

## BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE COMMUNITY INTERACTION

Subscribing to the principle of mutual exchange between the Court and its public, the CCJ brokered a number of highly successful outreach activities between the Court and its various Caribbean people.

Quite apart from visits to the Court by diplomats, judges and other dignitaries, the Court also threw its doors open to students at primary, secondary and tertiary levels including law schools and faculties. Students had the opportunity to visit the courtroom and occupy the seats designated for judicial officers.

This seemingly simple contact has had the effect of familiarising them with at least one aspect of the CCJ's operations and lessening in some small way, their natural inhibitions.

The Court President and Judges greatly assisted in of the CCJ, as the Court's communications focussed on this most effective and direct method of engaging its various publics. This has been crucial in eliminating the stigmas usually associated with Courts: of being aloof, remote and inaccessible.

For the regional public to understand the role and functions of the Court, it is important that the public are able to engage comfortably with its Judges and other Court officials, permitting frank, open and honest conversations and discussions. They were the "faces" and "voices" exchange not only facilitated easier transmission of educational information to the region's citizens, but also allowed the Court, to become aware of the various concerns and requirements of its customers.



*Students of the Diego Martin Secondary School in Trinidad interfacing with the CCJ Courtroom Technology.*

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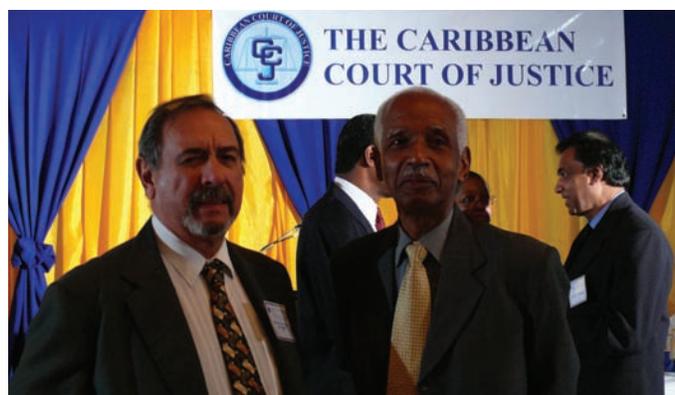
Within this framework, the “For You and For Me” Public Education Seminar Series continued in the period under review, with successful visits to Jamaica and Antigua. Apart from these activities, various members of the Court visited with different Caribbean judiciaries, governments, public and private sector interest groups, students and media personnel in an effort to establish contact and build relationships.

### Public Education Visits to Jamaica and Antigua

In October 2008, the CCJ embarked on a two-country public education tour. The highlights of these visits were the public education conferences held in each country under the theme, ***The CCJ, CSME and the People – Instruments for progress: What does it mean for you and for me?*** Participants had the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of the inter-relationships between the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and the Caribbean Court of Justice, and how these two integration movements affect the various public and professional sectors of the region. This initiative was conceptualised as an excellent vehicle for stimulating trust and confidence in the Court through open and earnest interfacing with the public.



*Above: The Honourable Mr. Justice Wit presenting at the public education seminar in Jamaica*



*Above Top: The Rt. Hon. Mr. Justice de la Bastide with Mr. Justice Lensley Wolfe, former Chief Justice of Jamaica at the Public Education conference held in Kingston, Jamaica.*

*Above Bottom: The Hon. Mr. Justice Nelson makes a presentation to the audience at the Public Education conference held in St. John's, Antigua.*

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*CCJ Judges pay a courtesy call on The Hon. Mme. Justice McCalla, Chief Justice of Jamaica, during the public education visit.*

The CCJ is grateful to and acknowledges the kind assistance of the Honourable Chief Justice and Supreme Court of Jamaica, the Honourable Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs of Antigua, along with the Bar Associations of Antigua and Jamaica, in making both programmes a success.

While in Jamaica and Antigua, representatives of the CCJ, The Regional Judicial and Legal Services Commission (RJLSC), as well as the CCJ Trust Fund were afforded the opportunity to meet with representatives of Governments, Oppositions, Bar Associations and Chambers of Commerce of the respective countries. At these meetings, the tripartite team was able to make important representations to these special interest groups, allowing for in-depth discussions on the various issues surrounding the CCJ.

## Meetings with Schools of the Region

In Jamaica, members of the Court Administration Unit (CAU) paid a visit to The Wolmers' Boys' School. There, they met with the school's vice principal, Ms. DeAnne Robb, who in April 2008 had accompanied her students on a visit to the CCJ headquarters in Port of Spain. Further to the CAU's visit, Ms. Robb and two



*Above: The Hon. Mr. Justice Nelson photographed with one of the Wolmers' Boys' School students who attended the public education seminar in Jamaica;*



*Above: Students of the Norman Manley Law School in Jamaica engaged in presentations of the CCJ panel at the Aubrey Fraser Lecture Theatre in Jamaica.*

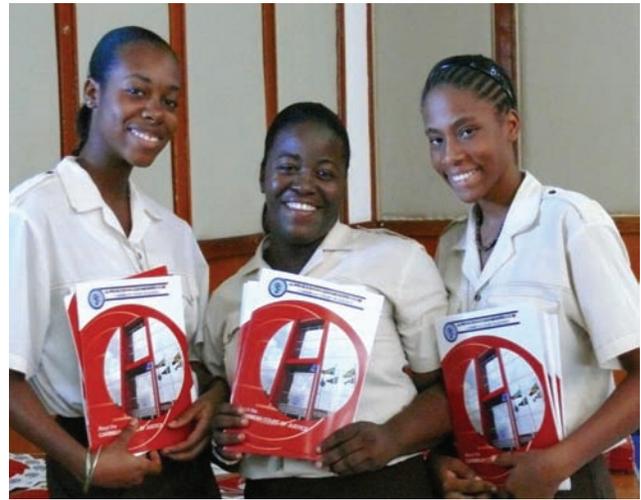
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of her students attended one of the public education sessions at the Terra Nova Hotel.

Another highlight of the public education visit was the Schools' Seminar hosted by the Norman Manley Law School (NMLS) at the Aubrey Fraser Lecture Theatre. Students gained insight into the Original and Appellate Jurisdictions of the Court, along with the various aspects of the day-to-day functioning of the CCJ. Towards the end of the proceedings, NMLS Principal Professor Stephen Vasciannie commented *"...In the future, we will come to remember this as a historic day in the life of the Norman Manley Law School"*.

With the kind assistance of the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs; The Honourable Mr. Justin Simon, the CCJ Schools' Seminar in Antigua was well attended, by over 200 students. The students' participation was indeed robust, as they asked challenging questions of the panel of presenters; the Hon. Mr. Justice Pollard, The Hon. Mme. Justice Bernard, The Hon. Mr. Justice Wit, Ms. Radha Permanand (Deputy Registrar at the CCJ) together with a representative from the CSME Unit in Antigua.

The participation of representatives of the RJLSC and the CCJ Trust Fund along with Judges and court administrators goes some distance toward dispelling notions about "secret" or



*Above: Students of Antigua receive their copies of the "About the CCJ" booklet at the Schools Seminar in St. John's, Antigua*

obscure court operations. The Caribbean Court of Justice subscribes to this philosophy of openness and access and has employed it to inform its public education and communication programme.



*Above: Antigua School Seminar in action*

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### Building Relations with the Media

The CCJ recognizes and appreciates the media as an important agent in our public education dissemination strategy. The Court's Public Education and Communications Unit, together with the Court Protocol and Information Unit are therefore engaged in continuous efforts to encourage better media relations both locally and regionally. Increased and improved rapport with media personnel has resulted in a heightened media presence at court proceedings and official events, and ultimately increased factual and positive media visibility for the CCJ.

The CCJ appreciates that the media must be its partner in the dissemination of information, and as such, works towards developing and strengthening its relationship with the local and regional media fraternity.

***Above: Media Registration at the CCJ hosted Inaugural Conference of the Caribbean Association of Judicial Officers.***

***Right: Dr. Michael Anthony Lilla, Court Protocol and Information Officer conducts a Media Interaction Training Session for CCJ staff.***

