

# PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID) CONCEPT STAGE

Report No.: PIDC2635

<b>Project Name</b>	DO Education Quality Project (P146831)
<b>Region</b>	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN
<b>Country</b>	Dominican Republic
<b>Sector(s)</b>	General education sector (70%), Public administration- Education (20%), Pre-primary education (10%)
<b>Theme(s)</b>	Education for all (100%)
<b>Lending Instrument</b>	Investment Project Financing
<b>Project ID</b>	P146831
<b>Borrower(s)</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>Implementing Agency</b>	Oficina de Cooperación Internacional
<b>Environmental Category</b>	C-Not Required
<b>Date PID Prepared/ Updated</b>	13-Jan-2014
<b>Date PID Approved/ Disclosed</b>	13-Jan-2014
<b>Estimated Date of Appraisal Completion</b>	15-May-2014
<b>Estimated Date of Board Approval</b>	15-Jul-2014
<b>Concept Review Decision</b>	Track II - The review did authorize the preparation to continue

## I. Introduction and Context

### Country Context

Despite rapid growth over the past few decades, the Dominican Republic continues to experience high levels of poverty and inequality. Between 2000 and 2010, Dominican GDP grew at an average rate of 5.2 percent, almost fifty percent higher than the average growth rate for Latin America over the same period (3.5 percent), leading to strong, sustained convergence with the rest of the region. Despite this sustained growth, however, poverty has risen over the last ten years. In 2010, 40 percent of the country's population was living in moderate poverty, up from 32 percent in 2000, and above the average for the region. Over the same period, inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, has reduced only slightly, from 0.51 in 2000 to 0.48 in 2010, a reduction equivalent to only half of that experienced across the rest of the region.

Low quality education contributes to the weak links between growth and equity observed in the Dominican Republic. Parental education explains a quarter of the uneven distribution of

opportunities as measured by the Human Opportunity Index, limiting children's human capital, their labor market productivity, and thus their ability to share in the benefits of growth. The education system is not fulfilling its potential role an instrument for fostering equality of opportunities. Moreover, the inadequately educated workforce is cited as being one of the largest obstacles to doing business in the DR, limiting its future growth potential (Global Competitiveness Report, 2011-2012). Improved education is thus critical to promoting a virtuous cycle of growth, shared prosperity, and poverty reduction in the country.

Achieving shared prosperity through investing in human capital is at the heart of the Government's strategy. The National Development Strategy for 2010-2030 aims to establish "a culture of planning and public policy actions with a long term vision for developing the country, overcoming poverty and increasing the welfare of the Dominican population." Human development plays a key role within this Strategy, as embodied in the second of its four axes, "a society with equal rights and opportunities, education, health, housing and quality basic services."

### **Sectoral and Institutional Context**

The Dominican education system is managed by a complex set of institutions, resulting in policies that are implemented unevenly, and seldom evaluated. The sector is governed by two separate ministries of education: the Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic (MINERD), and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology (MESCyT). The first is responsible for the service delivery of public pre-university education, and has a governance role over all pre-university schools (both public and private). MESCyT is responsible for regulating higher education, including courses related to pre-service teacher training. In addition, there are several agencies with differing levels of autonomy under MINERD that are responsible for implementing teacher policies, mainly with regards to training: the Salomé Ureña Teacher Training Institute (ISFODOSU), the National Institute of Teacher Training and Education (INAFOCAM), and the Dominican Institute of Research and Evaluation (IDEICE). The result is a complex landscape of actors responsible for managing the education system, specifically designing, implementing, and evaluating education policies.

The early childhood development (ECD) sectors face similar institutional and governance challenges. The Government's flagship program Quisqueya Empieza Contigo (QEC) is being designed by the General Directorate of Special Programs of the Presidency (DIGEPEP). Under the plan, the bulk of the service provision for children 0-4 will be passed on to the MINERD, representing a new mandate for them. To regulate the provision of ECD services under QEC, the National Institute of Comprehensive Care for Early Childhood (Instituto Nacional de Atención Integral a la Primera Infancia - INAIPI) will be created, under the umbrella of the MINERD. This new institution would need to operate in harmony with the other levels of the education system (especially primary), as well as across other sectors (especially health).

Despite significant gains in access to education over the past decade, challenges to the quality of services offered persist, thereby impeding student learning, and resulting in one of the poorest performing systems in the region. An aggressive construction policy has greatly expanded coverage at all levels since 2004. Net enrollment rates are now 36 percent in preschool education (0-5 years of age, and compulsory for children aged 5 in preparation for their entrance into basic education), 89 percent in basic education (grades 1-8), and 62 percent in secondary education (grades 9-12). Aside from the low enrollment rates at preschool and secondary levels, the system has low internal efficiency, and poor student learning outcomes. According to regional student assessments,

Dominican students ranked last among test takers, performing well below regional averages in all subject areas (SERCE, 2006). Even students from upper income quintiles, while performing considerably better than poorer students, performed badly relative to similar socio-economic groups in other countries. An average of 78 percent of third-grade students did not achieve a basic level of competence in reading. Scores in mathematics were worse, with 90 percent of students performing below the basic level. This stands in sharp contrast to comparable countries such as Costa Rica (12% in reading and 27% in mathematics) and the regional average (33% in reading and 46% in mathematics).

There are four key constraints to the system's poor performance: poorly prepared teachers, poorly used diagnostic data, lack of school readiness, and weaknesses in institutional capacity at all levels of the system. First, an education system cannot outperform the quality of its teaching corps, and the Dominican Republic is no different. A recent survey of mathematics teachers conducted by IDEICE revealed that only a minority of teachers (45 percent) were able to correctly answer 50 percent or more of questions related to the content they are supposed to be teaching (IDEICE, 2013). This is the result of a series of policy failures starting with the setting of teacher standards, the selection and recruitment of teachers, through to their training, promotion, and evaluation. The situation is made even more urgent given that demographic trends and the policy toward full-time schools will result in an estimated 10,000 additional teachers being recruited in the coming years. Second, although student assessments exist for grades 8 and 12, they are not used to identify learning gaps or diagnose system challenges, let alone design corrective action at the school level. What is more, since the first snapshot of how students are performing is not until grade 8, it is often too late to address the fundamental weaknesses around reading instruction and early math. Third, the lack of early childhood development (ECD) services results in low school readiness for the majority of students, especially those coming from poorer backgrounds. Finally, the institutional management of the sector is weak, characterized by an overly centralized system, duplicating efforts at various levels, using outdated processes, and with no clear mechanisms to make schools accountable to the community nor the MINERD for the quality of education (PREAL, 2010).

A number of government initiatives have been launched to bring about a broad reform of the education sector, starting with a doubling of the education budget to make change happen. This financial commitment to the sector is the clearest evidence of the political will behind the needed transformation of the sector. The main programs that this is expected to finance are: i) eliminating illiteracy; ii) improving curriculum and teacher training/development; iii) increasing the length of the school day (including student feeding programs); iv) modernizing the institutional framework by giving more responsibility to schools; and v) building new classrooms and rehabilitating existing ones. These priorities are aligned with and have been informed by the *Iniciativa Dominicana por una Educación de Calidad (IDEC)*, a process developed to bring all active donors in the education sector, the private sector, and civil society together to put forth recommendations for the implementation of education policies. With the technical consensus having been reached through IDEC, the government has now embarked on a political process known as the *Pacto Educativo*, consisting of a series of meetings with different parts of society (including teachers unions) with the objective of a broad endorsement across sections of society and transcending political parties on the way to solve the issues that impede reform in the education sector.

There are several international partners supporting MINERD in the design and implementation of these programs. The European Union jointly with the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) provides direct budget support, technical assistance and

capacity building in the education sector and looks to address quality issues through the creation of a quality monitoring and evaluation system. The Inter-American Development Bank provides continued financing and technical assistance in support of the 10-Year Education Plan, primarily focusing on the expansion of the full-time school model which would increase the school day by about 3 hours. The program aims to improve the performance and efficiency of primary and secondary education, to expand school infrastructure through the creation of “mirror schools” located on the same premise or near existing schools to accommodate the extended schedule, and to improve reading comprehension, writing and math skills in the first four elementary school grades. Other active partners are UNICEF (focusing on quality of basic education), USAID (early grade reading), the French Development Agency (higher education student loans), and the Cuban government (technical assistance for literacy campaign). Under the coordination of MINERD, these efforts complement the proposed areas of support under this operation.

### **Relationship to CAS**

The World Bank Group's Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) (Report No. 49620, discussed at the Board on August 12, 2009) is designed around four pillars that are closely aligned with the National Development Plan and the focus of the proposed Project: i) strengthen social cohesion and improve access to and quality of social services, ii) promote competitiveness in a sustainable and resilient economic environment, iii) enhance quality of public expenditure and institutional development, and iv) build capacity and constituencies for reform. The proposed Project would contribute primarily to results under Pillar 1 of the CPS. By putting in place the necessary conditions at the system level to increase the quality of education, the Project aims to boost labor productivity. In the long term this would increase growth and make it more sustainable, in addition to raising income levels. Moreover, by providing individuals with the income and skills that make them more adaptable and resilient to economic shocks, the Project would also support Pillar 2. Finally, the Project contributes to the realization of Pillar 3 and 4 through the overarching goal of enhancing the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Education.

## **II. Proposed Development Objective(s)**

### **Proposed Development Objective(s) (From PCN)**

The proposed Project Development Objective is to support the Dominican Government in improving the management of the education system by: (a) improving teacher policies, (b) developing a comprehensive evaluation system, (c) strengthening the quality assurance of Early Childhood Development services, and (d) enhancing the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Education.

### **Key Results (From PCN)**

- (i) Percentage of new teachers recruited under a new competitive and selective system.
- (ii) Application of new student assessment in grade 4 and dissemination of school-level results.
- (iii) Percentage of new ECD centers certified for quality in service delivery.
- (iv) Percentage of schools and districts being externally audited for the quality of their service provision and their use of financial resources.

## **III. Preliminary Description**

### **Concept Description**

Project Concept: The proposed Project would support the Dominican Government in implementing key priority policies that will improve the management of the education system. The policy areas to

be supported are those elements most linked to improving the quality of education: teacher policies that aim to bring the maximum talent to the classroom, student assessments that would identify the specifics that need to be improved and track progress, quality assurance mechanisms for ECD services, as well as institutional modernization to improve the efficiency of the day-to-day functioning of the system. As such, the Project aims to put in place the necessary conditions at the system-level for improving education quality, at a critical juncture where much needed increased investment and substantial expansion of supply are coinciding with broad-based civil society support for meaningful education reform.

Proposed instrument: The proposed loan instrument would be a Specific Investment Loan, in the amount of US\$50 million. Preliminary discussions have led to a Project structure consisting of two components. The first component would be results-based, and would disburse against Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs) consisting of implementation progress and performance targets agreed with the government and related to the four priority areas discussed above. DLI targets would be in line with the existing national education policy documents, and would have a set value. Achievement of the DLI targets would then determine the amount to be disbursed, and disbursements would be scheduled once or twice a year. Component 2 would disburse according to traditional methods, and would finance goods, consultant services, and non-consultant services relating to the carrying out of the requisite technical cooperation for each priority policy area.

#### Component One: Supporting Results Required for Improved Education Management (US\$40 Million)

The objective of this component would be to support the Dominican Government in enhancing the management of the education system, a precondition to improving the quality of education. Priority policy areas that have been identified as key to this transformation are:

##### (i) Improving Teacher Policies

Among the programs that the Dominican Republic plans to implement as part of a comprehensive re-conception of the teaching career to improve the quality of education are: a) improved quality of entering teachers through more rigorous selection of applicants to teacher training institutions, the application of training standards, and changes in the pedagogical and subject-specific contents of curricula, b) the professionalization of the teaching career, using evaluation, induction and certification processes as tools to make the career both attractive and challenging, c) a system of in-service training and professional development for different education levels and curricular areas, responding to needs emphasized by schools, and d) training of school directors to develop true pedagogical leaders as well as administrative managers.

The envisaged outcome of this sub-component at the end of the project is a teacher policy framework that would make the teaching profession more attractive and challenging, including revised and endorsed standards, with clear expectations in at least some areas such as pre-service training, in-service training, directors' training, and informed by students' performance in national assessments. The Project would support results in a subset (one or more) of the above areas – with DLIs reflecting progressive implementation results in the selected areas.

##### (ii) Developing a Comprehensive Evaluation System

The proposed activities around strengthening the evaluation system are concentrated in three areas: a) student assessment, b) school assessment, and c) institutional and technical capacity strengthening. This subcomponent would include a cross-cutting focus on improving the use of data generated to inform educational practices, for example, by determining institutional improvement plans, the supply of training programs, and the content of education materials etc.

The envisaged outcome of this sub-component is a functioning evaluation system, with capable staff, that provides useful information about the performance of primary and secondary students. In addition, more detailed information about school characteristics would be available to inform decision making (eg. training, school administrative functioning, academic improvement plans, content of educational materials, etc). Results for this component could include the online publication and dissemination of national assessment results for a proportion of school districts, the use of assessments data for school improvement plans, and the design, production, and dissemination of reports using data from TERCE-2013 and PISA-2015.

### (iii) Strengthening the quality assurance of ECD Institutions

Priority areas to support the strengthening of ECD quality assurance include: a) the design of a pre-service training and professional development system for human resources under the Quizqueya Empieza Contigo program, b) the development of an information and communications strategy with the dual aims of maximizing public understanding of the program and improving parenting practices, and c) the organizational design and institutional strengthening of the National Institute of Comprehensive Care for Early Childhood (Instituto Nacional de Atención Integral a la Primera Infancia - INAPI), including the development of its quality management and certification strategy.

The envisaged outcome of this sub-component is a system of ECD quality assurance mechanisms that evaluates the quality of services against standards. The activities mentioned above would produce results such as 5,000 teachers trained and certified for pre-primary grades according to quality standards and a percentage of ECD centers providing quality service according to the standards of service delivery.

### (iv) Enhancing the Institutional Capacity of the Ministry of Education

Priority areas for improving institutional capacity include: a) supporting the decentralization of Ministry functions and resources by increasing the proportion of the education budget transferred to regional and district-level school boards, and training school directors and board members in the execution of these funds, as well as carefully monitoring their use, and b) strengthening the Ministry's human resources system for both teaching and administrative staff.

The envisaged outcome of this sub-component is a system that allows the MINERD to fully understand how its financial and human resources are being used, in order to inform the ongoing decentralization process. Activities under this sub-component would lead to: a higher percentage of the MINERD's budget to be transferred to district and school boards, a number of schools and districts being externally audited for the quality of their service provision and their use of resources, and the production and dissemination of a report where the Human Resources System is used to help identify savings, and reallocate personnel and financial resources.

Component Two: Technical Cooperation on Priority Education Policies (US\$10 Million)

This component would provide technical cooperation to the Ministry of Education and other system actors that support the technical development and implementation of policies. Specifically, the technical cooperation agenda would help the actors in the system achieve the strategic targets known as DLIs. For each of the chosen policy areas and associated targets, the technical assistance would support the critical pathways, resolving the bottlenecks that would lead to the achievement of the DLIs. Examples of such technical cooperation activities in each policy area include, among others: i) an evaluation of a representative sample of teachers in terms of both content and pedagogical knowledge, to identify weak areas in which teacher training should focus its improvements, ii) inputs to ensure the continuity and comparability of national assessments over time and the dissemination and use of evaluation results to inform other priority areas for the improvement of education quality (e.g. teacher training, development of education materials, etc.), iii) the organization of workshops on topics such as the formation, training and audit of school boards, or the LAC experience with full-time schools, and iv) the drafting of an institutional framework of the INAIPI. In addition this component would include the design and implementation of two impact evaluations (IEs): one IE of the Government's extended school day program, and another of the impact of teacher training programs on student learning as measured by results in national student assessments.

#### IV. Safeguard Policies that might apply

<b>Safeguard Policies Triggered by the Project</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>TBD</b>
Environmental Assessment OP/BP 4.01		✗	
Natural Habitats OP/BP 4.04		✗	
Forests OP/BP 4.36		✗	
Pest Management OP 4.09		✗	
Physical Cultural Resources OP/BP 4.11		✗	
Indigenous Peoples OP/BP 4.10		✗	
Involuntary Resettlement OP/BP 4.12		✗	
Safety of Dams OP/BP 4.37		✗	
Projects on International Waterways OP/BP 7.50		✗	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP/BP 7.60		✗	

#### V. Financing (in USD Million)

Total Project Cost:	50.00	Total Bank Financing:	50.00
Financing Gap:	0.00		
<b>Financing Source</b>			<b>Amount</b>
Borrower			0.00
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development			50.00
Total			50.00

#### VI. Contact point

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