

DOCUMENT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

BELIZE

EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

(BL-L1018)

PROJECT PROFILE

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Under the Access to Information Policy, this document is subject to Public Disclosure.

PROJECT PROFILE

I. BASIC DATA

Project Name:	Education Quality Improvement Program		
Project Number:	BL-L1018		
Project Team:	Emma Näslund-Hadley, Team Leader, Analía Jaimovich and Livia Mueller (SCL/EDU); Juanita Riaño and Marianela López-Galdos (OII/OII); Mauricio García Moreno and Alejandro Pareja (IDF/ICS); Jorge Luis Gonzáles (FMP/CCR); Jane Chow (CID/CBL); Paula Louis-Grant (FMP/CBA); Andrés Consuegra (LEG/SGO); and Alejandro Cruz (consultant).		
Borrower:	Belize (BL-BL)		
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (BL-MOEYS)		
Financial Plan:	IDB:	US\$	10.0 million
	Local (in kind):	US\$	100,000.00
	Total:	US\$	10.1 million
Safeguards:	Policies triggered:	None	
	Classification:	Category “C”	

II. GENERAL JUSTIFICATION AND OBJECTIVES

A. Justification

- 2.1 The government of Belize has prioritized and invested heavily in education over the past few years. However, important challenges remain with regard to quality of instruction, particularly in primary education, as well as governance mechanisms to monitor quality and equity levels throughout the system, two major objectives of the Government of Belize’s Education Sector Strategy 2011-2016.¹
- 2.2 An analysis of the quality of primary education shows that, even though 92 percent of school-aged children attend primary school, the impact of primary schooling on student outcomes is extremely poor. Repetition rates are high, with only two in every five children enrolled in primary school completing this level in the prescribed eight years. Completion rates are low: only 48 percent of girls and 38 percent of boys enrolled in primary schools complete this level of education. Finally, learning outcomes at the primary school level are discouraging: less than half of primary school graduating students (standard six students) are able to achieve at a satisfactory level in the primary education exit exam (PSE). Boys do better in science, and girls in verbal and writing skills. The discouraging results of primary education can be explained by a number of factors, which include low quality of instruction in primary school classrooms, and lack of governance mechanisms for quality assurance (Arcia 2012).
- 2.3 In response to increases in the primary school-aged population (from 47,000 in 2003 to 69,000 in 2013), the Belizean school system has hired large numbers of teachers, many of them without the necessary qualifications to teach. Between

¹ A third objective of the Education Sector Strategy is increasing access to school, particularly for pre-school, secondary, and tertiary levels.

2003 and 2010, the teaching force increased by 16 percent at the primary level, from 2,643 to 3,063 teachers (MOEY administrative data). While this increase in the teacher force helped lower student/teacher ratios, it came at the cost of bringing down the proportion of trained teachers. Belize's rates of trained teachers are now lower than those of many other countries in LAC: while Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago all report that more than 80 percent of their primary school teachers are trained, in Belize only 47 percent of primary school teachers have the required training.² The insufficient proportion of qualified teachers as well as low quality of both teacher initial education and in-service teacher training programs affect the quality of instruction in primary school classrooms. The deficiencies in the quality of teachers in Belize are particularly worrisome in light of a growing body of evidence that indicates that the teacher is the most important school factor for student learning (Kane et al. 2013; Hanushek 2011; Rivkin et al. 2005; Rockoff 2004).

- 2.4 Teacher initial education is provided by the tertiary institutions in charge of teacher training (TEIs), including the University of Belize and five junior colleges. TEI records indicate that teacher students tend to have a weak academic profile in comparison with other courses of study. A review of the teacher initial education programs identified weaknesses across the institutions, including: (i) an absence of a clearly defined education philosophy and quality standards; (ii) lack of integration of content and pedagogy; (iii) weak partnerships with schools; (iv) absence of protocols and standards for supervision of teacher interns; (v) lecturers with limited competencies in the area of adult learning; and (vi) low level of Math and Science content. The issues identified in the area of in-service teacher training were similar, with the addition of weak instructional leadership of principals (Stewart 2011).
- 2.5 In addition to the fact that many teachers lack the necessary qualifications to teach, those who have been trained lack the necessary content and pedagogical skills. As a result, teachers lack the necessary content knowledge to be effective in the classroom. Recently, primary school teachers and student teachers (those in their last year of teacher initial education), were asked to take the primary school leaving examination taken by standard six students every year. Throughout all subject areas (Mathematics, English and Science), 31 percent of current primary school teachers obtained a grade of C or lower in the primary school leaving examination. The results for student teachers were even worse, with 56 percent of candidates obtaining a grade C or lower. The teaching methods currently implemented are predominantly teacher-centered and do not actively engage students in activities that may help them develop analytical and critical-thinking skills (Hull et al 2014).
- 2.6 In addition, also the poor outcomes of Belizean primary education can be explained by the lack of governance mechanisms for quality assurance. The overall assessment of quality assurance is that Belize has no properly functioning

² Trained teachers at the primary level are defined as those who have completed the Level 2 program or the 2+1 program or higher offered at the University of West Indies Campus in Belize.

system for managing the education system and monitoring education quality (Arcia, 2012). In the private subsidized and non-subsidized schools (82 percent), the MOEYS has no or little control over what goes on in the classrooms, what curriculum is implemented, what teaching practices are used, or teacher and student attendance rates; the schools and the churches handle these issues directly. The lack of an information system and monitoring capacity of the MOEYS precludes them from intervening in low performing schools in a timely manner. This is a concern given that high performing education systems have mechanisms in place to ensure that there is enough student data to inform teaching and policy (Darling-Hammond and Wentworth 2010; and Darling-Hammond 2010). Test results are used passively, as they are not used to evaluate or monitor school performance.

- 2.7 Belizean schools have a high degree of autonomy, but World Bank school accountability indicators (Arcia and Patrinos 2011; Arcia et al. 2011) suggest that the lack of governance mechanisms for quality assurance results in low school accountability. Parental involvement in school management is generally minimal, weakening provider accountability. The role of parents, through Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), has been relegated to a supporting role, helping schools raise funds, with in-kind support for social and school functions (Arcia 2012).
- 2.8 With few exceptions, principals lack the necessary skills to be able to ensure good quality levels in their schools (Arcia 2012). In collaboration with their school management authorities, most private school principals are in charge of decisions regarding hiring and firing of teachers, managing school resources, and defining what textbooks to use and what curriculum to implement. In spite of these large responsibilities, there are no standards or competencies that define the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and dispositions that principals should have. As a result, most principals lack training both as instructional and administrative leaders. The poor qualifications of principals may contribute to the lack of school compliance with the Education and Training Act rules: some principals do not comply with the maintenance of school records and reporting rules; and initial results from a curriculum survey indicate that many do not comply with the core content of the national curricula. This weak school leadership is troublesome in light of burgeoning research that indicates a link between student outcomes and instructional and administrative leadership of principals (Grissom et al. 2014 and Grissom and Loeb 2011).
- 2.9 While challenges persist throughout the education system, the proposed operation will focus on the governance of the education system, and the quality of instruction at the primary level. These areas are prioritized for two reasons. First, solid governance is crucial to any attempts to improve an education system. Second, the training of primary level teachers is prioritized as a strong base education is essential to eventually improving academic achievement and graduation rates at both the secondary and post-secondary levels.

B. Objectives and Program Components

- 2.10 **Objectives.** The overall objective of the operation is to improve the quality of primary education, and the governance of the Belize education system. This will

be achieved through investments in three components. The specific objectives are to: (i) train approximately 80 percent of TEI pre-service instructors teaching methods courses and 50 percent of in-service teachers at the primary level; (ii) train approximately 50 percent of primary school principals in instructional leadership and administration; (iii) develop and implement an Education Management Information System (EMIS) for the primary and secondary levels; and (iv) improved profile of teacher candidates.

- 2.11 **Component I: Improving the Quality of Teachers (US\$5 million).** The component aims to improve the quality of primary school teachers by raising the profile of teacher candidates, improving the quality of initial teacher education, and improving the skills of in-service teachers. To achieve this objective, the component will finance: (i) a marketing campaign to attract higher profile candidates for teacher training; (ii) assessment of teacher training candidates to identify those who need remedial assistance during their teacher training; (iii) capacity building of staff at TEIs to improve teacher training in pedagogical practices in Math, Science, and English, focusing on how to link the teaching of content with concrete content specific pedagogy; and (iv) on-site and distance practical professional development for principals and teachers currently in the classrooms on student-centered pedagogy in English, Math, and Science.
- 2.12 **Component II: Governance of the Education System (US\$4 million).** The component aims to create a quality assurance system to improve education policy planning and accountability mechanisms at various levels of the education system, including schools, the TEIs, and the MOEYS.³ To achieve this objective, the component will finance: (i) a feedback system to strengthen the capacity of TEIs to monitor the quality of their services and outputs; (ii) training, mentoring, and technical assistance to principals, department heads, and administrators of the TEIs on how to monitor and assure the quality of their services; (iii) the development of an entry into profession exam for new teacher candidates; (iv) training and technical assistance to principals to promote their leadership as the vehicle for improving school and student performance, including training on data collection and reporting processes, as well as the use of student data to identify teacher professional development needs and develop school improvement plans; (v) creation of an integrated EMIS with information on student enrollment and results, student and teacher attendance, school infrastructure, use of curricula and textbooks, teacher qualifications, etc., to enable planning and quality assurance at various levels of the system (schools, district education offices, and central level); (vi) training and technical assistance to the MOEYS and schools in the use of the EMIS for the purposes of quality assurance; and (vii) training and technical assistance to increase parent participation in school management.
- 2.13 **Component III: Evaluation. Evaluation (US\$1 million).** The component will finance the evaluation of the operation through four sub-components: (i) study of teacher candidates; (ii) pre-post analysis of the pre-service teacher training;

³ The prototype for the EMIS will be developed and tested with resources from BL-T1057.

(iii) randomized control trial of the on-site practical professional development in primary schools; and (iv) process evaluation of the EMIS.

III. TECHNICAL ISSUES AND SECTOR KNOWLEDGE

- 3.1 The Program is the result of extensive sector work, including: (i) an assessment of teacher content skills; (ii) a national survey of teacher attitudes and beliefs; (iii) an assessment of the country's system for teacher training and professional development; (iv) the development of a Belize Teacher Education and Development Strategy 2012-2017; (v) an institutional analysis of the education system; (vi) a pilot evaluation of a new pedagogical approach for teaching mathematics called Visible and Tangible Math; (vii) a census of textbook and curriculum use in schools; and (viii) a census of information technology use in schools. This sector work has helped identify priority areas for investment in the sector and define the specific lines of activities that will be supported through the Program. Most importantly, several lines of action of the Belize Teacher Education and Development Strategy will be implemented; the Visible and Tangible Math methodology will be brought to scale; and recommendations on school accountability will be followed through. In addition to the already undertaken sector work, the following technical work will be conducted during project preparation and initial implementation: (i) a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed investment; (ii) mapping of business processes to be automated through the EMIS; (iii) development of a Program Operation Manual; (iv) sample design for the on-site professional development and principal training; and (v) international project management support to the execution unit. To ensure widespread support for the Program, the MOEYS has undertaken extensive stakeholder consultations with TEIs, primary and secondary education principals, school managing authorities, students, PTAs, and the Belize National Teachers Union. The proposed Program is aligned with the IDB Country Strategy with Belize (2013-2017) (GN-2567). The strategy identifies education quality as a priority area of the Bank. The proposed Program is also in line with the objectives of the Ninth Capital Increase (GCI-9) to lend to small and vulnerable countries and lending for poverty reduction and equity enhancement; and with the IDB Strategy on Social Development (GN-2241-1).

IV. SAFEGUARDS AND FIDUCIARY SCREENING

- 4.1 Based on the guidelines of the Environment and Safeguards Compliance Policy (GN-2208), the operation is classified as category "C" as it is not expected to generate any negative environmental and/or social impacts (see [Annex II](#) and [Annex III](#)). Based on the fiduciary risks in the project risk matrix ([Appendix II](#)), the Bank's procurement and fiduciary policies and practices will be followed.

V. RESOURCES AND TIMETABLE

- 5.1 [Annex IV](#) provides details of technical work undertaken. [Annex V](#) describes the operation preparation steps, the milestone dates, and resources required. Distribution of the POD is scheduled for 24 March 2014, and approval by the Board of Directors on 18 June 2014.

CONFIDENTIAL

¹ The information contained in this Annex is confidential and will not be disclosed. This is in accordance with the "Deliberative Information" exception referred to in paragraph 4.1 (g) of the Access to Information Policy (GN-1831-28) at the Inter-American Development Bank.

SAFEGUARD POLICY FILTER REPORT

PROJECT DETAILS	
IDB Sector	EDUCATION
Type of Operation	Other Lending or Financing Instrument
Additional Operation Details	
Investment Checklist	Generic Checklist
Team Leader	Naslund-Hadley, Emma Ingrid (EMMAN@iadb.org)
Project Title	Education Quality Improvement
Project Number	BL-L1018
Safeguard Screening Assessor(s)	Naslund-Hadley, Emma Ingrid (EMMAN@iadb.org)
Assessment Date	2013-10-30

SAFEGUARD POLICY FILTER RESULTS		
Type of Operation	Loan Operation	
Safeguard Policy Items Identified (Yes)	The Bank will make available to the public the relevant Project documents.	(B.01) Access to Information Policy– OP-102
	The operation is in compliance with environmental, specific women’s rights, gender, and indigenous laws and regulations of the country where the operation is being implemented (including national obligations established under ratified Multilateral Environmental Agreements).	(B.02)
	The operation (including associated facilities) is screened and classified according to their potential environmental impacts.	(B.03)
	The Bank will monitor the executing agency/borrower’s compliance with all safeguard requirements stipulated in the loan agreement and project operating or credit regulations.	(B.07)
Potential Safeguard Policy Items(?)	No potential issues identified	
Recommended Action:	Operation has triggered 1 or more Policy Directives; please refer to appropriate Directive(s). Complete Project Classification Tool. Submit Safeguard Policy Filter Report, PP (or equivalent) and Safeguard Screening Form to ESR.	
Additional Comments:		

ASSESSOR DETAILS	
Name of person who completed screening:	Naslund-Hadley, Emma Ingrid (EMMAN@iadb.org)
Title:	
Date:	2013-11-19

SAFEGUARD SCREENING FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	
IDB Sector	EDUCATION-TEACHER EDUCATION &EFFECTIVENESS
Type of Operation	Other Lending or Financing Instrument
Additional Operation Details	
Country	BELIZE
Project Status	
Investment Checklist	Generic Checklist
Team Leader	Naslund-Hadley, Emma Ingrid (EMMAN@iadb.org)
Project Title	Education Quality Improvement
Project Number	BL-L1018
Safeguard Screening Assessor(s)	Naslund-Hadley, Emma Ingrid (EMMAN@iadb.org)
Assessment Date	2013-11-19

PROJECT CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY			
Project Category:	C	Override Rating:	Override Justification:
			Comments:
Conditions/ Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No environmental assessment studies or consultations are required for Category "C" operations. Some Category "C" operations may require specific safeguard or monitoring requirements (Policy Directive B.3).Where relevant, these operations will establish safeguard, or monitoring requirements to address environmental and other risks (social, disaster, cultural, health and safety etc.). The Project Team must send the PP (or equivalent) containing the Environmental and Social Strategy (the requirements for an ESS are described in the Environment Policy Guideline: Directive B.3) as well as the Safeguard Policy Filter and Safeguard Screening Form Reports. 		

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS/RISKS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS	
Identified Impacts/Risks	Potential Solutions

DISASTER RISK SUMMARY	
Disaster Risk Category:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low
Disaster/ Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific Disaster Risk Management is required.

ASSESSOR DETAILS	
Name of person who completed screening:	Naslund-Hadley, Emma Ingrid (EMMAN@iadb.org)
Title:	
Date:	2013-11-19

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

I. BASIC DATA

Project Name:	Education Quality Improvement Program		
Project Number:	BL-L1018		
Project Team:	Emma Näslund-Hadley, Team Leader, Analía Jaimovich and Livia Mueller (SCL/EDU); Juanita Riaño and Marianela López-Galdos (OII/OII); Mauricio García Moreno and Alejandro Pareja (IDF/ICS); Jorge Luis Gonzáles (FMP/CCR); Jane Chow (CID/CBL); Paula Louis-Grant (FMP/CBA); Andrés Consuegra (LEG/SGO); and Alejandro Cruz (consultant).		
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Financial Plan:	IDB:	US\$	10.0 million
	Local (in kind):	US\$	100,000.00
	Total:	US\$	10.1 million
Safeguards:	Policies triggered:	None	
	Classification:	Category “C”	

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The overall objective of the operation is to improve the quality of primary education, and the governance of the Belize education system. This will be achieved through investments in the training of school principals and teachers and design and implementation of a quality assurance system for the education system as a whole.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RISKS AND IMPACTS

- 3.1 There are no environmental or social risks associated with the activities outlined in this operation. In accordance with the results of the "*Safeguards Policy Filter Report*," it is proposed that the transaction be classified as category "C" (see [Annex II](#)).

INDEX FOR COMPLETED AND PROPOSED SECTOR WORK

Topic	Description	Estimated Dates	References and Electronic Links
Country Priorities	National Education Strategy 2011-2016	Complete	Ministry of Education Belize (2012). Improving access, quality and governance of education in Belize
Education Sector Diagnostic	Education Sector Assessment	Complete	Näslund-Hadley, Emma et. Al. (2013). Challenges and Opportunities in the Belize Education Sector
	GOB Teacher Education Strategy Framework	Complete	*
	Teacher Training Institutes	Complete	*
	Institutional Assessment of the Education System	Complete	*
	Belize Education Monograph	April 2014	N/A
	Teachers in Belize	April 2014	N/A
	Project Design	Operation Manual and Terms of Reference	March 2014
Mapping of business processes to be automated through the EMIS		April 2014	N/A
Economic Analysis	Cost benefit analysis of the proposed investments	March 2014	N/A
External Validity	Impact evaluation of Visible and Tangible Math Model	March 2014	N/A

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