

CARIBBEAN GENDER DIFFERENTIALS FRAMEWORK



CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK
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This framework was developed for the Caribbean Development Bank and refined through an iterative process of consultations with key stakeholders in education, gender and development studies. It draws upon major research conducted by the Institute of Gender and Development of the University of the West Indies led by Prof. Barbara Bailey.

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INTRODUCTION

This Gender Differentials Framework was developed through an extended process involving research, conceptualization from the conclusions of the research, review of current literature, and interactive feedback from stakeholders in both Governmental and civic organizations.

Following up on a mandate provided by Caribbean Heads of Government in 1997, requiring that regional agencies examine the problem of underperformance of boys, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) in partnership with the CARICOM Secretariat and the University of the West Indies undertook a series of initiatives aimed at empirically establishing the parameters of the problem and developing a policy framework that could facilitate an integrated solution.

BACKGROUND & PROCESS

The Millennium Development Goals specifically focus on eliminating inequities in the provision and outcomes of education, particularly in relation to gender disparities. In the case of Caribbean countries, the smallness of scale demands that there is full mobilisation of the human capital of the society towards sustained social and economic development. As a result, low educational attainment and achievement present particular challenges for work-force readiness and optimisation as well as social cohesion. The phenomenon of the under-achievement of male students and under-participation within the higher levels of formal education prompted an evidence-based approach to identifying the causes, enablers and appropriate policy and programmatic solutions.

The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) supported a research project, conducted between 2004 and 2008 by the University of the West Indies, to examine the factors influencing gender differentials in enrolment and performance at the secondary and tertiary levels in selected Borrowing Member Countries (BMCs). The intention was for a comprehensive regional study to rigorously examine how differentials between males and females are manifested in terms of education, enrolment and performance as well as to analyse factors such as socio-economic status which might help to explain these differences. The overall objective of the project was to engender better informed public policy in addressing current issues relating to gender and educational attainment by:

- (a) identifying gender differentials in enrolment and performance of male and female students at the secondary and tertiary levels in BMCs;
- (b) identifying socio-political, economic, demographic, cultural and other factors which determine or contribute to these gender differentials;
- (c) testing popular perceptions/theories advanced as explanation of the phenomenon; and
- (d) recommending relevant policy reforms and interventions.

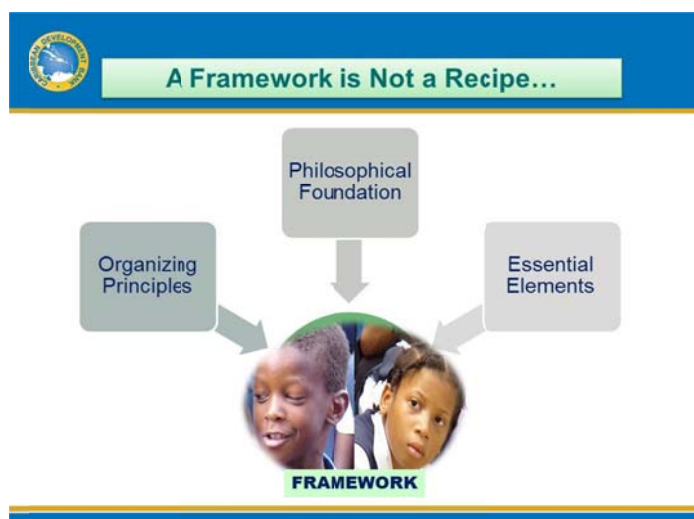
The research was conducted by the Institute for Gender and Development Studies (IGDS) of the University of the West Indies.

As part of the research application process, a stakeholder meeting was held in April 2010 involving wide participation from the major stakeholder groups. This Regional Workshop was dedicated to the dissemination and discussion of the findings of the research and the formulation of appropriate policy recommendations. It was intended that these recommendations would inform public policy interventions at the macro and micro levels within BMCs, would be implemented by countries and supported by development agencies. Although education-related issues and solutions were a key aspect of the regional workshop, the overarching premise was that only a multi-sectoral response would be adequate to address the issue.

In preparation for this event, CDB commissioned the preparation of a draft gender differentials policy framework for critical review and ultimately for endorsement by individual BMCs and the CARICOM Council of Human and Social Development (COHSOD).

Important activities which contributed to the development of the Framework included other studies on gender issues in the region (notably Bailey and Bernard, 2003); the 'Boys out of Risk' conference (May 5-9, 2010) held by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the World Bank. Following the review of the draft Framework, a further review meeting was held in August 2010 with a select group of stakeholders nominated from the April 2010 meeting to finalize the Framework.

CONCEPTUAL PRINCIPLES



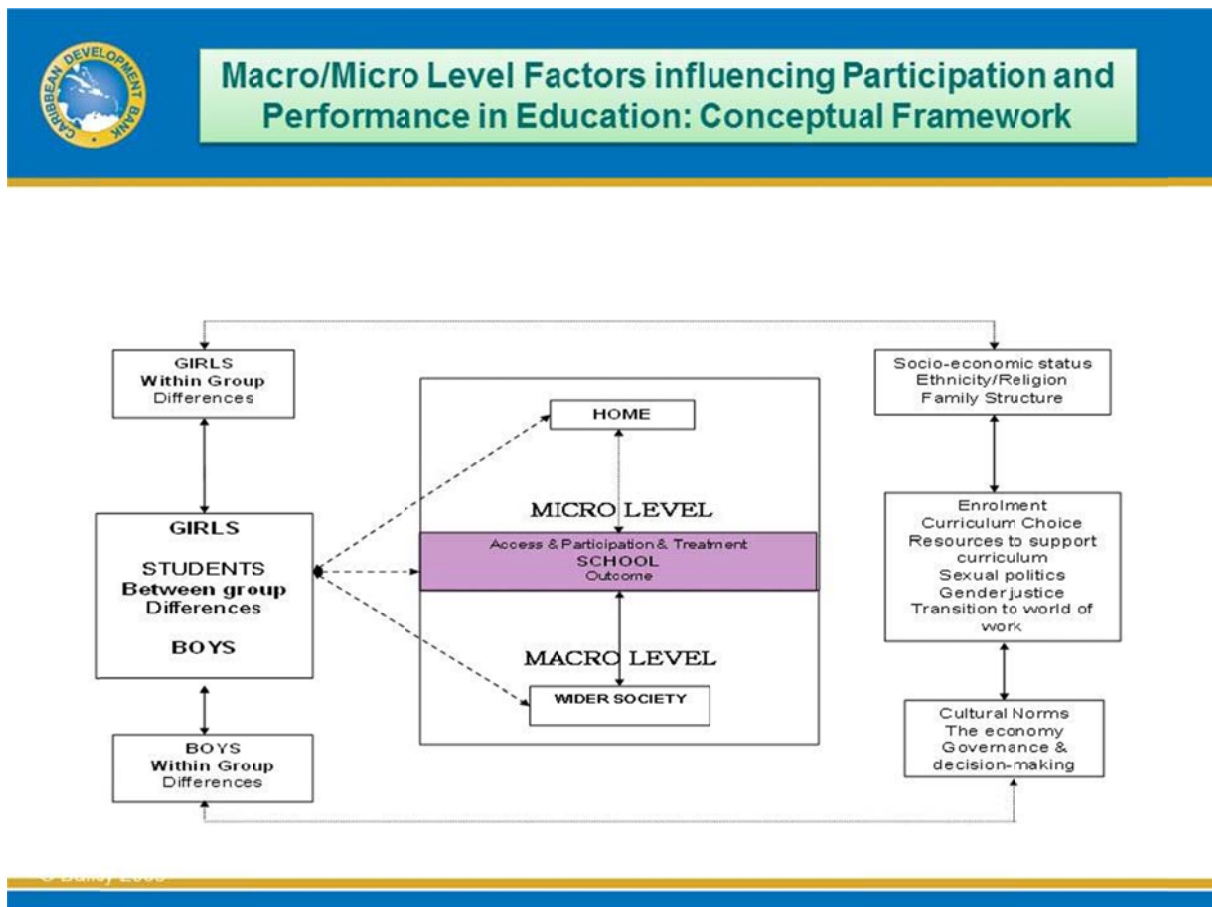
An essential consideration informing the development of the Framework is the awareness that **a Framework is not a recipe**. It is a structural construct built on a properly articulated philosophical foundation, clearly identified organizing principles and essential elements constituting a targeted response to the issues being addressed.

It is expected that the framework will be flexible enough to accommodate nuances in national policy formulation but cohesive enough to ensure any such responses are multi-sectoral and integrated.

The key philosophical and conceptual elements informing the Framework include:

- Adoption of the CARICOM Ideal Person and the UNESCO Pillars of Learning for the 21st Century which are being promoted as the new philosophical foundation for education in the Caribbean
- Recognition of the social construction of gender – that masculinity and femininity require relational re-configuration (the practical ramification of which is that one cannot “solve” the problem of gender discrimination for one gender in isolation to the wider relational construct)
- Adoption of a multi-sectoral, multi-level, non-linear integrated approaches to create synergistic convergence
- Recognition of the intersection of gender with race and class and the multiple ways in which structural dynamics impact and define the collective and the individual

The research conducted by the University of the West Indies (Bailey et al. 2009) was itself predicated on the conceptual framework which identify the micro and macro level factors which influence participation and performance in education (shown below):



Utilizing this framework to undergird their research, Bailey et al (2009) showed the complexity of the issues contributing to gender differentials and that these differentials were nuanced as much within sexes as between sexes.

Other research has explored the intersection between gender and vulnerability and shown that both sexes experience vulnerability but the predisposition to particular vulnerabilities may vary. Both sexes are equally vulnerable to HIV-AIDS and the disposition to violence. Boys however are more prone to drug use while girls are more impacted by teenage pregnancy, sexual abuse, school dropout and youth unemployment.

A key common conclusion corroborated by several research studies is the interconnectedness of factors that predispose risky behaviours and outcomes and that multiple risks have a cumulative effect:

- Bailey & Bernard (2003) **Establishing a Database of Gender Differentials in Enrolment and Performance at the Secondary and Tertiary Levels of the Caribbean Education Systems** – point to the “*widespread phenomenon of increased male attrition at higher grade levels*” (p.73)
- Correia & Cunningham (2003) **Caribbean Youth Development: Issues and Policy Directions** – reported sexual abuse: 1 in 10, higher for boys; 40% students reported high rage; high youth unemployment and detachment; one fifth of students carried weapon to school; 20% male and 12% female students in gang; drug and substance abuse with out of school aged 13-19 most at risk.
- Correia & Cunningham (2003) – estimated that “*if female youth unemployment were reduced to the level of adult unemployment, GDP would be higher by a range of 0.4% in Antigua & Barbuda and 2.9% in Jamaica*” (p. xv).

Correia & Cunningham (2003) asserted that “**school attendance and connectedness** are the **single most important protective factors** identified in reducing risky behaviors. Among youth who feel connected to school, ..the probability of sexual activity *falls* by 30% for boys and 60% for girls, of engaging in violent activity by 60% for boys and 55% for girls, and of drug use by 50% for boys and 30% for girls”.

Moser and van Bronkhorst (1999) have also noted the inter-relatedness of factors. “The links between unemployment, pregnancy, domestic violence, interpersonal, and gang violence are especially strong, as is evident from the results of a participatory urban appraisal of violence in Jamaica... Men said that high unemployment led to frustration and idleness, which in turn led to an increase in gang violence, interpersonal conflict, and domestic violence.

Women on the other hand said that high unemployment led to greater economic dependency on men, which in turn led to an increase in domestic violence”

THE GENDER DIFFERENTIALS FRAMEWORK

Goal

The Goal of the Gender Differentials Framework is:

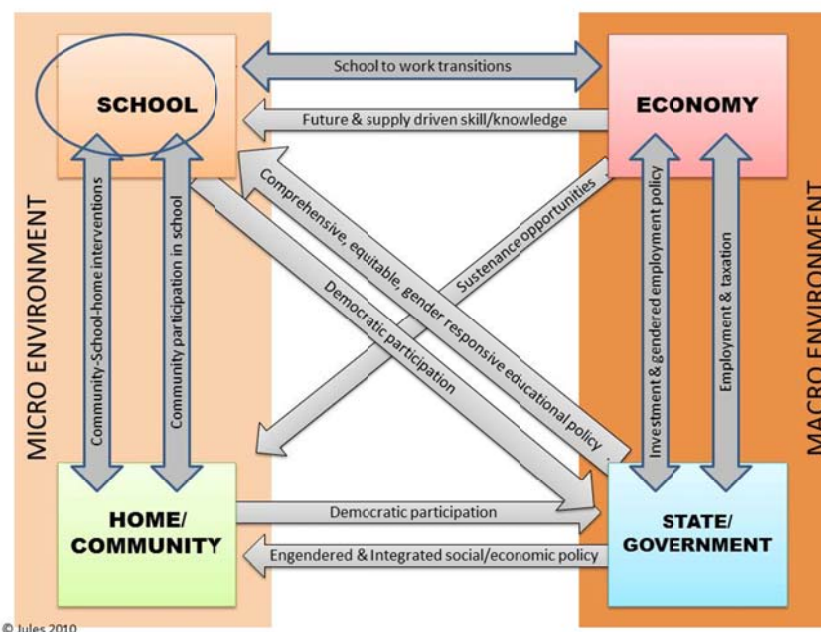
“Achievement of enhanced learning outcomes and engagement in productive work and quality living for all males and females based on common and appropriate experiences, opportunities and standards.”

Objective

The objective is to implement specific strategies and actions in four priority areas/pillars:

1. The school
2. The home & community
3. The state/government
4. The economy

Framework



The Framework seeks to establish an integrated platform for action in both the micro and the macro spheres involving the four pillars identified earlier. It recommends key interventions deemed necessary to successfully address gender differentials and it treats these strands of intervention as dynamic initiatives that can ensure positive outcomes in each sphere. The intervention strands while specific enough to provide a clear focus for action, are sufficiently flexible and indicative to encompass a range of contextual actions defined by national authorities.

At the micro-environmental level, the main pillars comprise the school and the home/community. The main strands of interaction between them involve:

- Community – school – home interventions
- Community participation in the school and school participation in the community

Throughout the Caribbean, schools and churches constitute the most prevalent and vital element of the social infrastructure in the community. The framework therefore aims at strengthening the nexus between **school**, **home** and **community** so as to create a more positive, symbiotic and reinforcing environment.

At the macro-environmental level, the main pillars are the state/government and the economy; and the main strands of interaction between them are:

- Investment and gendered employment policy
- Employment and taxation

There are significant opportunities for impacting the construction of gender in the national environment interaction through the exercise of the regulatory power of the state (however weak or strong this regulatory regime might be exercised). Government policies affect the economy because they either prescribe or facilitate. Regardless of where a particular government may fall in the spectrum between laissez faire economic policy and centralized interventionism, options exist and mechanisms can be put in place that will shape gender relations in society. The framework identifies **investment**, **employment** and **taxation** as three arenas of policy which most directly impact and frame the micro-environment. Some of the specific initiatives identified in these arenas seek to bolster gender equity principally through the economic empowerment of women, the removal of barriers related to sex-stereotyping of jobs and opportunities, and provision of private sector incentives to promote gender equity.

The framework further seeks to create a dynamic between the micro and the macro environments through the following cross-cutting strands/interventions:

Between SCHOOL and GOVERNMENT/STATE *and vice versa*

- Democratic participation – ensuring legislative and regulatory framework for full participation of key stakeholders (parents, teachers, students, education providers) in provision of quality education
- Comprehensive, equitable, gender-responsive education policy – measures to guarantee quality, equity and gender responsiveness in education

Between SCHOOL and ECONOMY *and vice versa*

- School to work transitions – initiatives for ensuring work preparedness of students on graduation from terminal points of the system and for guaranteeing foundational competencies from stage to stage (with attention paid to performance differences between the sexes)
- Future and supply driven knowledge, skills and competencies – paying attention to the preparation of students for tomorrow's jobs by ensuring that the education system takes a proactive role in human resource development in a volatile global economy

Between HOME/COMMUNITY and ECONOMY *and vice versa*

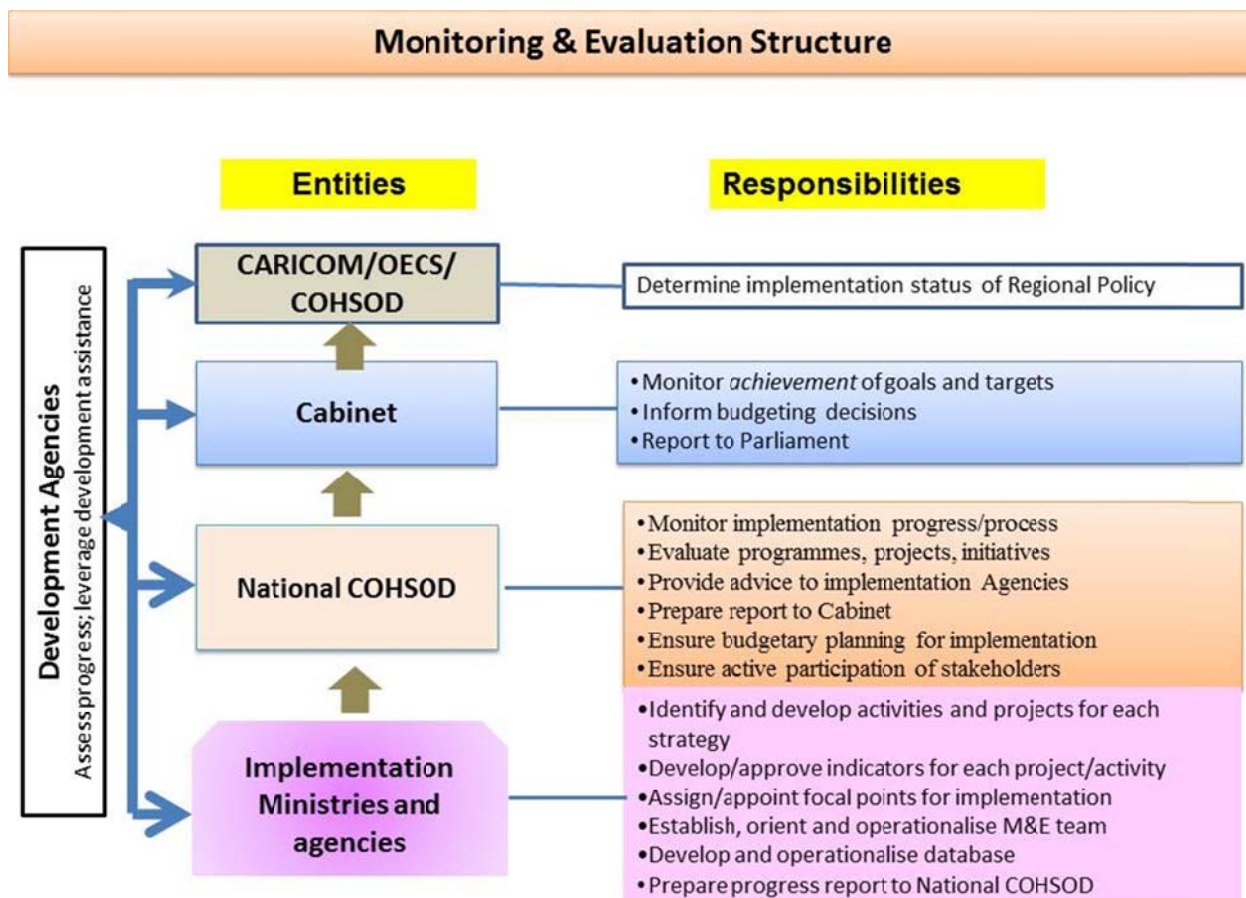
- Sustenance opportunities – the capacity to earn a decent living and to provide for family is the foundation of the relationship between the home/community and the economy.

Between HOME/COMMUNITY and STATE/GOVERNMENT

- Democratic participation – interventions directed to strengthening citizenship engagement in community and government and fostering a sense of responsibility and citizenship
- Engendered and integrated social/economic policy – addressing gender differential issues at community level and making the home a beneficiary of ameliorative measures promoting gender equity, economic opportunity and child protection.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & EVALUATION MECHANISM

Following consultations at the regional level, the following monitoring and evaluation structure was proposed:



This structure seeks to foster inter-ministerial and inter-agency collaboration under the policy direction of the national governments with a supporting role for regional and multilateral agencies.

The objectives of monitoring and evaluation of the Framework are to:

- **Assess performance** to improve achievement of intended results of the Regional Policy;
- **Improve management of programmes**, projects, sub-projects and activities to ensure optimal use of funds and other resources;
- **Learn from the implementation experience**, the relevance, methods and outcomes of programmes and projects;

- **Provide information** to enhance advocacy of policies and programmes;
- **Promote stakeholder satisfaction** at all levels.

Specific monitoring and evaluation indicators are listed in Part 2 of this document.

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