWTH IN TE

- ❖ Institutional QA frameworks established for only 21% of the 14 CARICOM countries (Roberts 2003.)
- ❖ Different levels of development re: legislation and policy for the respective tertiary level education markets
- ❖ CARICOM has established guidelines re: accreditation, equivalence and articulation (AEA) to guide governments in setting up their own national mechanism.
- ❖ Host governments view foreign institutions as lucrative investment opportunities and as contributing significantly to their GDP.



NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BODIES

- ❖ The University Council of Jamaica (UCJ), a legal statutory body has been operating for over 15 years.
- ❖ National Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago established in 2004 through an Act of Parliament and began functioning in 2004.
- ❖ The Barbados Accreditation Council signed into Law in 2004 but has not yet started to function.



Functions of the Councils Include:

- ❖ Registration of foreign-based institutions offering educational courses in the respective countries
- ❖ Advising on the recognition of foreign-based institutions and their awards
- ❖ Establishing relationships with national, regional and international accreditation bodies
- ❖ In theory, acting as a guardian of the quality of provision of regional and international higher education institutions.

Possible Challenges:

- ❖ Technical capacity to deal with the influx of programmes expected with the further liberalization of tertiary education.
- ❖ Substantial demand on resources (financial, time)
 - o May contradict GATS Article 6.4 stating that ensuring the quality of TE is not more burdensome than necessary.



DOMESTIC REGULATIONS FOR SETTING QUALIFICATIONS, QUALITY STANDARDS AND LICENCES

- ❖ Regulations for incoming TLIs have not been made specific or different from those for local TLIs. The regulations address the following:
 - o Confirmation that the institution /programme is accredited by an appropriate accreditation body
 - o Making public the standards for registration and accreditation of the programmes of foreign providers (Jamaica)
 - o Establishing licensing bodies to regulate the standards of all professional groups (Jamaica)



PROVISIONS FOR MONITORING:

(i) ACCREDITATION AND DEGREE RECOGNITION IN COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN AND (ii) EQUIVALENCE OF THE PROGRAMME CONTENT TO THAT DELIVERED IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

- ❖ Proof that the foreign institutions as well as qualifications are accredited in the country of origin (Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago)
- ❖ Programmes requiring specialized accreditation must be accredited with the relevant recognized professional body in the country of origin. (Trinidad and Tobago)
- ❖ For foreign programmes offered through local affiliation arrangements, the following conditions must be satisfied:
 - o supervision of the parent institution
 - o comparable quality of the programme to the counterpart in the country of origin (Trinidad and Tobago)



THE PREPAREDNESS OF FOREIGN PROVIDERS TO COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

- ❖ Foreign institutions operate either virtually or in various forms of commercial presence, often in the form of partnership with local TLIs with which they may have a financing relationship.
- ❖ local institutions may provide only space and logistical support or their staff may assist in course delivery.
- ❖ In some cases, course content may be localized.



OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICTS) IN THE ACTIVITIES OF NEW PROVIDERS

- ❖ The growing digital divide leaves CARICOM TLIs in very uncompetitive positions.
- ❖ There exist 16 external sources of distance education programmes from reputable external providers in the region.
- ❖ Many DE programmes rely heavily on the local tutorial support and demand that their providers take some care about the quality of such local teaching.
- ❖ Professional organizations often evaluate those who wish to provide teaching for their qualifications. (Brandon, 2003)
- ❖ Distinctions between traditional and distance providers are likely to disappear to be replaced by mixed-mode education, substantially centred on ICTs (Middlehurst, 2001) - a development likely to place foreign providers in greater competition with local TLIs.



MONITORING THE COMPATIBILITY OF FOREIGN PROVIDERS' PROGRAMMES WITH THE NATIONAL/REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT THRUST

- ❖ Overseas institutions must indicate their plans to bridge the cultural gap. They must demonstrate the extent of the Caribbean material they will be using. (Jamaica)
 - o Dependent upon the commitment of the provider to ensure this is done.
 - o Issue, therefore, of effective monitoring.
- ❖ Overseen via monitoring of partnership arrangements between indigenous public and private institutions and foreign providers. (Trinidad and Tobago)
 - o Awaiting the advice of CARICOM



CHARTING A WAY FORWARD RE: QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TE IN THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN.

- ❖ Need for a CARICOM Regional Accreditation Body. Issues to be addressed include:
 - (i) Policies to limit and/or seriously monitor the registration and functioning of extra regional providers
 - (ii) Partnerships in TE which include collaboration on QA and mutual recognition issues
 - (iii) National/regional codes of good practice in the provision of TE to protect the student as consumers



CHARTING A WAY FORWARD contd.

- ❖ Caribbean universities also need to network to fill the void left by national QA agencies not desirous of engaging in international activities.
- ❖ Re: the GATS: where commitments have not yet been made, governments and institutions must become fully apprised of its provisions and conditions
- ❖ Where there has been unconditional acceptance of the GATS, strategies for its implementation and the preservation of education as both public good and personal gain must be developed.



CHARTING A WAY FORWARD contd.

- ❖ The Anglophone Caribbean must create a network in which Quality Systems and accreditation arrangements converge and are harmonized in the context of increasing international trade in HE. These must also be extended to less traditional modes of learning such as DE and e-learning.
- ❖ The Anglophone Caribbean must also now organize itself to be not just importers of TE but exporters also. QA is likely to prove to be the key to the region's success.