Report No. PID11463

Project Name	St. Kitts and Nevis-OECS Education Development Project
Region	Latin America and Caribbean Region
Sector	ES - Secondary Education
Project	P075978
Borrower(s)	OECS countries (Dominica, Grenada, St. Christopher and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines)
Implementing Agency(ies)	MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION OF THE OECS St. Christopher (Kitts) & Nevis: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Education Address: P.O. Box 333, Lockhart Street, Basseterre, St. Kitts, West Indies Contact Person: Osmond Petty, Permanent Secretary; Bronte Gonsalves, Education Planner (Nevis) Tel: (869) 465-2521 Fax: (869) 465-5202 Emails: secpet@hotmail.com; edunevbg@caribsurf.com St. Lucia: Ministry of Education, Culture and Labor Address: New NIS Building Waterfront, Castries, St. Lucia Contact Person: Didacus Jules, Permanent Secretary Tel: (758) 451-6725 Fax: (758) 453-2299 Email: Julesd@Candw.Lc
Environment Category	B
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1. Country and Sector Background

The island states of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) face considerable development challenges due to their small size and extreme vulnerability to external shocks and natural disasters. The events of September 11 resulted in a reduction in tourist earnings that severely impacted on their economies, where diversification remains limited. The OECS countries rely primarily on three sectors for external income: (i) tourism, which accounts for more than half of the earnings; (ii) mono-cropping in banana or sugar, where they are facing declining preferential access to export markets and (iii) offshore financial and business services, for which they have recently come under increasing international pressure to strengthen their regulatory infrastructure as well as to reduce "harmful" tax competition.

All the OECS countries have put education at the center of their strategy to diversify their economy to ensure sustainable growth and to improve the cohesion of the society by better integrating youth. In November 2000, after a large consultation process, the OECS countries developed an Eastern Caribbean Development Strategy with ten core priorities, among them two related directly to this project: (i) developing human capital through continued investments in better quality health and education, especially improved access to secondary and tertiary education and (ii) addressing pressing social issues, particularly chronic unemployment and problems associated with youth. From there, each OECS country started a participatory process to plan their long-term education development. At a Regional level, the OECS Secretariat (through the OECS Education Reform Unit - OERU) is attempting to harmonize those strategies. A framework for reform with a horizon of 2010, "OECS Education Reform Strategy: Pillars for Partnership and Progress," was adopted by the Ministers of Education in June 2001.

The Bank has adopted a multi-country approach to assist the OECS countries to move forward with their education sector plans. The OECS Education Development Project is an umbrella program that addresses issues common to all countries yet allows for flexibility to address individual country needs. Up to five potential countries (Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines) will initiate sub-projects as they are ready and have met the program's criteria for inclusion. St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Lucia have completed their project preparation and will negotiate with the Bank in the upcoming months.

2. Objectives

The overall program 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 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-centered 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 LAC countries.

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

Component 1 (Access). This Component will finance: (i) construction of new facilities for secondary education in under-served areas and (ii) rehabilitation of existing schools to incorporate appropriate spaces for Learning Resource Centers and computer and science laboratories and to expand the number of classrooms.

Component 2 (Quality Improvement). This component will enhance the school teaching and learning environment, with more direct interventions at the school level and a focus on student-centred learning, through financing of: (i) curriculum enhancement, related teacher training and improved continuous assessment; (ii) establishment of learning resource centers and improved science laboratories and provision of relevant learning materials, books and laboratory equipment; (iii) establishment of literacy and numeracy enhancement programs and programs to support participation of disadvantaged students, including learning support for less able learners; and (iv) use of school development plans and provision of school improvement projects and extracurricular activities for youth at risk.

Component 3 (Institutional Strengthening). This Component will finance: (i) expansion of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) to link schools with each other and with the Ministry of Education at the central level, which should include reporting and supervision mechanisms as well as the establishment of quality standards to be monitored on a continuous basis; (b) improved supervision and support to schools through strengthening of district education offices, the training of principals, the promotion of parent participation and the implementation of decentralized maintenance budgets.

Financing Total (US$m) (tentative)
BORROWER (18.0)
IBRD (40.0)
Total Project Cost: 58.0

6. Implementation

In each country, a Project Management Unit (PMU), already established within the respective Ministry of Education, will be responsible for project coordination, management and implementation. A Project Coordinator has been assigned by the ministry to coordinate project progress and will be the principal link with the World Bank. The PMU will include the number of staff members gauged necessary to carry out the coordination, procurement, financial management and accounting of the project.

7. Sustainability

The sustainability of the OECS Education Development Project is confirmed by the strong political support from each of the participating OECS Governments and the extensive stakeholder consultations that have gone into the design of the long-term education sector plans and the subsequent project designs for secondary education. On the financial side, a fiscal impact analysis of the projects was undertaken in both St. Lucia and St. Kitts and Nevis, showing generally acceptable financial burdens for the countries. It is expected that actions under the project to bring more efficiency into the education sectors will ultimately make both education sectors more financially sustainable.

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

The design of this project has benefited from lessons learned from recently closed Bank-funded education projects in participating countries (St. Lucia, Dominica and Grenada), from other similar Bank operations in other sectors and from the experience of the Bank and DFID team members, consultants and clients.

Flexibility must be factored into the project design and allowed for during project implementation: In St. Lucia, the sector realized significant strides towards system reform through changes in the current project content to address pressing unanticipated needs. This has taught us that while there can be broad agreement on the scope of assistance under specified components, there needs to be room for maneuver within and across sub-components as implementation progresses.

Donor coordination is paramount, but single-source funding is more easily managed: Implementation of sector reforms is enhanced by greater coordination of donor agencies. 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 DFID, CIDA, OECS/OERU, UNESCO and EU in the planning of sector investments and the design of the program, and DFID and the Bank are associated in the preparation and implementation of the program.

Community participation in the design and implementation of projects is key: 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. This has carried over into the preparation of the new project.

School improvement projects offer an opportunity to involve the school community and can make a difference in the school climate: 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. They have given teachers and principals the autonomy to decide how best to improve education quality in their schools, while 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. This program will incorporate these types of innovative activities to promote school-based management, improve the school environment and address existing problems with youth at risk.

Land sites for civil works must be decided upon before project initiation: Due to unforeseen changes in costs as a result of land site changes in previous projects, the participating countries have taken the steps during preparation of their projects to settle issues relevant to proposed construction sites before the project start date. These include school mapping, property titles and ownership, encumbrances, utilities, environmental impact and surveys. In addition, a general framework of guidelines for environmental assessments will be provided to all new countries coming in under the program.

9. Program of Targeted Intervention (PTI) Y

10. Environment Aspects (including any public consultation)

Issues: St. Kitts & Nevis and St. Lucia have identified the sites for each of the new schools, based on poverty assessments and school mapping data. As the construction of schools has environmental implications, the islands are small and there are environmental issues regarding the type of construction (hurricane proof) and location, each borrower was asked to carry out for each school an assessment of the environmental impact (EA). The EA for St. Kitts has been reviewed by the Bank and is available at the Bank's Info Shop and in St. Kitts. A general framework for the environmental assessment of land sites and construction in all other countries is being drawn up in collaboration with the Bank's Quality Assurance Team.

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