



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

EASTERN CARIBBEAN

COUNTRY PROFILE



Families and friends of youths graduating from the USAID-sponsored Caribbean Youth Empowerment Program gather at a church for graduation ceremonies.

EASTERN CARIBBEAN SNAPSHOT

USAID-assisted countries: Antigua & Barbuda, The Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines

OVERVIEW

The Eastern Caribbean program of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) supports development assistance activities in the six independent states of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) plus Barbados. For the past several years the program has focused on promoting economic growth through an improved business and investment climate, helping governments and the private sector compete in the global marketplace, combating HIV/AIDS, and protecting fragile ecosystems.

A new development assistance strategy for the years 2011-2015 will continue the fight against HIV/AIDS, but will also contain new initiatives to create employment opportunities for youth and to assist the island nations in adapting to the effects of climate change.

Programs

Economic Growth

The focus of USAID's economic growth program has been to help position the countries of the region to succeed economically in their new, open, and competitive trade environment. Assistance has included supporting governments in attracting more foreign and domestic investment through the establishment of investment promotion bodies and streamlined administrative functions and helping private sector firms to become more competitive and export-oriented. Other goals included strengthening the legal and environmental frameworks related to open trade and introducing new approaches to natural disaster risk reduction. Through a Global Development Alliance partnership, USAID also worked with specialty agricultural commodity growers in two countries to improve their productivity and expand their regional and U.S. exports by using sound market intelligence, agronomic and production technology packages, and integrated pest management systems.

Biodiversity conservation has also been an important element of USAID's program with an emphasis on collaborating with governments and civil society to identify and mitigate the impacts of human disturbance on ecosystems and to improve the institutional framework and local capacity for managing protected areas.

Recent initiatives will focus on strengthening the ability of the region's youth to enter the job market through workforce development projects and activities that create other economic opportunities. This shift in program focus, which has already begun on a pilot project basis in several OECS countries, has a particular emphasis on youth who are at risk of dropping out from being productive assets to society, by empowering them to move into the workforce through engagement and preparation.

Climate Change

USAID will also shift its environment program to focus on adaptation measures to climate change through addressing three critical areas: coastal



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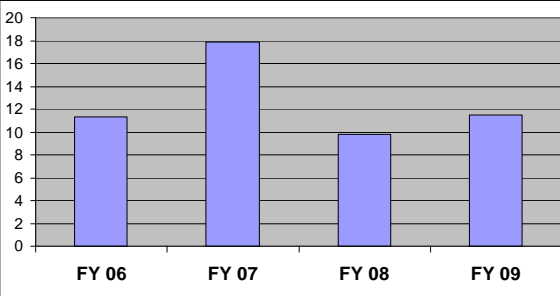
zone management, freshwater resources management, and improved land use policies to protect mangroves, watersheds, and other catchment areas from degradation and destruction. These issues have been identified as priorities by national governments in the Eastern Caribbean, by regional organizations, and by other donors. Technical assistance support will be provided to relevant government agencies to ensure that climate change is better integrated into national development planning. The private sector, non-governmental organizations, and local communities will be integrated into the process to ensure they are prepared for and able to adapt to the impact of climate change. The ability of small, vulnerable island states to address these challenges through appropriate adaptive actions will prove much more cost effective than dealing with later environmental damage.

Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI)

USAID expects to use funding from the new Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) to augment its youth-related activities, especially in the areas of remedial education program and juvenile justice. The CBSI will advance and reinforce the efforts already underway to further secure the Caribbean region through improved cooperative relationships by substantially reducing illicit trafficking, advance public safety and security, and promote social justice.

HIV/AIDS

USAID's current HIV/AIDS strategy focuses on expanding access and improving the quality of prevention, care, and treatment, and improving the availability and use of accurate and reliable information on HIV/AIDS while expanding access to risk reduction behavior change interventions in target countries. In the next few years, USAID's HIV/AIDS program will come under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR-II) and be implemented through a new Caribbean Regional Partnership Framework. The Framework is a U.S. Government interagency collaboration with twelve Caribbean national and regional partners, in which the U.S. agencies and the Caribbean stakeholders jointly develop future HIV/AIDS programs. Through the Partnership Framework, USAID and its interagency partners will receive significant new funding to work with Caribbean regional entities and selected host countries to jointly provide integrated prevention, care, and treatment programs. At the end of this strategic Regional Partnership Framework's five-year time frame, in addition to positive advances in the prevention, care, and treatment of HIV/AIDS, Caribbean governments and regional HIV/AIDS entities will be better positioned to sustainably address the epidemic over the long-term.



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