

In May 2002, following a major upsurge in the recruitment of Caribbean teachers (especially from Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad) by North America and the United Kingdom, the Minister of Education of Jamaica, Hon. Burchell Whiteman, requested the assistance of the Commonwealth Secretariat in addressing the problem of teacher loss in the Caribbean and organised a meeting of his Caribbean colleagues to (i) identify the extent of the problem, (ii) examine whether teacher loss was common to all, and to ascertain whether reasons for this were recruitment by other countries, disaffection with the teaching environment leading to career change, or death due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In July, representatives of Caribbean Ministers of Education met at the “Savannah” in Barbados.

The **Savannah Accord** of July 2002, produced by Ministers of Education and their representatives from eight Caribbean territories, called upon “Commonwealth Ministers of Education in general, and the thirty-two Ministers of Education of Small States in particular, on whose countries the depletion of the human resource in education has the greatest immediate and prolonged impact, to:

- Conduct national research to determine the extent of teacher loss and the short and long-term impact on each country’s education system and provide the outcomes of this national research to the Commonwealth Secretariat;
- Support the conduct of a Pan-Commonwealth study of the problem, findings of which shall be presented at a special session of the 15CCEM in Scotland, 2003, entitled ‘Teachers at Risk’

This report on **Teaching at Risk** conceptualises four broad dimensions of teacher loss:

- Teacher recruitment to industrialised nations
- Teacher recruitment to developing (often neighbouring) countries
- Career change associated with teacher disaffection
- Teacher ‘drifting’ to other countries where they go to obtain qualifications and may decide to stay
- Teacher attrition, due to retirement or death (sometimes related to HIV/AIDS)

The objectives of this report are to:

- Illuminate the important contextual issues of supply and demand in the teaching profession throughout the Commonwealth;
- Determine the extent of teacher loss whether for reasons of recruitment by other countries, disaffection with the teaching environment leading to career change, or death due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic;
- Understand the impact of teacher mobility and teacher loss; and
- Investigate practices of teacher recruitment to inform the debate of the Draft Protocol for the Recruitment of Commonwealth Teachers that will take place at the 15th CCEM in Edinburgh, Scotland in October 2003.

Thirteen of the 54 Ministries of Education of the Commonwealth Member nations (24%) responded to a survey to quantify the total numbers in the teaching force, percentage of turnover in teachers over a threeyear period, and the numbers of teachers lost from the profession due to recruitment from abroad, career change, death and retirement during the same period. Focus groups meetings were conducted with teachers who have been recruited from developing Commonwealth countries to teach in schools in London to share their experiences with recruitment.

Due to limited resources to fund this project and time constraints, it was not possible to include teachers recruited to countries other than the UK in the qualitative aspects of this study. This report draws upon other related investigations of the teaching profession to address important contextual factors influencing the mobility of Teaching At Risk: Commonwealth Secretariat p. 6 teachers and incorporate findings that could not be achieved within the scope of this particular study.

This report focuses on the areas of interest outlined in the Savannah Accord and discusses the extent of teacher loss and the short- and long-term impact on the education systems of Commonwealth countries. Findings from this study also provided insight to the global issues of supply and demand in the teaching profession, factors impelling cross-national teacher recruitment, and the general practices of international recruitment firms to inform the debate of Protocol A, included in the Draft Protocol for the Recruitment of Commonwealth Teachers.