

“ON THE DECK”- ONLINE SESSION ABOUT BARBADOS’ FIRST BATHYMETRIC SURVEY

A MARINE EDUCATION AND
OCEAN LITERACY INITIATIVE

SEPTEMBER 2025



BARBADOS
MARINE SPATIAL PLAN

Post-Event Report

Event Title

Live Online Session: Barbados' First Bathymetric Survey – “On the Deck”

Dates

September 15–16, 2025

Organized by

Barbados Marine Spatial Plan (BMSP), Marine Environmental Education (MEE) Workstream

In Partnership with

Marine Institute of Ireland (MI)

Executive Summary

The Barbados Marine Spatial Plan (BMSP), through its Marine Environmental Education (MEE) workstream, successfully hosted “On the Deck”, a two-session live online event, showcasing Barbados’ first-ever bathymetric survey of its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Conducted aboard the RV Celtic Explorer in partnership with the Marine Institute of Ireland (MI), the event represented a significant milestone in marine spatial planning and ocean literacy in Barbados.

Targeted at senior secondary school students and undergraduate university students, the event engaged approximately 120 participants in interactive sessions that combined live vessel tours, presentations from marine scientists, and discussions on career pathways in the maritime sector.

Feedback from students and educators highlighted the event’s impact in raising awareness of ocean science, enhancing classroom learning, and inspiring interest in marine-related careers.

Event Overview

- Objective: To build awareness among Barbadian youth about the country's marine environment, deep-sea research, and sustainable ocean management while showcasing career opportunities in

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the maritime sector.

- Format: Two 45-minute live online sessions streamed from aboard the RV Celtic Explorer via Zoom.

- Dates & Audiences:

- September 15, 2025 (2:00 PM): University of the West Indies (UWI) undergraduate students, “Essentials of Oceanography” course.

- September 16, 2025 (10:00 AM): Senior secondary school students (The Combermere School, The Codrington School, St. Leonard’s Boys’ Secondary School).

Attendance & Audience

- Total Participants: - 120 students

- 50 undergraduates from UWI

- 70 secondary school students (30 -The Combermere School, 20 -The Codrington School, 20- St. Leonard’s Boys’ Secondary School)

The secondary school participants were primarily 6th-form students (ages 17–18), representing disciplines such as Geography, Environmental Science, Chemistry, Biology, Green Engineering and all associated sciences.

Programme & Activities

The sessions were moderated by Donna King-Brathwaite, Ocean Literacy and Marine Education Consultant (OLMEC) and followed a structured six-part agenda:

1. Welcome: Dr. L. Brewster, Director of the Coastal Zone Management Unit.
2. Vessel Tour: Dwight Leach, Education Officer (EO).
3. Maritime Careers (Secondary Schools only): Lois Harvey, Second Officer of the Vessel.
4. Science Presentation: Vera Quinlan, Chief Scientist.
5. Data Presentation: Oisín McManus, Online Surveyor.
6. Q&A and Closing Remarks.

Marketing & Outreach

A mixed-method approach was used:

- Warm calling to secondary schools who have participated in MEE programmes.
- Direct engagement with UWI lecturer Dr. Emma Smith.

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- Formal invitations with official invitation emails, including zoom links were coordinated by BMSP's Administration Officer, Charmaine St. Hill.

Feedback & Outcomes

Student Questions:

- UWI: Focused on technical aspects (EEZ size, groundtruthing, shipwreck identification, seafloor movement, coral reef mapping).
- Secondary Schools: Focused on real-world applications (weather impacts, conservation, traits for marine careers, seafloor planning relevance).

Feedback Highlights:

- Lecturer (UWI): Found the session highly relevant and well-timed, enhancing lab work.
- University Students: Gained clarity and were excited by the 3D data visualization.
- Secondary Schools:
 - Combermere: Unique exposure to real-world science applications.
 - Codrington: Enjoyable and engaging.
 - St. Leonard's: Opened students' eyes to marine career opportunities.

Key Learnings

1. **Youth Engagement:** Students were highly engaged during the Q&A, showing interest in careers in oceanography, data science, and maritime operations.
2. **Live Access Value:** Broadcasting directly from the *RV Celtic Explorer* provided authenticity and excitement, strengthening the impact of the sessions.
3. **Curriculum Alignment:** The content aligned well with existing university and Cape Level subject areas, reinforcing classroom learning with real world application.
4. **Career Exposure:** The inclusion of a career-focused talk (Day 2) was a highlight for secondary students, sparking curiosity about opportunities in the blue economy.

Next Steps

1. **Expand School Participation:** Consider broadening invitations to include more secondary schools and faculties at the UWI across the island to scale impact.

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2. **Follow-Up Resources:** Share supplementary materials (e.g., fact sheets, videos, career pathway guides) with schools after the session for continued learning.
3. **Online Lecture and Vessel Tour:** The ongoing implementation of the online lecture and the physical tour of the vessel shall be made available to participating schools upon its return to the Bridgetown port, contingent upon the availability of time.
4. **Ongoing Collaboration:** Continue building partnerships with the Marine Institute of Ireland and other regional research organizations for future educational programming.

Appendix

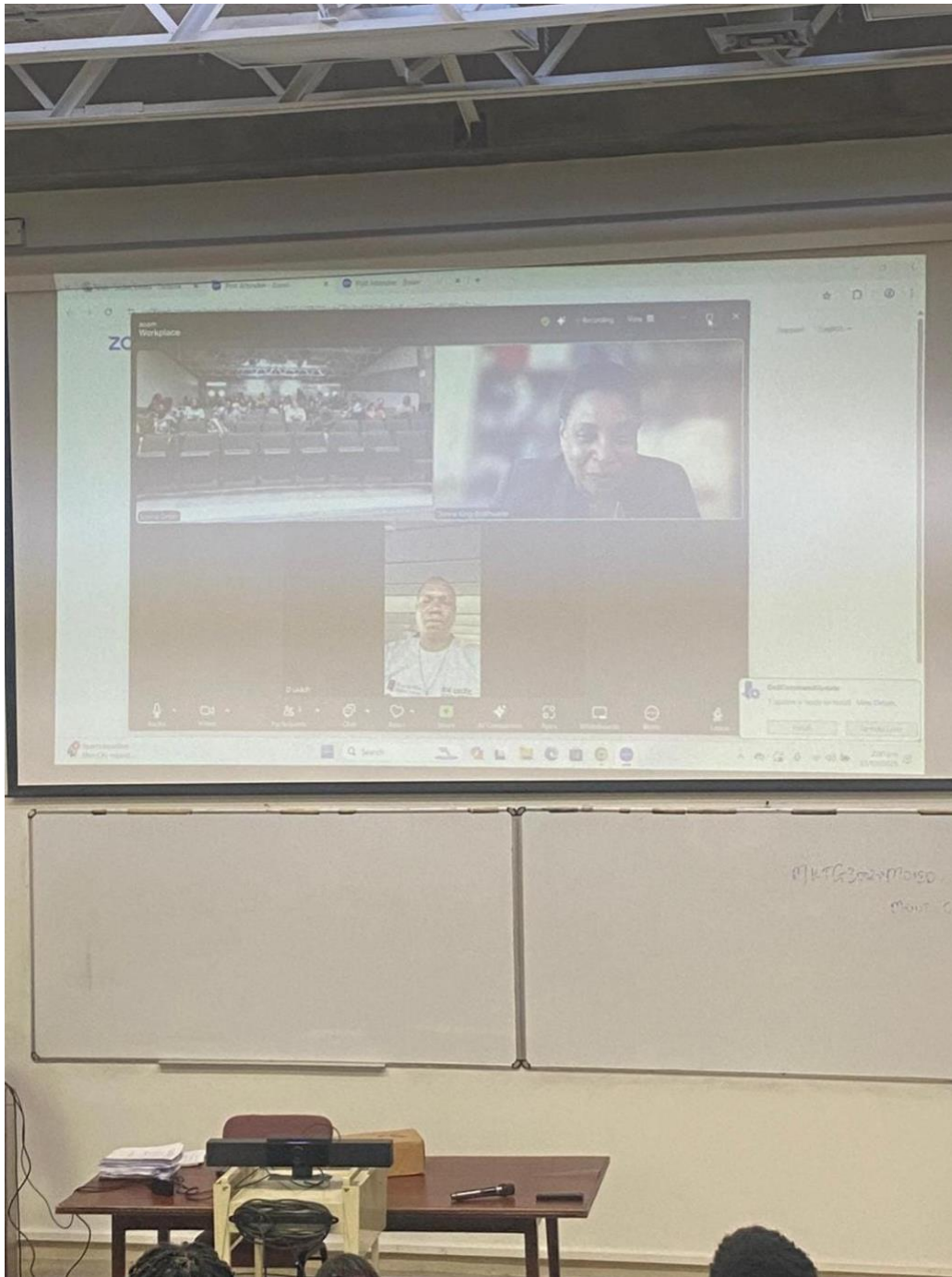


Photo 1: A photo from a student inside the lecture theater at UWI, of the zoom screen, on the screen the MEE Team-Donna King-Brathwaite OLMEC, top right of screen and Dwight Leach EO, bottom of screen.

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Photo 2: Photo of the students view from The Combermere School Hall, on screen is Lois Harvey, 2nd Mate of the *RV Celtic Explorer*.