Teachers for the future:  
Meeting teacher shortages to achieve Education for All

National Steering Group, Dominica  
First Session, Roseau, 15 December 2004

Summary Notes and Decisions

Opening
1. The representative of the Director of the ILO Sub-regional office for the Caribbean welcomed participants, with special thanks to Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Education (MOE) for helping to organise the meeting. Mr. Hyacinth also welcomed the participants, noting the importance of the programme in the context of the priority accorded by the MOE to achieving EFA objectives. Experienced, well-trained and qualified teachers were needed in Dominica if these objectives were to be realized, requiring in turn a thorough examination of recruitment, selection and careers. Major decisions would need to be taken in coming years in the interests of students and high quality education. Introductions of participants were then made (list attached).

2. The ILO education sector specialist from Geneva presented the action programme background, including expected activities and potential outputs in Dominica, the Caribbean and internationally. In response to participants’ questions, it was indicated that: the ILO was engaged in similar work on the nursing profession; the regional policy dialogue forum to share information, good practices and policy options would be open to other countries of the Caribbean; cooperation with UNESCO and the OECS would be explored; the ILO would be open to technical support for the implementation of the existing teacher education reform plan but was not able to provide financial support for its implementation; ILO financial support to the implementation of the action programme in Dominica would have to be initially modest, but could increase with success in attracting other partners (and suggestions were sought for likely candidates for Dominica); the ILO office in Port of Spain was also able to provide technical support in areas such as human resource development, career guidance, labour markets and assistance to employers’ and workers’ organisations.

Priority issues relating to teacher shortages and EFA in Dominica

3. Participants identified the following key issues, which needed to be addressed within the action programme:

- teacher education and training policies and governance, with increased attention to meeting competency needs in the field of special education, including for the exceptionally gifted, and to more pedagogical training for secondary teachers;

- licensing policies and processes following pre-service training;

- provision of continual professional development, including use of sabbaticals;

- means of validating skills and competencies acquired through professional development (certification);

- shortages in subject areas, especially math and some sciences, both in recruitment of new teachers and retention of serving teachers, and potential competition from the private sector;
- curricula issues linked to teacher training, notably special education, family health, life skills and HIV/AIDS (the latter not seen as a major problem as yet, but potentially);
- development of early childhood development;
- teacher migration and the application of international norms in this area;
- teacher career paths, including more flexibility and bridges between primary and secondary levels;
- school leadership and school-level support measures to enhance effective schooling and teacher retention rates
- teacher remuneration levels and other incentives;
- more structured and institutionalised social dialogue in education settings.

4. It was agreed that the ILO’s proposed conceptual framework for assessing issues and policy options encompassed most if not all of these issues, and should be the basis for work within Dominica, subject to the following modifications:
   - Chapter II, auxiliary teaching staff: drop reference to this point as such staff did not exist in Dominica,
   - Chapter IV: an additional point should be added to the point concerning careers and mobility as follows: d) between primary and secondary school levels

Plan of action and timeline for activities

5. The MOE has already begun to prepare a draft report based on the conceptual framework. It was agreed that this draft would be the basis for a first discussion by the national steering group. By the next meeting, a budget should be prepared for reproduction of this draft document, agreed by the steering group and submitted to the ILO for support. Within its financial capacity for the action programme, the ILO will support these costs.

6. A project development workshop should be organised to assist in developing and implementing approaches to donors for support to the action programme work and the related teacher education policy framework. In line with its overall strategy on resource mobilization for the programme, the ILO is prepared to support such a workshop within the limits of its technical and financial capacity.

7. At a January 2005 meeting convened by the Commonwealth Secretariat in London to examine follow-up work on the recently adopted protocol concerning teacher recruitment, the ILO will discuss cooperation on a regional thematic paper about teachers’ mobility (within the Caribbean and to non-Caribbean countries). If carried out, the paper could be an input to the regional forum mentioned below (paragraph 9).

8. It was agreed that the National Steering Group would next meet on 12 January 2005, 9 A.M. in the Public Service Training Centre Conference room unless otherwise indicated. The purposes of that meeting would be to:
   a. review progress in the draft document being prepared by the MOE and agree a budget for reproduction of the first draft;
b. agree on nominations, roles and proceed to invite additional members of the steering group, as indicated below (composition of the steering group, paragraph 11);

c. decide on other issues as needed to advance work of the programme.

Regional policy dialogue forum

9. To enhance the value of information exchanges and dialogue, the steering group urged the ILO to look at possibilities for expanding the regional policy dialogue forum to countries in the Caribbean other than those participating in all phases of the programme (for the moment Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago, and possibly Dominican Republic). The ILO has agreed to examine options bearing in mind available financial resources, and to explore with the steering group the prospects of convening the forum in Dominica in the event that Trinidad and Tobago declines. If not held in Dominica, the ILO will support one steering group representative each from Government, the DEF and DAT to participate in the forum (and more, depending on available funds from other sources). Likely dates for such a forum would be the period October to early December 2005.

NSG Chair and composition

10. The Chair and Convenor of the NSG will be the Chief Education Officer, Mr. Hyacinth. The Vice-Chair will be the Labour Commissioner (Ag), Mr. Smith.

11. The core partners of the NSG are understood to be the Government (MOE and Ministry of Legal Affairs, Immigration and Labour), DAT and DEF. Additional education stakeholders will be invited to participate in accordance with decisions taken at the next steering group meeting (paragraph 8 above) as follows: one representative from the State College (teacher educator); one to two principals; one to two teachers; one representative of parents.

Closing

12. Mr. Hyacinth thanked participants for a useful meeting, which had helped to identify short- and long-term priorities and means to address the priorities in order to enhance teachers’ development and educational quality in Dominica. The meeting should establish a basis for strengthened collaboration between various stakeholders, beginning with the MOE and the Ministry of Legal Affairs, Immigration and Labour.

Notes prepared and submitted by the ILO as initial convenor

Geneva, January 2005
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List of Participants  

Government  

*Ministry of Education*  

Mr. Steven Hyacinth, Chief Education Officer  
Ms. Nicholas Goldberg, Senior Education Officer  
Mr. Ted D. Sarrant, Senior Education Planner  
Mr. Jeffrey Blaize, Education Officer  
Mr. Charles Lucina Lafond, Education Officer  

*Ministry of Legal Affairs, Immigration and Labour*  

Mr. Arthur R. Smith, Labour Commissioner (Ag)  
Mr. Lyndell Williams, Deputy Labour Commissioner (Ag)  
Mr. Walter J. Matthan, Legal Officer  

Teachers’ Organisations  

Ms. Celia Nicholas, President, *Dominica Association of Teachers (DAT)*  

Employers’ Organisations  

Mr. Cyril O. Dalrymple, Executive Director, *Dominica Employers’ Federation (DEF)*  

International Labour Office (ex-officio)  

Mr. George Gamerdinger, Senior Specialist, HRD and Vocational Training, *Sub-regional office for the Caribbean, Port of Spain*  

Mr. Bill Ratteree, Education Sector Specialist, *ILO Geneva*