

Broadcasting Commission Continues Media Literacy Project

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Executive Director, Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica (BCJ), Cordel Green (left), makes a point, during a special meeting with officials from the BCJ and the Ministry of Education held yesterday (January 24), at the BCJ's New Kingston offices. Also participating in the discussions are (from left): Director, Joint Board of Teacher Education, Marcia Stewart; and Deputy Chief Education Officer, Sharon Neil.

The Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica (BCJ) is set to roll out Phase III of its Media Literacy Project, being undertaken in institutions across the island.

Addressing a meeting with stakeholders at the BCJ head offices in New Kingston on Wednesday (January 24), the agency's Executive Director, Cordel Green, said under this third and final segment, which will run from January to December, the Commission is aiming to embed media and information literacy in the curricula of teachers' colleges and primary and junior high schools.

As such, he said, the Commission will be establishing media mentorship programmes involving existing media practitioners, in five pilot schools this year. This is in addition to the implementation of five low power and internet school/community radio stations, which will be operated by the students.

Assistant Executive Director, BCJ, Karlene Salmon-Johnson, added that the Commission will be reviewing the teacher college training curriculum with a view to include literacy project strategies and material.

"We will also be conducting a refresher course with those student teachers who were trained in Phase II of the project, in preparation for a practicum/pilot of their materials," she said.

Mrs. Salmon-Johnson said the media and information literacy materials will be tested and implemented in 45 schools – 30 primary and 15 secondary – by students and in-service teachers trained in the second phase.

At the end of Phase III, the curricula of the media literacy project will be formally handed over to Ministry of Education.

Launched in 2007, the Media Literacy Project was conceptualised as a necessary intervention in dealing with problematic content in traditional and new media. It also seeks to address the need to empower Jamaican children, and by extension, the Jamaican society, in making use of media for personal and national development.



Director, Joint Board of Teacher Education, Marcia Stewart (left); and Deputy Chief Education Officer, Sharon Neil, converse following a special meeting with officials from the Broadcasting Commission of Jamaica (BCJ) and the Ministry of Education.

The programme involves partnership with the Ministry of Education, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Joint Board of Teacher Education (JBTE).

Giving an overview of the first two phases of the project, Mr. Green, said a package of four lessons on video, each designed for delivery within a 20-minute class, was developed for grades four to six, which was the original focus of the project.

The videos and other teaching manuals have since been tested by the JBTE in 10 primary schools and select teacher training colleges across the island. Based on the feedback, grades one to three were included in an effort to target children at a younger age.

Additionally, some 80 teachers were trained to provide instruction in media literacy in schools across the island, while 150 grades five to eight students were trained in the operation of radio stations.

Also attending the meeting were: Administrator, JBTE, Dr. Marcia Stewart; Deputy Chief Education Officer, Sharon Neil; National Literacy Coordinator, Dr. Andre Hill; Education Officer, Nadine Simms; and Education Officer, Media Services Unit, Kerrick Watts.