



THE DRUG TREATMENT COURT IN BARBADOS

AN OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW OF THE DRUG TREATMENT COURT IN BARBADOS

- Alternatives to incarceration have been a subject of discussion in Barbados for some time. Judges and magistrates within the discretion given to them by law on occasion have explored innovative ways to deal with offenders other than sending them to prison. The initiative of the Inter American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) to promote a hemispheric project on Drug Treatment Courts (DTCs) as an alternative to incarceration was therefore seen by the government as a positive development.
- In December 2010, Barbados indicated its willingness to join the CICAD project and in March 2012 a team led by the Honourable Adriel Brathwaite, Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs and including Chief Justice Sir Marston Gibson participated in a Study Visit and Exchange Program for the Caribbean to Toronto, Canada. These officials were able to observe DTCs in operation in Toronto, to speak to judicial officials and to share experiences with other participating Caribbean jurisdictions. The Attorney General indicated on his return to Barbados that he was impressed by what he saw and was convinced that the country should explore the introduction of a DTC pilot.

In June 2012 another major step towards the introduction of the DTC in Barbados was taken when the country hosted a “Sensitization Workshop” in collaboration with CICAD and the Canadian Association of Drug Treatment Court Professionals (CADTCP). The Workshop presented the model to judicial, medical and other stakeholders and explored the steps necessary for the successful establishment of the pilot.



In March 2013, Barbados joined the fraternity of countries with DTCs when the Honourable Adriel Brathwaite signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CICAD to implement the DTC model. The MOU formalized the participation of Barbados in the hemispheric project and detailed the technical assistance which would be provided by CICAD to support the initiative.



In April 2013, in support of the earlier efforts, a CICAD DTC team including experts from Canada held a Training Workshop at the Supreme Court of Barbados for a wide range of stakeholders. The Workshop focused on general and specific aspects of DTCs and measures to ensure the successful implementation of the model. The Barbados participants were able to draw on the countries experiences of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago which together were represented by a High Court Judge, a Magistrate and the Head of a National Drug Commission.



On February 11, 2014 Barbados formally inaugurated the country's first pilot Drug Treatment Court as an alternative to incarceration for drug dependent offenders, at the Supreme Court in the city of Bridgetown. The launching of this Court represented the culmination of a period of three years of preparatory work supported by the Organization of American States (OAS) through the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD), with funding from the Government of Canada.







The official launch of the Court had participation from the Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs, Honourable Adriel Brathwaite, Chief Justice Marston Gibson, High Court Judge Randall Worrell and other senior judicial and government officials. The Executive Secretary of CICAD, Ambassador Paul Simons accompanied by Antonio Lomba, DTC Project Manager travelled to Barbados for the event. The Canadian Government which has provided funding and training support for the CICAD project was represented by High Commissioner Richard Hanley.

- The Barbados DTC team was exposed to further training in March 2014 when CICAD extended an invitation for a High Level Study Visit and Training in Vancouver, Canada. The Study Visit coincided with the celebration of the Fifth International Conference on Problem Solving Courts and Innovative Approaches to Justice of the CADTCP. The Conference allowed participants to benefit from a range of expert presentations on Problem Solving Courts, restorative justice, substance abuse, mental health issues, and innovative approaches to justice. The Barbados DTC team was led by the Chief justice, Sir Marston Gibson and included several senior officials who will participate in the Drug Treatment Court pilot.
- In July 2014 a team led by Justice Randall Worrell attended a Workshop in Trinidad and Tobago on the establishment of Juvenile Drug Treatment Courts. The Workshop in Trinidad coincided with the graduation of five participants of the adult Drug Treatment Court pilot. The graduation made Trinidad and Tobago the first country to launch, implement, and produce graduates under the OAS' DTCs for the Americas Program.

GOVERNANCE OF THE DRUG TREATMENT COURT PILOT



The Barbados Drug Treatment Court Steering Committee which was formed after the signing of the MOU in March 2013 has held some twenty (20) meetings. The Committee has been able to put the DTC infrastructure in place and established a Court Team.

Membership of the DTC Steering Committee

Honourable Justice Randall Worrell	-	Chairman
Chief Magistrate Pamela Beckles	-	Deputy Chair
Mr. Graveney Bannister	-	Magistrate
Mrs. Betty Hunte	-	Manager (Ag), NCSA
Miss Jennifer Baptiste	-	NCSA
Mrs. Dorita Lovell	-	Probation Department
Mr. Francis McBarnette	-	OAS Country Representative
Mrs. Ruth Parris	-	Verdun House
Mrs. Allison Gotip	-	Counsellor, CASA
Ms. Cheryl Corbin	-	Forensic Sciences Centre
Mr. Wayne Marshall	-	Office of the Attorney General
Mr. Lancelot Applewhite	-	Director of Public Prosecutions Chambers
Mr. Trevor Blackman	-	Royal Barbados Police Force
Mr. Andrew Pilgrim	-	Queen's Counsel, Bar Association

BARBADOS DRUG TREATMENT COURT BECOMES OPERATIONAL



The Drug Treatment Court had its first formal sitting at the Supreme Court at White Park Road in the city of Bridgetown on **Wednesday, 14th January 2015.**

PROFILE OF BARBADOS DRUG TREATMENT COURT CLIENTS

The Barbados Drug Treatment Court started its work with a cohort of sixteen (16) potential clients. The Court, after the assessment process, now operates with thirteen (13) clients; twelve (12) men and one (1) woman. These clients have all come into contact with the criminal justice system for possession of a controlled substance, in this instance marijuana.

- These clients range in age from 19 years to 37 years.
- They all have attended secondary school and are literate. In one case, the individual is pursuing studies at the tertiary level.
- Most of the clients are employed.
- In nearly all cases the clients have family support and do not need residential support.
- The drug of use continues to be marijuana.

Counseling

- The Barbados Drug Treatment Court has received counseling support from a registered charity, the Centre for Counseling Addiction Support Alternatives (CASA) with clients visiting the Centre at least once per week. The reports are distributed to the Court Team and discussed in the pre-court meetings. CASA has also held sessions for the family of some of the clients to integrate them into the treatment and rehabilitation process.
- The compliment of counselors available to CASA and the DTC is very small and given the importance of this activity in the treatment of clients we have identified that this area will require greater support.

Drug Testing

- Drug testing of the Drug Treatment Court has been carried out by the Forensic Science Centre of the Government of Barbados.
- The Forensic Science Centre has chosen to utilize urine testing since, in their view, they consider this test to be reliable and cost-effective. Samples of urine from clients are taken at the Forensic Science Centre and a quantitative result is produced for the Court. This method has allowed a reliable tracking of the progress of clients.
- The Court with assistance from the United States Embassy in Barbados has acquired urine test kits which will be used also for random test by the counselors.

International Support

- CICAD – Training, advice, materials, etc.
- Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago
- Canada, United States of America

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Criminal Justice Research Planning Unit (CJRPU) of the Office of the Attorney General has been selected to undertake the monitoring and evaluation of the DTC pilot in Barbados. It is expected that they will submit their report in the first quarter of 2016. Barbados has benefited from the training workshops conducted by CICAD on this subject and the Diagnostic Study conducted with CICAD support in Nuevo Leon, Mexico in 2014.

CHALLENGES FACING THE DRUG TREATMENT COURT IN BARBADOS

- Funding remains one of the biggest challenges facing the continued existence of the Drug Treatment Court in Barbados. The Court, as it exists, is working within the resources available to the Barbados Judiciary.
- Another major concern is that the court depends exclusively on the services of CASA for the counseling of clients. CASA is a charity and has indicated that its involvement beyond the pilot phase will depend on increased financial support.

CHALLENGES FACING THE DRUG TREATMENT COURT IN BARBADOS (cont' d)

- The DTC Steering Committee is aware that in order to avoid client relapse and recidivism that there should be a proactive approach to encourage healthy lifestyles and support. The Steering Committee is actively discussing initiatives to achieve this aim.
- The DTC Steering Committee has approached the Barbados private sector to support the DTC initiative. A few companies have provided incentives for our clients that are performing well within the program. It is our view, however, that we will require greater assistance such as the provision of employment opportunities for the clients.