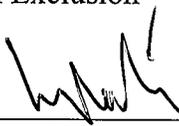


INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION
Project Number 532-012

Project Location: Jamaica
Project Title: Improved Education of Targeted Youth
Funding: US\$ 17.3 million
Life of SO: FY 2005-2009
IEE Prepared by: Joan Taffe, OPDM, USAID/Jamaica
Clearance: Terrence Tiffany, Acting Director, Office of General Development (Education and Health), Jamaica
Recommended Threshold Decision: Categorical Exclusion

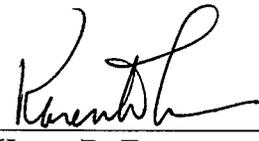
CONCURRENCE


Howard Batson
Mission Environmental Officer
USAID/Jamaica

Michael Donald
Regional Environment Advisor
USAID/Guatemala

MISSION DIRECTOR'S
DECISION

Approved:


Karen D. Turner

Date:

13 Dec 2004

LAC BUREAU
ENVIRONMENTAL
OFFICER'S DECISION

Approved:

Jerry Bisson

Date:

Background

Jamaica's education system has a major role to play in addressing the problem of youth violence and fostering socially and emotionally well-adjusted children. In education programs, one of the barriers to achieving the desired objective is the high student drop out rates after primary schooling. There are about 142,000 youths who are out of school and out of work, and a quarter of them did not go beyond grade nine. Two-thirds of Jamaicans under age 34 have no academic qualifications (as measured by academic passes). Fourteen percent of females and 26 percent of males are illiterate.

The new USAID five-year education strategy will build on the achievements of the New Horizons for Primary Schools Project and the Uplifting Adolescents Project, which were instrumental in providing poor performing children and disadvantaged youth an opportunity to improve their education. USAID, in continued partnership with the Ministry of Education Youth and Culture, the National Council on Education, the National Center for Youth Development, and the Curriculum and Support Service will implement this program throughout the life of the new strategy, from U. S. Fiscal years 2005-2009.

Activities proposed under the new USAID Strategic Objective (SO) for "Improved Education of Targeted Youth," will address the needs of the targeted Jamaican children, who will benefit from real improvements in the access to, and outcomes of, education for the poor, leading to a real reduction of poverty. The targeted group will include primary school children, who are at risk of dropping out of schools and who have already dropped out of schools, and selected grade 7-9 students of upgraded secondary schools.

Program Description

The proposed activities for the 2005 – 2009 education program is aimed at improving education for targeted Jamaican youth by improving teaching skills and improving educational outcomes for at-risk and out of school youth as well as working with communities, parents and the private sector to meet the country's education need.

(1) Improving Literacy and Numeracy in Targeted Schools:

Activities to improve literacy and numeracy in targeted schools include support to the Professional Development Protocol of the MOEY&C to increase teacher training opportunities, training on Resource Teacher's (RT) role to maximize the effectiveness of RTs, train principals and school board members in school management, and explore the possibility of working with the Caribbean Center for Excellence in Teacher Training to provide additional teacher training. Assistance will also be provided to contribute to the provision of quality and equity through the use of information and communication technologies. This will include sharing of selected best teaching strategies through distance teaching, the Internet, cable television and other media.

(2) Improving Educational Outcomes for At-risk and Out-of-school Youth:

Activities to improve educational outcomes for at-risk and out-of-school youth will include collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture (MOEY&C) to implement the Expanded Secondary Program for Grades 10-11 and the High School Equivalency

Program through the utilization of independent learning methodologies to provide additional opportunities for over-age students outside the formal education system. Assistance will also be provided to assist selected students to gain certification in their skills areas, improve the education of a significant number of at-risk youth through experience at job-sites in the communities as well as incorporate activities aimed at improving boys' performance.

(3) Increased Support by Parents, Communities and the Private Sector for Education to Meet Jamaica's Needs

Activities to increase support by parents, communities and the private sector for education will focus on the area of financial resources, supportive attitudes in the community, and direct engagement and exchange of ideas with people in the business world and the community. Activities to increase community support will include working through and with local parent organizations and other community organizations. There will also be collaboration with the private sector in using private sector resources to improve education at the corporate and civic levels through corporate school sponsorship, education foundation funding and national education system assistance at the local school level. In addition, USAID will also work in collaboration with the MOEY&C to implant the Secondary Enhancement Program, which involves a provision of assistance to undertake strategic development actions detailed in school development plans.

Program Implementation: This Strategic Objective will be managed within the Mission by a US Direct Hire General Development Officer who will be supervising the work of implementing partners. The proposed funding mechanisms will be a competitively bid contract for IRs 1 and 3, and a competitively bid Grant under Contract for IR 2. These successful organizations will be the primary implementers that will orchestrate the various components of a comprehensive and complex program approach. They would likely use a variety of sub-contractors or sub-agreements (including agreements with qualified NGOs) to meet the needs of a comprehensive scope of work.

Environmental Impact and Mitigation Measures: The three components of this program involve the provision of technical assistance in the form of educational training and social and institutional capacity building and will have no negative impact on the physical or natural environment. The program therefore qualifies for a Categorical Exclusion under 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i),(iii),(v) and (xiv).

However, should any activity be found to have a potential negative impact on the environment at any point during the life of this strategy, a supplemental IEE will be submitted for the activity. In Addition, the Mission will monitor activities on an ongoing basis to ensure that there are no potential negative environmental impacts of these activities.

Monitoring and Reporting: All implementing partners are required to submit Semi-annual Reports to the Operating Unit which must include Reg. 216 environmental compliance, if applicable. The CTO will be responsible for overseeing and monitoring all program activities throughout the life of the activity, and for collaborating with the MEO to

ensure that all activities are in compliance with the categorical exclusion threshold decision which is being recommended for this program. In addition USAID/J-CAR will ensure that all environmental compliance activities are elaborated upon in the relevant section of the Annual Reports.

Recommendations for Threshold Decision: *Categorical Exclusion:* Pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i), (v) and (xiv), a **Categorical Exclusion** is recommended for this SO as it involves the provision of technical assistance, education training, and social and institutional capacity building, which have no significant effect on the environment. Section 216.2 (c) specifically describes those activities that are wholly technical assistance and training as being qualified for categorical exclusion.