

Project Name GRENADA-OECS Education Development Project

Region Latin America and Caribbean Region

Sector Secondary education (100%)

Project ID P077759

Borrower(s) GOVERNMENT OF GRENADA

Implementing Agency

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1. Country and Sector Background

Although the education system in Grenada has reached many positive achievements, there are shortcomings to address. The following issues have been identified through the work and studies done under the previous Bank-financed Basic Education Reform Project (BERP), in the sector strategy plan (SPEED) and through other studies carried out for the region in preparation for the first phase of the OECS Education Development Project (for St. Lucia and St. Kitts and Nevis). The studies covered the following areas: (i) social assessment; (ii) school financing; (iii) youth at risk; (iv) teacher training; (v) curriculum; (vi) science education; and (vii) numeracy and literacy.

(a) Access to secondary education. Although Grenada has achieved nearly universal coverage for primary education (99%), access to secondary education is limited. Net enrollment was about 73% in 2000. As is the case in other OECS countries, the limited number of secondary school places in Grenada results in lower transition rates from primary to secondary schools. This is partly due to the high selectivity of the Common Entrance Examination (The CEE is a competitive exam given at the end of Grade 6 through which access to the secondary education is determined), which rations the limited places available in secondary education. This also has a negative effect on the poor because they often attend the schools with fewer resources and from which fewer students pass the exam. In addition, there is a gender issue present in Grenada (and in the whole Caribbean region in general), whereby males demonstrate lower academic achievement levels and have lower participation in secondary education. SPEED aims to achieve full secondary education coverage by 2008.

(b) Quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching and learning is low, both at primary and secondary level. The results of the

Minimum Competency Test (MCT), introduced for the first time in 1999 in Grade 4 in Language and Mathematics, show that the majority of students did not acquire an acceptable level of knowledge and skills, as outlined in the curriculum, to ready them for secondary school. The CXC regional examination, applied at the end of secondary (Form 5) shows some improvements in performance over the years. The percentage of students who obtained four passes increased from 35 percent in 1998 to nearly 53 percent in 2001. Yet student achievements are still low, with significant differences between subjects. Among the main factors that contribute to low quality of teaching and learning are the following:

Irrelevant curriculum: As is the case in many OECS countries, the curriculum is imbalanced and insufficient to meet society's current needs and does not appeal to the interests of many students. It includes subjects and subject content which need further rationalization and a core curriculum is to be redefined to ensure development of fundamental skills for all students. The curriculum offers a multiplicity of options too early in the student's school career, resulting in superficial coverage of many subjects. As a result, many children enter the job market with certification but without basic knowledge and skills, and those who are pushed into extended primary often leave without any kind of leaving/completion certificate.

Low teacher qualifications and insufficient training: Teachers' qualifications are low. This problem is more acute at the secondary level, where just 32 percent of the teachers are certified (versus 85 percent of primary teachers). Teacher turnover is also very high at secondary level (teacher attrition is 11.3 percent in secondary and 3.2 percent in primary). Teacher training modalities have largely been in-service; however the MOE introduced a secondary education Pre-service training programme in September 2002. Both primary and secondary are considered inefficient due to the cost of replacing teachers during the period of training.

Insufficient instructional materials and education equipment to support student-centered learning approaches: Secondary schools are characterized by the absence of basic educational materials and equipment to support student-centered classroom teaching and learning. Those school libraries that exist are poorly stocked and under-used, and computers are not systematically connected to the internet. Science laboratories are poorly equipped and the computer laboratories, when existing, are under-used due to insufficient access to educational software, poor maintenance of the hardware and exclusive rights to students in the upper tracks. The conditions make it extremely difficult to implement student-centered approaches, such as group or team work, independent research projects, science experiments and other hands-on learning methods. Finally, teachers and educational support staff require more appropriate training to use existing and proposed new equipment.

Need to enhance evaluation programs: Although in recent years Grenada has undertaken some major reforms in testing and evaluation (such as the introduction of the MCT as a diagnostic tool and changes to the CEE, applied in Grade 6), further reforms are needed to strengthen the assessment, to use the evaluations as quality assessment mechanisms and to provide feedback to students, teachers and parents. The MOE has

identified as priority activities the review and development of the professional standards of the teaching service, including mentoring programs, performance indicators and an improved supervision system to support professional development and enhance teacher performance.

(c) Ineffective management and administration of education. Improvements in management and administration are perceived as key to improve sector performance. Under the BERP, Grenada made progress in this front. It reorganized the MOE, creating four new units (a PMU; Educational Planning and Statistical Unit; Educational Testing and Exams Unit; and Educational Materials Unit). It produced its first Statistical Digest gathering data from the education sector, and it achieved efficiency gains with the construction of a new building for the MOE, allowing for the full use of equipment and an enhanced working environment. Nevertheless, an audit of the structure and management of the MOE was carried out in August 2000, which identified the need for a set of additional reforms aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of management in the Ministry and in schools. The main recommendations suggested a number of structural changes, in particular: (a) to strengthen coordination and eliminate overlaps within the MOE (partially achieved through the move to the new MOE building); (b) to strengthen the information system (EMIS) to support informed and effective decision-making; (c) to continue to build the planning capacity of the MOE, initiated through the creation of the Planning Unit but which will need to be further strengthened and decentralized to include district offices and schools; (d) to transform the culture of the MOE from a traditional command and control maintenance administration to a proactive institution, centered in providing support to schools, with strategic thinking and management; and (e) to change the culture of the schools and to strengthen governance at the school level. This will require training principals in management, expanding the levels of parent participation and increasing autonomy and capacity of the schools to manage small maintenance budgets and apply site-based activities and innovations.

(d) Maintaining financial resources for education and management. Though budgetary resources have been maintained at relatively high levels, the goals for the education sector have resulted in increased needs for investment and expenditures in recent years. The challenge for Grenada in the years to come is to ensure that the goals set in its long-term education plan (SPEED) are met, within the current and expected economic reality and with the available resources. It will be crucial to ensure consistent levels of education financing, diversify the sources of funding resources and make certain that the resources are used effectively. There is a need to improve the existing low capacity of the sector in budget management and planning to foster an efficient use of resources by the MOE and the schools and avoid difficulties in mobilizing the necessary resources for quality investments.

Government Strategy

Grenada, like all the countries participating in this program, has engaged recently in the preparation of a long-range education sector plan, SPEED. The process has been highly participatory, including meetings across the island with key stakeholders. In its plan, the Government has indicated a strong commitment to education. It has agreed to maintain significant and

consistent public investment in education, as indicated by the levels of education expenditure as a percentage of GNP. The continuity of this commitment over the past 30 years has led to almost universal coverage in primary education. As a result, the Government is now focusing on the development of quality secondary and tertiary education and greater access to these levels for students from low-income families. The Government recognizes that there are still quality issues to be addressed at all levels. Grenada is: (i) designing remedial programs to improve literacy and numeracy skills for low-achieving students in primary school; (ii) increasing training opportunities to raise teacher qualifications; (iii) reforming the secondary school curriculum to make it more relevant to the needs of the society; (iv) equipping secondary schools with the facilities, materials and technology to promote student-centered learning and (v) increasing the use of diagnostic assessment mechanisms.

2. Objectives

The overall objective is to build human capital in the OECS which, in turn, will contribute to the diversification of their economy and more sustainable growth. This objective will be achieved by: (i) increasing equitable access to secondary education; (ii) improving the quality of the teaching and learning process, with more direct interventions at the school level and a focus on student-centred learning, and (iii) strengthening management of the sector and governance of schools.

3. Rationale for Bank's Involvement

The Bank has a standing commitment to provide financial and technical assistance to the Caribbean region and an ongoing relationship with the ministries of education. A collaborative approach has yielded increased cooperation between the Bank and the countries, and among countries. The Bank has participated in the Caribbean Education Task Force in its quest to establish a regional strategy and is knowledgeable about regional sector issues.

The Bank has carried out extensive sector work in secondary education and can provide best practice examples of initiatives at this level. Particular to this project, the Bank's team offers expertise and familiarity with international secondary education reforms and school-based programs for youth, particularly in Chile, Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay.

The Bank has encouraged collaboration among donors (DFID, OECS/OERU, CIDA) in the project and has assisted in mobilizing additional sources of financing.

The Bank organized and financed a regional curriculum workshop, allowing OECS representatives to engage in consensus building around lower secondary curriculum issues. DFID, CXC and OERU representatives also participated to ensure collaboration among donors and regional agencies.

4. Description

1. INCREASE ACCESS

- a. Construction of a new secondary school
- b. Refurbishing of existing secondary schools and conversion of current primary schools into secondary schools

2. QUALITY

- a. Curriculum enhancement
- b. Establishment and/or upgrading of learning spaces
- c. Organization and provision of student support services
- d. Teacher training
- e. Improving student assesment system
- f. School improvement projects

5. Financing

Total (US\$m)

BORROWER \$3.20

IBRD \$4.00

IDA \$4.00

UK: BRITISH DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DFID) \$0.80

Total Project Cost \$12.00

6. Implementation

A Project Management Unit (PMU), already established within the Ministry of Education under the MOE's reorganization supported by the BERP, will be responsible for project coordination, management and implementation. A Project Coordinator will be assigned by the Ministry to coordinate project progress and will be the principal link with the World Bank and DFID. The PMU will include the number of staff members gauged necessary to carry out the coordination, procurement, financial management and accounting of the project. Project components will be executed by the respective ministry units, with oversight by the PMU. Implementation of the project will be guided by the Project Operational Manual (POM) which will include an implementation plan, the Financial Management Manual and a detailed procurement plan.

7. Sustainability

The financial analysis will determine whether the size of investment of the project and its impact on the recurrent costs is sustainable for the country. The project will be adapted based on the results of this analysis.

8. Lessons learned from past operations in the country/sector

Donor co-ordination with single-source funding: Projects that are excessively complex, with multi-countries, multi-donors and multi-source funding have proven difficult to implement. The aim of this program is to improve donor coordination, stimulate donor investments and reduce transaction costs but avoid the rigidity and complexity of a co-financed loan. We are engaged in dialogue and parallel coordination of actions with major donors (DFID, CIDA, OECS/OERU and EU) in the planning of sector investments and the design of the program. DFID and the Bank are working closely together in the preparation and implementation of this program, and DFID is providing parallel financing.

Community participation in design and participation of projects: All the countries have noted the importance of involving stakeholders in the

development of sector plans, and adopted a highly participatory process to establish their national long-range education plans. In the case of Grenada, participation of stakeholders who will be involved in project implementation is perceived as key to promote ownership of project activities and gain support for project interventions.

Civil Works: In Grenada, as in St. Lucia, the implementation of the BERP has taught the country that the cost of civil works should be based on site-specific construction designs and not on drawings or prototypes.

Importance of consulting beneficiaries on the content of training: When the direct beneficiaries are not sufficiently consulted regarding the selection of the training, as a consequence, in some cases the training can be redundant for the unit where the staff would work or is not the most suitable training course, in the eyes of the trainees. In general for OECS countries, provision of training has not been sufficient to guarantee changes in teachers' behavior.

Importance of communication: Grenada's BERP illustrated that promoting greater communication among the different units involved in an education reform program was crucial to reinforce the work individually done by each unit and to avoid situations where the units are unaware of activities underway that should be complementary. It was also felt that a communication strategy was necessary to convey overall efforts in education reforms.

School improvement projects: The Bank has found, in countries across the region, that school improvement projects have proved to be one of the most effective agents of change in schools. Chile's school-based Education Improvement Projects (PME) and extra-curricular activities (ACLES), Uruguay's MECAEP projects and Paraguay's Innovative Education Projects have been widely successful in involving students, teachers, parents and community leaders in the quest for improved education responsive to local needs and have increased educational leadership among teachers and principals, improved communication between the school and the community and enhanced teaching practices. The student-run extra-curricular activities have allowed students more expression in determining the activities that are interesting and meaningful to them, within the safe structure of the school community.

9. Environment Aspects (including any public consultation)

Issues : The project is likely to include the construction of one school. A school mapping exercise will take place over the next two months. Based on the results, coupled with a recent poverty assessment and a household survey, a site will be selected and any possible resettlement issues will be identified.

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Note: This is information on an evolving project. Certain components may not be necessarily included in the final project.

This PID was processed by the InfoShop during the week ending January 31, 2002.