

TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROFILE

NOVEMBER 12, 2009

I. BASIC PROJECT DATA

Country:	Barbados		
Project name:	Education Sector Studies		
Project number:	BA-T1012		
Project team:	Sabine Rieble Aubourg (SCL/EDU), Team Leader; Ryan Burgess (EDU/CTT); Aimee Verdisco, Carlos Gargiulo, and Claudia Cox (SCL/EDU); Laura Ripani (SCL/LMK); Rochelle Franklin (CCB/CBA); and Miozotis Florez (LEG/SGO).		
Date of request:	September 2009		
Beneficiary:	Primary and secondary students, post-secondary students		
Executing agency:	Ministry of Education and Human Resources (MEHR)		
Financing plan:	IDB (ORC-SOF - Social Fund):	US\$365,000	
	Local:	US\$113,300	
	Total:	US\$478,300	
Technical and basic responsibility:	Education Division (SCL/EDU)		
Execution timetable:	Execution period:	18 months	
	Disbursement period:	24 months	

II. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

- 2.1 **Access to Education.** Since its independence in 1966, Barbados has made great improvements in expanding access to all levels of education. In 2007, for example, there were 6,560 children enrolled in pre-primary schools representing a net enrolment of 88%. Moreover, the percentage of children entering primary education with previous preschool experience was 100% (EFA, 2008). The Government of Barbados (GOBA) strives to achieve universal access to early childhood education (ECE) (3-4 year olds) by the year 2010, although ECE is not obligatory. At the primary level, access is considered universal with a student (net) enrolment of 96% in 2006. The completion rate for primary education (5-11 year olds) is also very high; in 2004, 96% of students who entered primary education completed it (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, n.d.). The completion rate compares very favourably with other countries in the region where completion averages 88% (EFA, 2008). Among secondary students (12 – 16 year olds), 89% are attending school, reaching near universal access to secondary education. Drop-out rates at both primary and secondary levels are negligible. Enrolment at the tertiary level is about 38 percent (MEHRD 2008) but falls below government's goal (and the regional goal) of 60% enrolment of secondary students at the tertiary level.

- 2.2 **Quality of Education.** Despite these achievements, quality concerns remain, as indicated by national assessment results at both the primary and secondary levels as well at the post-secondary level where a number of students enter with weak basic and life skills. Results of the Barbados Secondary Schools Entrance Examination (BSSEE) and the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) indicate that a relatively large group of students does not perform well on these assessments. For example, BSSEE results for 2006 indicate that about 30% of primary students performed at the 0-30 point range (out of 100) in the BSSEE in Mathematics and English [UWI/EEC 2007]; a percentage that is considered too high given the size of the student population.
- 2.3 Similar concerns exist at the secondary level where out of the 5,176 students who took the CSEC in 2006, about 75% did not receive passes in more than 3 subjects,¹ and on average about 18% leave secondary school without any certification. CSEC results also show that students' achievement in Mathematics is lower than in English. For example, results of the CSEC from 2005 to 2007 show that on average 59.3% of the students passed in English while only 42% did so in Mathematics. These percentages are based on students who received grades 1-3 passes and are considered too low (EEC 2006).
- 2.4 At the post-secondary level (Technical and Vocational Education (TVET)), data about students' performance and their subsequent job placements is rather limited as the institutions do not conduct regular tracer studies; therefore little is known about the effectiveness of their training programs. Results of a (non-representative) employer survey suggest that school leavers are not well prepared for the world of work and lack "life skills." In contrast, TVET providers point to the lack of adequate physical space, equipment and materials, and limited training for their faculty to upgrade and conduct training programs that respond to employers' needs. Most institutions have long waiting lists since they are unable to enroll all applicants due to limited training areas including classrooms, laboratories and workshops. The perceived weak level of preparedness of students entering the post-secondary institutions is a concern as a considerable number do not meet the academic prerequisites for admission and require remedial instruction in Mathematics and English, indicating that the school-to-work transition has to be strengthened.
- 2.5 **Justification for Use of Resources from the Social Fund.** To better understand the issue of weak student performance and to address the limited data of the post-secondary sector, the GOBA has requested the Bank to undertake a series of diagnostic studies to inform the next Education Strategy that is being prepared by the National Advisory Commission on Education (NACE). The NACE was created in 2009. The proposed studies will help to define the future strategy for the sector potentially leading to future investments by the Bank in Barbados.

¹ Four passes are the minimum requirement to enter the public sector or pursue tertiary education.

III. PROGRAM OBJECTIVE AND DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 The purpose of this operation is to provide a detailed study of the education sector in Barbados analyzing the various sub-sectors, closing existing data gaps and providing input for discussion on policy and decision making for the future. In particular, the Social Fund resources will be used to conduct the following studies:
- 3.2 **Sector Study** analyzing the current status of education in Barbados at all levels however, with a particular focus on secondary, post-secondary/ tertiary education. The study will collect data on the system (enrolment, finance, teacher qualification, assessment data) and will analyze the institutional arrangements for vocational and technical training and education including the two ministries involved (MEHR and MLabour). Recommendations will be developed to restructure the sector (TVET) and to facilitate the implementation of the Caribbean Qualification Framework by ensuring close articulation between secondary and post-secondary/ tertiary education. It will assess the quality of teachers, programs and materials and develop recommendations for implementation of the framework.
- 3.3 **Labor Market Study.** This study will **assist** the Government in obtaining updated, reliable and timely information about labor markets that can be easily accessed by the TVET providers and other stakeholders. In addition, given the absence of reliable and timely data on the TVET system, the study will conduct the following surveys: (i) training gap survey among employers to identify unmet training needs (both technical and life-skills); (ii) a “tracer study” of TVET graduates and calculate the rate of return of the their training options chosen/completed; and (iii) a labor market study analyzing the training needs of specific sectors of the Barbados’ economy and pointing to future trends that will inform training options in the system.
- 3.4 **Strategic Planning.** As indicated, GOBA has created the NACE in charge of defining the priorities of the current administration. To this end, the NACE has conducted nationwide stakeholder consultations. The proposed short-term consultancy will assist the NACE in finalizing the next Strategic Plan for the Education and Training Sector.
- 3.5 **Agricultural Studies.** During the 2008 food crisis when prices of food items increased considerably, GOBA decided to review and possibly reinvent its agricultural sector due to the heavy dependency on imports. The TC resources will support a feasibility study of introducing modern agricultural techniques at the tertiary level intended to strengthen food production.

IV. BUDGET

- 4.1 The total cost of the TC is US\$478,300, US\$365,000 which will be charged against the resources of the Special Program for Employment, Poverty Reduction and Social Development in Support of the Millennium Development Goals (ORC-SOF – Social Fund) and US\$113.300 will be local contribution.

Table IV-1: Budget

Type of Expense	SOF-ORC	Local	TOTAL
Sector Study	151,800	21,000	172,800
Labour Market Study	123,600	21,000	144,600
Strategic Planning	17,500	6,300	23,800
Agricultural Studies	42,200	7,000	49,200
Workshops (venue)		8,000	8,000
Coordinator (monthly salary)		48,000	48,000
Support for consultants		2,000	2,000
Financial Audit	9,900		9,900
Contingencies	20,000		20,000
TOTAL	<u>365,000</u>	<u>113,300</u>	<u>478,300</u>

V. EXECUTING AGENCY AND EXECUTION STRUCTURE

- 5.1 This operation will be executed by the Bank in close collaboration with the NACE, MEHR and MLabour. To this end, MEHR and MLabour have already formed a steering committee consisting of technical staff that will oversee the consultancies.
- 5.2 **Technical responsibility:** Sabine Aubourg (SCL/EDU) will be responsible for the technical aspects of the TC (tel.: (202)-623-1757, sabinea@iadb.org; fax (202) 312-4152).
- 5.3 **Responsibility for disbursements:** Country Office in Barbados will be responsible for the disbursements of the TC resources.

VI. MAJOR ISSUES

- 6.1 The participation of two ministries in the proposed operation will constitute a challenge in terms of collaboration and coordination. As indicated in ¶5.1, the two Ministries have already formed a working group. It is anticipated that continued coordination will require effort between both institutions in order to provide timely input on issues.

VII. ACTION PLAN

- 7.1 The Plan of Operations will be prepared by November 20, 2009. The letter of request by the Government is under preparation.

VIII. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

- 8.1 No negative environmental or social effects were identified and the TC has been classified as a “C” according to the Safeguard Classification Tool.

(ORIGINAL FIRMADO)

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Approval: _____

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