



## Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

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### Education for All 2015 National Review

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# St. Vincent and the Grenadines Education For All 2015 Review



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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ACE	Adult and Continuing Education
ALBA	Bolivarian Alliance of the People of Our America
CAPE	Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CCSLC	Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CEE	Common Entrance Examination
CEO	Chief Education Officer
CSEC	Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate
CVQ	Caribbean Vocational Qualifications
CXC	Caribbean Examinations Council
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EFA	Education for All
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GOSVG	Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NQD	National Qualifications Department

NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SLE	School Leaving Examination
SVGCC	St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UWI	University of the West Indies

## Section I: Introduction

### 1.1.1 Introduction

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has made significant progress in education during the last two decades. The government has been committed to the implementation of regional and international strategies including the implementation of the goals and strategies of Education For all (EFA) coming out from the Dakar Framework for Action 2000. This report highlights the challenges, the progress made, and the lessons learnt with implementation of the goals of EFA. It will also focus on the issues and challenges that would emerge 2015 and beyond. As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) with limited natural resources, education has been identified as the vehicle that would drive citizens out of poverty so that they can secure better lives for themselves and their family members. Poverty reduction continues to be given great significance in the government's development thrust. In 2001, the medium to long term plan includes accelerating the economic process, building up the human capital base and poverty reduction and prevention.

In the year 2000, several countries at their meeting in Dakar agreed and give their commitment towards achieving the six EFA Goals by the year 2015. The six EFA Goals listed below and on the next page juxtaposed neatly with the ideals of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and its education priorities and strategies. Hence the policies and programmes implemented were strategically targeted in addressing and achieving the stated EFA Goals. The six EFA Goals include:

**Goal 1:** Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

**Goal 2:** Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

**Goal 3:** Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

**Goal 4:** Achieving 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

**Goal 5:** Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015, achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

**Goal 6:** Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measureable learning outcomes are achieved by all especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.



## 1.1 Geography and background context

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is an independent archipelagic State in the Eastern Caribbean. The country is comprised of a main island, St. Vincent, and a chain of 32 islands and cays, the Grenadines, of which only seven are inhabited- Bequia, Mustique, Canouan, Mayreau, Union Island, Palm Island and Petit St. Vincent. The total area of the country is 150 sq. miles (389Km<sup>2</sup>) of which the main island is 133 sq. miles (344 Km<sup>2</sup>). The country lies approximately 61<sup>o</sup> west and 13<sup>o</sup> north; it lies approximately 1,508 miles (2,427 km) south of Miami, Florida, 415 miles (667 km) north of Venezuela and 109 miles (175 km) east of Barbados.

The country has a territorial sea of 12 nautical miles and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf of 200 nautical miles. The marine space is over 70 times the land area. The terrain of the main island and several of the Grenadines is mountainous, with a forest cover of between 25 and 30 percent.

The country is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) with all the inherent challenges, such as a narrow economic base and high vulnerability to external shocks and natural disasters. According to the United Nations Human Development Report ranking, St. Vincent and the Grenadines is recorded as having High Human Development. In the past, St. Vincent and the Grenadines relied almost exclusively on agriculture, but within recent times, tourism and related services, construction and other sectors have become increasingly important as contributors to the national economy.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines attained political independence from Great Britain on the 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1979 and inherited a Westminster Parliamentary system of government. The country is a Commonwealth member and is a founding member of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), whose members have a common currency and some common institutions (such as in civil aviation and the judiciary). On the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, 2010, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, along with the other OCES member countries, signed the OECS Economic Union Treaty, thereby becoming a single

economic and financial space. The country is also a member of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market. Members of CARICOM have functional cooperation areas of trade negotiations, health, education, security and in the coordination of foreign policy. Following political independence in 1979, St. Vincent and the Grenadines became a member of various international organisations, including the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the United Nations (UN). The country also has membership in several other regional and international organisations including the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Organisation of American States (OAS), the Community of States of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAC), and Bolivarian Alliance of the People of Our America (ALBA), Spanish the Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra America.

### 1.1.2 Demographic factors

Based on the 2001 Population and Housing Census Report, the population of St. Vincent and the Grenadines stood at 106,253. This represented a 0.2 percent decline from the previous census of 1991 of 106,499 persons. In 2001, the largest single group of the population (30.7%) was children under 15 years of age. Additionally, the sex ratio was 1:1.02, i.e., for every 100 females, there were 102 males. Subsequent mid-year estimates indicate that the total population declined by an average annual rate of 0.9 percent to 100,892 persons in 2009. These declines are attributable to an average annual reduction in the birth rate 1.9 percent, accompanied by adverse net migration. Within every age group, with the exception of those 65 years and over, there were more males than females. The preliminary data for the 2012 census estimate the population at around 109,550 which is comprised of 55,339 males and 54,151 females.

### 1.1.3 Economic Review

In 2000 St. Vincent and the Grenadines Real Domestic Product was estimated at EC\$1.07 billion. It subsequently expanded at average annual rate of 2.7 percent. During this period, the major performers were communications, mining and quarrying, transport, and other services. Manufacturing and education experienced average negative growth while agriculture realised growth rates of 0.5 percent. In 2001, the economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines registered real growth of 1.8 percent. Thereafter, the economy continued to realise positive real growth up to 2008, with 2005 being the lowest (2.8%) and 2003 being the highest (7.6%). The performance in 2003 was influenced by a positive spill-off from the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector as well as activities in the hotel and restaurant and construction sectors. There was another peak in 2006 (6.0%), fuelled by activities in the

financial intermediation, communication, hotels and restaurants, government services, wholesale and retail trade, transportation and construction sectors.

In 2008, St. Vincent and the Grenadines was affected by the global economic fallout. As a result, there was negative growth of 0.6 percent. Several sectors were adversely affected, resulting in declines. These include construction (10.3%), hotels and restaurant (5.5%) and agriculture (4.1%). Despite the adverse economic climate, some sectors still grew. These are public administration, defence, and compulsory social security (8.0 %), private household employment (9.4%), wholesale and retail trade (3.9%), communications (1.8%), mining and quarrying (5.1%), real estate and housing (2.1%) and health and social work (5.4%).

The economic turmoil continued into 2009 as the economy experienced negative growth at 2.3 percent. The major contributors to the contraction were hotels and restaurants which declined by 22.1 percent and construction which declined by 8.3%. Manufacturing as well as mining and quarrying also experienced significant declines of 8.6 and 8.3 percent, respectively. Notwithstanding the prevailing economic conditions, some sectors posted positive growth. These included financial intermediation (1.4%), health and social work (4.6%) and agriculture (15.2%) (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2013).

#### 1.1.4 Education

The government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has placed great emphasis on the education and training of its citizens so that they can cope with the new technological environment that is upon us. The mantra of the government is that education should be the centre-piece of our nation's development. In so doing the goal is to provide every citizen with quality education from early childhood to the adult years. The major aim is to have at least one university graduate, on average per household by the year 2025.

The Education System in St. Vincent and the Grenadines modelled closely that of the British System. It has four distinct levels: Pre-primary which caters for children between the ages 3 and 5 years, Primary for students 5 to 11 years, Secondary level for students in the 12 to 16 age group and the Post-secondary/ tertiary level for students who matriculate to that level.

Formal education in St. Vincent and the Grenadines was first offered by the churches. It was not until 1849 that the then Colonial government started assisting with the education of citizens. Today, most of the educational institutions are publicly funded. At present there are 116 privately operated pre-schools and nine public institutions, 68 primary schools of which 11 are government assisted, similarly there are 26 secondary schools of which 7 are government assisted.

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College (SVGCC) is the lone state-owned institution that provides post-secondary/tertiary level certifications. This college is an integrated body which brought together the A Level College, Technical College, Teachers College and the School of Nursing. The Community College has four divisions that include: The Division of Arts, Science and Humanities, Division of Technical and Vocational Education, Division of Nursing Education and Division of Teacher Education. The College is governed by the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College Act

2005 and is managed by a board. The government provides around EC\$12.5 million subvention dollars annually to the college.

The University of the West Indies, Open Campus which is a regional university campus offers several online degree programmes. There are also a number of foreign medical colleges with campuses on the island. These medical colleges cater primarily for foreign students however, there are a few Vincentian students enrolled at some of them. The National Accreditation Unit has started the process of registering all tertiary institutions operating in the country. To date five such institutions have been registered these include: St. James University, Trinity Medical College, All Saints Medical School, National Centre of Technological Innovation Inc. (NCTI) and the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College.

The Adult and Continuing Education Unit, a department in the Ministry of Education is the lead agency in matters related to adult education. The Unit provides support agency for the various organisations and departments that provide adult education. The policy of adult and continuing education is based on principles of equal access for all people to both formal and non-formal education of comparable quality. The country is now divided into nine (9) Adult Educational Zones. Each zone is served by a Zonal Coordinator whose main responsibility is to ensure that the educational needs of adult learners in communities within their various zones are met. Most of the programmes are demand driven and are often free to interested persons. ACE has been offering programmes in Basic Computing, Agro-processing, Garment Construction, Food Preparation, Pottery, Screen Printing and other programmes from time to time . In the period 2008-2011 between 438 to 1839 persons per year were enrolled in various ACE programmes throughout the State.

The Ministry of Education is charged with the responsibility of setting educational policy, regulations and standards and with monitoring the sector to ensure that standards are observed. The Minister of Education heads, a senior management team which includes the Permanent Secretary (PS), who is responsible for administration, planning and finance, and the Chief Education Officer (CEO), who oversees the

management of schools and curriculum development. The CEO has overarching responsibility for the 'professional' side of education delivery. This ranges from pre-school to tertiary education, from formal to informal. The CEO is assisted by a cadre of senior education officers, education officers, co-ordinators and principals.

Over the years, several legislations, regulations and policies have been passed to strengthen the management and administration of the education system. In 1992 the 1937 Ordinance was repealed with the passage of the Education Act 1992. This was the first major education act to be passed in fifty five years. This was followed by the passages of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Community College Act 2005, the Further and Higher Education (Accreditation) Act 2006 and the Education Act 2006. The latter has not been proclaimed as yet thus the Education Act of 1992 is still the Act that governs the Education System. The Education Regulations 2014 and the Early Childhood Education Services Regulations 2014 have been drafted and will become legal document once the Education Act 2006 is proclaimed.

The Educational thrust dubbed the 'Education Revolution' has seen significant investments in education. Over EC\$1.9 billion dollars have been invested in this sector during the last twelve years. The huge outlays of money have been expended to improve the physical environment of many school plants and new schools have been built in Barrouallie, Fairhall, West St. George, Edinboro and on the Grenadines Islands of Bequia and Union Island. The principal focus of the 'Education Revolution' has been to improve access to education from early childhood to tertiary level and to improve the quality and relevance of educational outcomes. These reform initiatives were financed by a combination of grant, loans and credit from several donors and multilateral lending agencies, including the European Union (EU), the World Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines (GOSVG).

## St. Vincent and Grenadines Education for All 2015 Review

<b>Central Government's Budgetary Allocation to Education -2000-2014 (\$ Million)</b>														
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Recurrent Budget allocated to Education	53.9	56.8	55.8	57.1	60.5	63.9	65.4	73.3	84.0	98.2	104.3	106.7	106.2	109.3
Capital Budget allocated to Education	19.5	23.2	24.9	20.4	21.5	30.5	23.9	28.8	42.5	24.3	25.3	33.2	36.1	30.0
Total Budget allocated to Education	73.3	80.1	80.6	77.6	81.9	94.4	89.3	102.1	126.5	122.5	129.6	139.7	142.3	139.3
Total Budget allocation	424.1	437.7	419.5	459.8	483.5	587.1	581.0	630.1	757.4	750.9	913.5	786.5	793.9	799.1
Percentage of Total Budget allocation	17.3	18.3	19.2	16.9	16.9	16.1	15.4	16.2	16.7	16.9	14.2	17.8	17.0	17.4

**Table 1. Ministry of Education Budgetary Allocation 2000-2013**

Besides the improvement of the physical school plants much emphasis has been placed on teacher training and professional development. Prior to 2001, less than ten primary teachers had a bachelor's degree, today close to two hundred primary schools teachers are qualified with a bachelor's degree or higher. The government provided and continues to provide many scholarships, bursaries and grants to teachers and other citizens to access university level training; through scholarships tenable at universities all over the world including, Cuba, Venezuela, Mexico, Taiwan, Malaysia, United Kingdom, Austria, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, Morocco, and USA (Gonsalves, 2010). The government has also expanded the student loan programme thus making it easier for teachers and other citizens to further their tertiary education.

### **Number of Primary Teachers With Degrees 2013-2014**

Male	Female	Total
19	143	162

**Table 2 Number of Primary Teachers with Degrees 2013-2014**

St, Vincent and the Grenadines continues to make sizeable investment in Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Education. It is one of the few countries in the Caribbean to start a 'One Laptop per Child Initiative' at the primary level. This programme which was unveiled in 2010 saw the distribution of fifteen thousand laptop computers to primary students and their teachers in 2011. The second phase of the



programme which commenced in July of 2014 involved the distribution of twelve thousand five hundred ACERS Laptops to all secondary students and their teachers. This programme is complemented with the provision of high speed wireless broadband internet access at all educational institutions.

Based on evaluations of various interventions conducted with support from central government, bilateral and multilateral donors, there is evidence to indicate that significant successes have been registered within the education sector of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These include expanded access to education across all levels of the education system, particularly in the area of secondary education where we were able to achieve universal access to secondary education in September of 2005. Given that access to quality education is a right, the government continues to implement strategies and programmes aimed at lifting the quality of education at all levels.

## SECTION II

### Main EFA challenges in 2000 and targets for 2015

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has made steady progress in education since the beginning of the 1990s. This section of the report examines the main challenges faced in 2000 as the country moved towards identifying the priorities and strategies in addressing the six goals of Education for All. The evolution of our national ethos, ideology and development strategy has been developed within the context of our position as a member of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the wider CARICOM. Our educational development is guided by regional considerations as well as by overarching national imperatives such as internal efficiency and poverty reduction. The Country Poverty Assessment report 2007-2008 identified general improvement in educational levels as one of its main strategy in its fight against poverty. Despite the economic crisis affecting the world since 2008, the government has remained resolute to its commitment to education and has continuously allocated sizable percentage of the annual national budget to the education sector. It has also supported a number of regional and global initiatives that include but not confined to:

- Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Economic Union;
- OECS Education Sector Strategies (latest being 2012-2021 Strategy)
- CARICOM Single Market and Economy;
- Summit of the Americas Education Agenda;
- Education for All (EFA) Dakar Framework for Action and
- Millennium Development Goal.

Finding the requisite resources to support each of the above-mentioned initiative has proven to be very challenging but the government has been very creative in its budgetary allocation to ensure that its commitments are fulfilled (See Ralph E. Gonsavles & Ministry of Finance, 2007).

## Issues and challenges in 2000

### **Pre-school**

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is recognised as an important foundation of the formal educational process. In 2000, the major issues and challenges were related to the learning environment, access to education, the curriculum, the level of training of teachers, and the nature of the transition from this level to the primary level.

The delivery of pre-school services was led by the private sector, and therefore took place outside of the government. ECE was mostly conducted through church organisations, non-governmental organisations (particularly VINSAVE), community groups, and private initiatives. Together, these catered for about 4010 day-care and pre-school children between the ages of 3 months to 5 years in about 120 registered centres nation-wide. Most of these centres were located in urban and suburban areas; about 75% of rural children had limited access to any form of early childhood education.

### ***Quality***

The quality of pre-school facilities varied enormously.

### ***Staffing***

There were about 345 teachers working in 120 pre-school centres. Although about 80% of these teachers had received some training in pre-school provision, only about one-fifth were certificated. VINSAVE, the main training centre and service provider, was directly responsible for pre-school training, and trained about some 40 pre-school teachers per year.

### **Other issues and challenges**

a) Absence of an appropriate policy and regulatory framework to govern the provision and enhance the delivery of ECE

b) There was limited involvement by government in creating an enabling environment for the delivery of quality ECE services, including registration and monitoring

c) There was no Education Officer or ECE Unit within the MEYS

d) The absence of any formal links between VINSAVE, the main training centre and provider, and the Teacher Training College

e) High staff turnover rates due to poor wage structures and teacher incentives.

f) The geographical spread of pre schools clustered round urban centres. They were not sufficiently dispersed to be within easy reach of all pre-school aged children. Areas where no schools existed were often those where poorer families live, and where children may suffer other disadvantages.

g) There were many reported incidents of families being unable to pay the fees, and so their children were denied regular access to pre-schooling.

## **Primary Education**

### ***Issues and Challenges***

a) A major concern was the performance of students at the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) and School Leaving Examination (SLE), and the criteria on which these examinations were based; overall pass rates were about 33% and less than 10% respectively;

b) Low levels of attendance and achievement among certain vulnerable groups, particularly, males, children of single parents, child guardians (often females), and rural students;

c) Lack of appropriate policy framework regulations and quality standards to ensure that the private sector was in line with Government in the provision of adequate space and related facilities to deliver an effective primary programme and services;

d) Inadequate funds for the maintenance of school buildings and furniture;

e) The need for additional curriculum officers at MEYS to monitor teachers in all primary schools, and to address issues relating to special needs education. In 2000, there are only two Senior Education Officers with responsibility for primary education; they also share responsibilities for special needs;

f) Insufficient staff at the Teachers College to supervise teaching practice in schools;

## **Special Education**

There was no outreach provision for children with special needs, including high achievers and children at risk;

b) There was insufficient integration of children with SENs into mainstream primary and secondary schools;

c) Mainstream teachers were not trained to teach children with SENs;

d) Although there was a wide range of equipment (including ICT) that would allow many children with special needs to have much greater access to education, there was little provision for this in the system;

e) There was need to improve hearing impairment services in mainstream schools;

f) There was a need for expansion of opportunities of work experience and placement for young people with SENs;

g) Mainstream teachers were not trained to teach children with SENs;

h) There was an acute shortage of trained staff, including therapists, for speech impairment and mental, ADHT, and physical disabilities;

i) Likewise there was limited expertise in the assessment of disabilities and impairments (currently head teachers make their own assessment which is sometimes inaccurate)

j) There was a lack of an early diagnostic system of screening to identify children with special needs who have to cope in a 'normal' classroom environment;

k) There were no early intervention programmes for addressing simple needs;

l) Children with special needs did not appear to be fully catered for within current management systems;

m) There was a need to establish an appropriate position within MEYS to address the needs of the whole range of SENs.

## **Secondary**

### ***Issues and Challenges***

- a) There was concern about the poor educational performance of male students;
- b) There was concern about the high levels of students who leave without any qualifications.
- c) There were questions about the level of investment in a type of secondary education that was basically oriented to a single set of academic examinations;
- d) Opportunities for guidance and counselling in schools were limited;
- e) To meet targets of 9-years universal basic education it would be necessary to increase access to secondary education;

### **Technical and Vocation Education**

- a) A large percentage of the enrolled school population left school with no formal certification;
- b) Manpower forecasting cannot be relied upon for guidance in TVET planning;
- c) Lack of reliable data on TVET provision, quality and relevance in MEYS;
- d) TVET programmes did not address the needs of the informal/private sector (for example, the vocational content of the CXC examination was regarded as irrelevant to the world of work and the current relevance and focus of the MPCs are deemed ineffective);
- e) Gender stereotyping in course recruitment at post-secondary level;
- f) A serious shortage of people with ICT skills, yet insufficient ICT provision and training;
- g) Accreditation of the new programmes now being offered at the SVGTC, needs to be obtained from the NCTVET in Jamaica so that qualifications have value outside of SVG;
- h) TVET institutions needed to be given more autonomy in such matters as budget, staff recruitment and appraisal, promotion, and marketing;
- i) There were insufficient suitably experienced or qualified staff to provide training and/or teaching at all levels, including the proposed new degrees;
- j) Low status and perception of TVET among youth and their parents.

## **Adult Education**

- a) The Adult Education Unit was under-funded, leading to limited public sector resources available for adult education;
- b) There were widely reported low levels of functional literacy in and out of schools and among the adult population;
- c) There was need for a clear assessment of the level of functional literacy in the country and, in relation to this, a need for a widely accepted definition and tests of functional literacy (and numeracy);
- d) There was limited capacity for training.

## **Tertiary Education**

### Issues and Challenges

- a) There was an increasing demand for post-secondary educational opportunities, and for the expansion of secondary education provisions to meet this level of demand;
- b) In addition to preparing a minority of the students for university, A-level College courses should enable graduates to move directly into employment, and realise personal potential
- c) There was a pressing need to upgrade and enhance the teaching-learning environment at the Teachers College;
- d) Integration of the colleges has been slow. It is in the interest of all involved that this is resolved as expediently as possible;
- e) If associate degrees are to be awarded by the proposed SVGCC, then issues of accreditation, articulation and validation will arise;
- f) Poorly managed upgrading system for teachers who do not meet certification requirements serve to de-motivate those who seek only job security
- g) Recognition of SVG Nursing School qualifications in USA and UK creates a 'brain drain' as graduates take up employment overseas.

### National policy objectives

The government chose during the medium to long term to focus on:

- accelerating the economic process,
- building up of the human capital base, and
- poverty reduction/prevention.

The major educational requirements were articulated as follow:

- a) The general level of numeracy and literacy must be measurably improved to meet the requirements of technological change;
- b) The output of students trained in the areas of science and technology, and in the supportive social sciences, must be substantially increased;
- c) All students should be prepared for utilising opportunities for self-employment;
- d) The output of students trained in technical and vocational skills must be substantially increased to meet the manpower demands of the country;
- e) The number of students going on to higher education must be increased;
- f) The capacity of society to participate in and generate cultural and sporting achievements must be observably enhanced;

The government committed itself to:

- a) maintaining and intensifying its emphasis on **equity** of access to educational opportunity. All forms of class, religious, gender, ethnic, or geographical inequalities will be eliminated. In particular, those policies that seek to ensure access to



education for all, regardless of economic status, will form a firm and important cornerstone of the educational policy of the GOSVG.

- b) **equality of opportunity** and the elimination of discrimination are of particular significance in Government's policy where it refers to the educational rights of both males and females. The exercise of women's rights is ensured, *inter alia*, by according women and girls equal access with men and boys to academic, vocational, and professional opportunities. The elimination of any form of gender discrimination and inequality within the educational system will remain a high priority during the next five years. It is a matter of concern, for example, that boys and young men appear to be disadvantaged within the system at present.
- c) pursue a series of **poverty reduction** strategies.

(Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, 2002)

### National targets for 2015 and beyond

1. Universal access to Early Childhood Education and development;
2. Improve quality of ECE through an integrated health and social development programme;
3. Review and revise the primary curriculum making it more relevant;
4. Improve the quality of primary education for all students;
5. Ensure efficiency (internal and external) in primary education;
6. To provide appropriate access to education for all Special Educational Needs children;
7. Improve the management of primary education;
8. Improve the quality of secondary education for students;
9. Improve the earned promotion rates through secondary forms and to improve earned transmission rates to tertiary education and the world of work;
10. Increase access to and participation in post-compulsory education and training, and higher education in St. Vincent and the Grenadines;
11. Improve equity in tertiary education;
12. Reorganization and improvement in the structure for Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET);
13. Expand the range and relevance of Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) programmes and course.

## Section III- Progress towards the EFA Goals

### Goal 1

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, significant efforts were made to improve early childhood access in areas which were hitherto underserved. In 2010, the government opened nine (9) centres which offered free access to would be participants. The locations were carefully selected in order to complement existing preschools and not compete with them. In 2012-2013 the first comprehensive annual school survey was conducted for all 125 institutions. The data obtained, coupled with population figures yielded the following results for the 0-2 and 3-4 + cohorts. Enrolment for the 2013-2014 academic year is shown on Table 2. However, population figures for 2014 would not be available until the end of the year to facilitate a comparison of the NER.

**Table 3. Net Enrolment ratios for Day Care and Preschools 2012-2013 Academic Year**

Cohort	ENROLMENT			POPULATION			NET ENROLMENT		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
0 to 2	706	686	1,392	3175	2900	6019	22.2	23.7	23.1
3 to 4+	1,430	1,441	2,871	3208	3134	6342	44.6	46.0	45.3

**Table 4. Enrolment by Gender in the Early Childhood Sector 2013-2014 Academic Year**

Cohort	ENROLMENT		
	Males	Females	Total
0 to 2	549	513	1,062
3 to 4+	1,266	1,271	2,537

## **Goal 2**

In reviewing the progress of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the country achieved Universal Primary Education in the 1990's and Universal Secondary Access in 2005-2006. At the primary level, there were 66 institutions for the period 1994-1995 to 2008-2009. Subsequently, in September 2009 two new institutions were opened, one public and the other private/ church affiliated. Currently, there are 57 public and 11 private/ government assisted institutions. In the secondary sector, there were 21 institutions for the period 1993 -1994- 2004-2005. In September of 2005, St. Vincent and the Grenadines achieved Universal Access to Secondary Education. Classroom spaces were augmented through the conversion of four primary schools into secondary institutions. Presently, there are now 26 secondary schools which provide learning facilities to the nation's youths. While there has been an increase in access, there was a reduction in the country's population of -2.3% from 1991-2001 as indicated in the Population and Housing Census Report of 2001. Similarly, overall enrolment at both the primary and secondary levels declined from the 1990 to present as reflected in Tables 5 and 6 respectively.

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Year	Enrolment			
	K	Grades 1-3	Grades 4-9	Total
1995/96	2742	8431	10976	<b>22149</b>
1996/97	2569	7679	11380	<b>21628</b>
1997/98	2887	7931	10529	<b>21347</b>
1998/99	2723	7985	10238	<b>20946</b>
1999/00	2759	7872	9899	<b>20530</b>
2000/01	2538	8051	9500	<b>20089</b>
2001/02	2479	7852	9562	<b>19893</b>
2002/03	2389	7418	9472	<b>19279</b>
2003/04	2068	7274	8960	<b>18302</b>
2004/05	2197	6637	8454	<b>17288</b>
2005/06	2084	6287	7224	<b>15595</b>
2006/07	2226	6336	7166	<b>15728</b>
2007/08	1972	6185	6431	<b>20164</b>
2008/09	2030	6477	6434	<b>14941</b>
2009/10	2034	6192	6308	<b>14534</b>
2010/11	1758	5551	6054	<b>13363</b>
2011/12	2020	5645	6146	<b>13811</b>
2012/13	1988	5637	5984	<b>13609</b>

Table 5. Enrolment by Grade at the Primary Level from 1995/1996-2012-2013

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<b>Year</b>	<b>Enrolment ( Forms 1 to 5)</b>	<b>No. of Girls</b>	<b>Percentage Girls</b>
1995/96	7689	4579	<b>60</b>
1996/97	7690	4551	<b>59</b>
1997/98	7775	4591	<b>59</b>
1998/99	8727	5427	<b>62</b>
1999/00	7939	4560	<b>57</b>
2000/01	7867	4547	<b>58</b>
2001/02	7873	4558	<b>58</b>
2002/03	7909	4463	<b>56</b>
2003/04	8629	4837	<b>56</b>
2004/05	9391	5267	<b>56</b>
2005/06	10655	5682	<b>53</b>
2006/07	11857	6044	<b>51</b>
2007/08	12026	6182	<b>51</b>
2008/09	11425	5821	<b>51</b>
2009/10	11140	5592	<b>50</b>
2010/11	10927	5215	<b>48</b>
2011/12	10419	5052	<b>48</b>
2012/13	10394	5019	<b>48</b>

**Table 6. Enrolment at the Secondary Level from 1995/1996-2013**

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PRIMARY NET ENROLMENT RATIO				SECONDARY NET ENROLMENT RATIO			
Year Ending	Male	Female	Total	Year Ending	Male	Female	Total
2000-01	82.1	74.4	78.2	2000-01	48.0	67.0	57.4
2001-02	81.3	73.6	77.4	2001-02	47.1	68.0	57.5
2002-03	81.6	74.1	79.1	2002-03	51.4	69.0	60.1
2003-04	77.2	69.4	73.4	2003-04	56.8	73.1	64.9
2004-05	74.6	66.4	70.5	2004-05	63.5	83.2	73.3
2005-06	92.5	90.1	91.3	2005-06	79.1	90.3	84.7
2006-07	58.0	64.4	93.4	2006-07	84.6	93.3	88.9
2007-08	89.3	84.0	86.7	2007-08	87.6	97.7	92.6
2008-09	91.1	86.4	88.8	2008-09	87.2	93.9	90.5
2009-10	90.6	88.3	89.5	2009-10	68.1	63.9	66.0
2010-11	84.7	82.6	83.7	2010-11	91.9	83.8	87.9
2011-12	76.8	74.6	75.7	2011-12	73.9	73.3	73.6
2012-13	75.3	72.5	73.9	2012-13	75.4	73.6	74.5

Table 7. Net Enrolment at Primary and Secondary Level from 2000/2001-2012-2013

The St. Vincent and Grenadines Community College, since inception, has been endeavouring to satisfy the educational needs of both youths and adults alike. The autonomous body has sought to provide a variety of disciplines in preparation for various vocations.

Year	St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College, Division of:				Total
	Arts Sciences & General Studies	Technical & Vocational Education	Teacher Education	Nursing Education	
2000/01	561	222	38	30	<b>851</b>
2001/02	690	226	50	36	<b>1002</b>
2002/03	777	205	38	34	<b>1054</b>
2003/04	940	281	68	100	<b>1389</b>
2004/05	1014	217	38	100	<b>1369</b>
2005/06	969	141	54	100	<b>1264</b>
2006/07	926	257	54	0	<b>1237</b>
2007/08	832	506	63	44	<b>1445</b>
2008/09	826	248	33	85	<b>1192</b>
2009/10	716	321	53	73	<b>1163</b>
2010/11	923	397	197	120	<b>1637</b>
2011/12	992	482	66	127	<b>1667</b>
2012/13	1016		52	101	<b>1169</b>

Table 8. Enrolment at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College from 2000/2001-2012-2013

As indicated in the table above, the enrolment figures for the most part have increased. The SVGCC has entered into partnerships with various tertiary institutions such as the University of the West Indies and the University of Technology in Jamaica. Arrangements with these institutions allow graduates to complete 2 years at home and pursue another 2 years at either of these institutions and subsequently obtain a Bachelor's degree.

Additionally, the government has partnered with other supportive governments and agencies to provide more scholarships in increasingly diverse fields to enable persons to pursue higher education in the field of their choice. This is in keeping with the vision of having at least one university graduate per household by 2025.

In St. Vincent and the Grenadines there is relative equity and equality in access to the education system. There are no distinct ethnic minorities per se despite the heterogeneity of the population. In exploring the issue of gender parity at the respective levels, it is evident that the females are accessing the education system as well as the males from the early childhood level (see Table 9), primary (see Table 10) and secondary (see Table 11). However, a cause for concern is the decreasing male participation at the higher levels of

<b>Age in Years</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>GPI</b>
0 - 1	305	286	<b>591</b>	0.94
2	401	400	<b>801</b>	1.00
3	699	726	<b>1425</b>	1.04
4	546	507	<b>1053</b>	0.93
4+	185	208	<b>393</b>	1.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>2136</b>	<b>2127</b>	<b>4263</b>	1.00

secondary education as shown in the higher parity indexes (See Table 11).

Table 9. Total Number of Children Enrolled in Early Childhood Centres by Gender 2012-2013

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>ENROLMENT</b>			<b>GPI</b>
	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>T</b>	
<b>K</b>	1053	934	<b>1987</b>	0.89
<b>1</b>	993	978	<b>1971</b>	0.98
<b>2</b>	900	842	<b>1742</b>	0.94
<b>3</b>	1013	911	<b>1924</b>	0.90
<b>4</b>	945	935	<b>1880</b>	0.99
<b>5</b>	991	879	<b>1870</b>	0.89
<b>6</b>	1163	1072	<b>2235</b>	0.92
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7058</b>	<b>6551</b>	<b>13609</b>	0.93

Table 10. Overall Enrolment at the Primary Level by Grade and Sex 2012-2013



	<b>ENROLMENT</b>			
<b>GRADE</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>GPI</b>
<b>1</b>	1219	1020	<b>2239</b>	0.84
<b>2</b>	1233	1052	<b>2285</b>	0.85
<b>3</b>	1116	1032	<b>2148</b>	0.92
<b>4</b>	972	1039	<b>2011</b>	1.07
<b>5</b>	835	876	<b>1711</b>	1.05
<b>TOTAL</b>	5375	5019	<b>10394</b>	0.93

Table 11. Overall Enrolment at the Secondary Level by Grade and Sex 2012-2013

Year	No. of Teachers	Total Trained Teachers	Percentage Trained
1995/96	1118	568	51
1996/97	963	603	63
1997/98	1007	597	59
1998/99	1004	664	66
1999/00	987	666	67
2000/01	961	690	72
2001/02	999	726	73
2002/03	1009	735	73
2003/04	973	702	72
2004/05	972	824	85
2005/06	880	670	76
2006/07	878	695	79
2007/08	916	760	83
2008/09	874	702	80
2009/10	897	671	75
2010/11	819	723	88
2011/12	877	748	85
2011/13	890	736	83

**Table 12. Proportion of Trained Primary Teachers 1995/1996-2012-2013**

As a compliment to the *Education Revolution* undertaken by the government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, efforts were and are still being made to maximize the number of trained teachers within the classrooms. As shown on table 12, there has been a continuous increase in the number of persons who have successfully completed teacher training. At the primary level, there is another positive development; in that more persons are obtaining an undergraduate degree which was previously not the norm.

Year	Total Number of Teachers	Total Number of Graduate Teachers	Percentage Graduates
1995/96	394	143	36
1996/97	315	200	63
1997/98	379	137	36
1998/99	372	146	39
1999/00	406	155	38
2000/01	405	149	37
2001/02	421	162	38
2002/03	435	165	38
2003/04	468	169	36
2004/05	490	180	37
2005/06	555	203	37
2006/07	569	210	37
2007/08	597	219	37
2008/09	679	102	15
2009/10	603	256	42
2010/11	650	270	42
2011/12	680	298	44
2012/13	706	320	45

Table 13. Proportion of Secondary Graduates Teachers 1995/1996-2012/2013

At the secondary level, both the overall number and the proportion of graduate teachers increased between 1995/1996 and 2012-2013. The government has sought to improve the quality of instruction at the secondary level on two fronts. Initially, more teachers were sent for training to improve the overall content base thereby improving the stock of graduate teachers. Secondly, teacher training was provided at the Division of Teacher Education for those graduates who were not previously teacher trained. Such methods were employed to enhance the content base as well as the afford flexibility in the style of delivery within the classroom.

## Section IV: Reviewing the implementation of the 12 EFA strategies

### 4.1 The implementation of the strategies

The Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2002-2007 chartered the development of education during the period to 2004 to 2013. The primary purpose was to provide strategies and a timeframe for delivering education of a quality that would raise levels of achievement of all learners, enabling them to benefit as individuals, and to contribute to national and regional development.

The ESDP concentrated on ten sub-sectors, each with its own goals and policy objectives:

***A - Management, administration and governance***

***B - Early childhood education***

***C - Primary and all-age school education***

***D - Secondary education***

***E - Post-secondary/tertiary***

***F - Special education***

***G - Adult and continuing education***

***H - The teaching profession***

***J - Technical and vocational education and training***

***K - Libraries, documentation and archives***

***The intended outcome of the plan*** was a nation that is functionally literate, numerate, and computer competent. Basic education would be provided for all, and there would have been opportunities for out-of-school youths, young people and adults to fill gaps in their learning. The aim was that, in future, citizens would be knowledgeable about technology and its applications; they would be self-confident and emotionally secure, with well-developed interpersonal skills. It was expected that citizen would be more likely to be protective of their health, their environment and their natural heritage, and would be able to contribute to the advancement of their community, country, and region.

In keeping with the twelve identified EFA implementation strategies as articulated by the Dakar Framework for Action, the ESDP 2002-2007 sought to mobilize strong national and international commitment for Education for All. Over the life of the plan significant investment in basic education, Information and Communication Technologies, teacher training and professional development and other infrastructural development was made.

#### **4.1 Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education**

Prior to 2009, pre-school education was offered solely by private institutions, church boards and other Non- Governmental Organisations (NGO). In 2009, nine state-owned early childhood centres began operating. These centres were strategically located in areas that were considered as vulnerable communities where private operating pre-school were either unserved or non-existing at the time. These government -own institutions raise the bar on the standards expected and acted as model schools for others to emulate. The entrance of public preschools has given more children from poor communities and other disadvantaged areas to access early childhood education at minimal or no cost to them. This has enhanced our chance of achieving our national goal of universal access to pre-primary education by 2015.

#### **4.3 Successes to Date in the Education System**

Over the last decade, under the slogan of ‘The Education Revolution’, St. Vincent and the Grenadines has made great strides in education. Some of the major accomplishments can be enumerated briefly as follows:

1. Practically all children of 3 to 5 years are enrolled in institutions offering early childhood education and care.
2. A National Policy Framework, and Regulations and Standards have been produced for the Early Childhood sub-sector.
3. Model pre-schools have been built in areas that have been badly affected by the demise of the banana industry.

4. Several privately owned pre-schools have been upgraded by the Government in order to raise standards and improve quality.
5. Universal Primary Education has been maintained across the state.
6. Universal Access to Secondary Education, introduced in 2002, was achieved by 2005. Moreover, after an initial decline in student performance as measured by the pass rate in the CSEC examinations, by 2011 the level of performance had recovered to the previous rates.
7. Tertiary education offered inside the country has been expanded significantly by the creation and expansion of the Community College.
8. Significant numbers of Vincentians have taken up scholarships and other opportunities offered to access higher education at colleges and universities in a wide array of subject areas and a wide range of countries.
9. New and improved standards and specifications have been established for the physical plants of primary and secondary schools; several new schools have been built in accordance with these standards; and several old school buildings have been replaced or reconstructed also in compliance with the new and improved standards and specifications.
10. The proportion of teachers in primary schools with professional training increased from around 60 per cent to more than 85 per cent during the last five years.
11. A cadre of primary and secondary school principals was trained in school leadership and management.
12. Education Officers were given training in educational supervision.
13. Performance standards were defined for primary teachers and principals.
14. The 'One-Net-Book per Student' policy has been implemented, strategically targeting all students from Grade 2 to 6 in primary schools, and all students in secondary schools.
15. All education institutions now have broadband connections to the Internet.
16. The 'Literacy Crusade' and other efforts have resulted in raising the literacy rate of the population 15 years and older to 88 per cent. Moreover, the most literate age cohort is that of persons 15 to 29 years, and the lowest rate of literacy is among the population 65 years and older.
17. A Literacy Policy and Plan was developed and is being used as a guideline for literacy initiatives.
18. A TVET strategy was developed through the STATVET Project.

19. A strategy for the mobilization of the private sector in skills development has been put in place.
20. Competency Based Training Sector Standards in 90 different trades under STATVET have been developed.
21. The Public Libraries, National Archives and Documentation Centre, formerly located in separate quarters have been integrated and relocated into a new building and renamed the National Public Library, Archives and Documentation Services.
22. Over the decade the Government has consistently allocated between 18 to 21 per cent of the National Budget to the education sector.
23. The Ministry of Education, while not optimally structured has succeeded in coping and managing the implementation of the projects and programmes related to the above listed accomplishment (Ministry of Education, 2014).

#### 4.4 Challenges

A list of these challenges is provided below.

1. The participation of children from lower socio economic homes in ECE is below average.
2. Many children entering the primary school system are not ready to cope with the primary level programme.
3. Many students who move from the primary to the secondary level are not ready to cope with the secondary level programme. Of particular concern are: weak literacy and communication skills; weak numeracy skills; and weak study and concentration skills.
4. The rate of completion of upper secondary education is an important indicator of successful education systems. While universal access to secondary education has significantly expanded opportunities at that level in St. Vincent and the Grenadines the significant variability in the age of students entering Form-1, and the continued age variability of students across all forms as indicated in the limited statistical data available (2008-2009) are matters of concern.
5. Whereas such a large chunk of the region's resources is allocated to the education sector, that after two years of Early Childhood Education, seven years of primary education, and five years of secondary education, fewer than a third of the students

who actually sit the CSEC examinations are able to achieve the goal of at least five CSEC subjects including English and Mathematics.

6. The success rates in CSEC Mathematics and Science are as low as 9 per cent in some secondary schools in St Vincent and the Grenadines.
7. Many of the students who sit CSEC examinations tend to offer and end up with passes in subjects such as Social Studies, Integrated Science, Electronic Document Preparation, Management; and Principles of Business. Only modest numbers of students sit and pass the individual Sciences, Geography, Foreign Languages, History, the Visual Arts, Music, Electronics and Electricity, Technical Drawing and Building Construction. The implication of this pattern is that many students who successfully complete CSEC may find that they have limited prospects for opportunities for tertiary education and in the world of work, and might find themselves short of the accomplishments defined under the pillars of learning as indicated above.
8. The education system arrangements (MOE, School, CXC programmes, etc.) are structured in such a way that only a very small percentage of students in every school are able to offer science subjects beyond the Form-3 level. In an era so heavily focused on Science and Technology this must be counter-productive (and depressing to many students).
9. The current arrangements generally force students into a mutually exclusive diet of mainly Science (available to a very limited group) or Business options. Students and others were very highly critical of this approach. It was felt that students should be able to offer Sciences for the entire duration of basic education (primary and secondary schooling) and not be forced to stop at the Form 3 level. It was argued too that Science and Mathematics courses beyond the Form 3 level should vary depending on the fields that students intend to pursue.
10. The Country Poverty Assessment 2008 showed it is mainly education beyond the secondary level that provides real prospects for upward social mobility. Indeed, apart from higher education, the gaps between the richest and the poorest quintile in literacy and general education have narrowed considerably. Given universal access to secondary education and the expectation that there will be significant improvements in quality and performance of students at this level, it follows that there will be increased demand for further expansion at the post-secondary level.
11. The SVGCC will be under persistent pressure to provide a wide range of relevant, flexible, high quality, post-secondary offerings. This will be even more difficult in the context of a small, multi-island state.



12. The expressed concerns with respect to the capacity and commitment of some teachers to the education of students. There are complaints about initial teacher-training arrangements; the lack of opportunity for meaningful, on-going professional development; the lack of opportunities for mobility; the lack of appropriate instructional equipment and materials; and generally relatively poor remuneration. The major challenges for the teaching profession and education management are: how to ensure solid initial training for teachers; how to deal with qualification and possibly licensing issues; how to update knowledge and skills; how to ensure that at least 90 per cent of all teachers and all principals and Education Officers are competent and confident with respect to basic and functional use of ICT; how to train teachers to integrate critical cross-curricular themes into all subject areas; how to break away from an isolated classroom culture and mindset to an open professional environment; how to attract, reward, and retain effective teachers; and how not to continue to inflict ineffective teachers on students at any level of the system.
13. The success of the National Literacy Crusade and universal access to secondary education which has integrated technical and vocational education within the secondary curriculum have long term implications for both Adult and Continuing Education and the TVET sub-sectors, and also the appropriate linkages with the SVGCC. All of these sub-sectors may need to re-configured and re-focused on the critical task of upgrading the general education and technical competencies of the prime age population (20 to 49 years) who require re-training, upgrading, and skills and knowledge in new areas so that they can function comfortably in the new dynamic and turbulent economic environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
14. There is still the notion that TVET should be for students who are “not academically inclined” (generally interpreted to mean less intellectually endowed). This is reinforced by the general paucity of pathways and loop-back options for TVET students to access higher education, and the resulting dead-end nature of many TVET programmes.
15. Given the increasing importance of science and technology in the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is critical that TVET, ACE, Tertiary Education, basic education, the private sector, and other stakeholder efforts be intricately interwoven into a relevant, logical, sustainable system geared to improving the quality, flexibility, and creativity of the human resource base in the pursuit of a better quality of life for all. This is an urgent imperative. It is clear that the countries that have powered their way to sustainable developed-country status in recent times have several things in common. They all have relatively high literacy capacity for the vast majority of their people, good basic education generally, and clear national public policy towards integrated work-force preparation, on-going development, and certification.

16. There is dire need to improve the creativity, and social, psychological and economic well-being of all Caribbean citizens through music. There is need to ensure that all children, from ECE through Secondary, have access to a balanced, comprehensive and sequential programme in music as an integral part of their education. The programme should include: rudiments of music; responding to music; performing; and creating music. A music programme justifies itself purely on the effect and impact music has on human beings, but in addition, the music sector (along with other areas of the Creative and performing arts) has the potential to contribute significantly to increased employment, increased personal satisfaction and fulfillment, and increased national income.
17. Given the enormous and growing problems that people in the Caribbean currently experience from the effects of the major non-communicable diseases such as Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, Cancer, and Cardiovascular ailments, and given the high public and private costs of dealing with these ailments “Lifetime Fitness and Wellness” should be considered as a critically important area of concentration in schools and educational institutions at all levels. Lifetime Fitness and Wellness is an established offering at many educational institutions across the world.
18. There is need to increase and improve parental and community involvement in the education process using, for example, the Joyce Epstein’s Model of parental involvement.
19. The Ministry of Education needs to be restructured on a functional basis premised on Units, Departments and Divisions instead of its present basis on posts in the establishment. The present structure places practically all the responsibilities of the sector on the Permanent Secretary and the Chief Education Officer that enmeshes and over burdens them in minutia. An effective restructuring should facilitate management, monitoring and assisting schools at the level of the school district.
20. There is need for considerable improvement in the routines and arrangements for collecting and analyzing data; for making such data available to the public and support organizations and agencies; and for the systematic use of such data in planning and decision-making.
21. There is the challenge of implementing a programme of upgrading the plants of primary and secondary schools to meet the new standards and specifications that have been adopted.
22. Modern multi-million dollar school plants must, however, be fully utilized to realize maximum returns on the investment. But costly school facilities normally lie idle from 3:00 pm each day, during weekends, and during holidays and long vacation periods. The appropriate use (joint use) of existing school facilities by the

community can be a cost-effective way of promoting a wide range of educational, recreational, sporting, civic, and cultural activities by residents of all ages. Given the dearth of organized clubs in much of the sub-region the failure to use these facilities more intensively must be a matter of great concern.

23. It was noted in ESDP (2002-2007) that, “The Ministry of Education works under cramped conditions within a set of temporary buildings”. In the Education Sector Diagnosis, March 2012, it was noted that, “The physical conditions under which the Ministry functions, and the many different buildings from which the Ministry operates are highly unsatisfactory.” It appears that there is little change in the situation in 2012.
24. There is need to re-visit the BRAGSA arrangements with respect to the maintenance of school plants.

## **Section V: Prospect for post -2015**

### **5.1 Lessons learnt**

Education continues to be the main driver of growth for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Research has shown that investment in quality education can lead to economic growth and development. One of the important lessons learnt is that investment in education has to be sustained if you are going to reap significant benefits in the long run. In the case of St. Vincent and the Grenadines as stated earlier in the report, the government has been spending on average about 17% of its expenditure on education. This investment has led to improve results at all levels of the education system. We have recorded moderate improvements in examination results in the last five years at the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) levels of the Caribbean Examinations Councils (CXC) examinations. While our overall results would have seen improvements, the performance in Mathematics, English and the Sciences is still an area of concern.

The major challenge going forward is to get our students to improve their critical thinking skills in order to enhance learning outcomes. We have to strive to lift the quality of education to enhance the learning outcomes of students at all levels. In going forward more attention has to be placed on catering for the diverse needs of the learners. It therefore means that greater consideration has to be given to special education, with teacher training in this area receiving greater focus and attention. The education system in St. Vincent and the Grenadines will advance further if more emphasis is placed on early detection of learning difficulties and proper remediation programme for these students are implemented.

We have to aim for greater levels of specialized teacher training and professional development. In addition, we have to reduce the number of teachers who are teaching

outside of their specialisation. The teaching of science and mathematics at all level has to be re-examined so that weaknesses can be corrected and remedied early. Teachers must be trained and equipped with the necessary tools and facilities to get the job done.

The feminization of the teaching profession is also a major concern as we look to the future. At all levels female teachers outnumbered their male counterparts in the classrooms especially from pre-primary to secondary. The low number of males attracted to the teaching profession means that less male role models are present in the school system for boys to emulate. The dominance of women in the teaching profession has led many of our male counterparts to see teaching as a feminine profession thus many males do not see teaching as an attractive future career. This imbalance in the profession has steered many to conclude that the boys in school lack the presence of male role models that can inspire them to perform better.

For St. Vincent and the Grenadines while we focus on enhancing the quality to improve learning outcomes, the post- 2015 agenda have to include incentive to attract more intelligent young professionals especially males to the teaching profession. Retaining and attracting quality teachers at all levels will help us to sustain quality education as we work to improve our ranking on the UNDP's human development index. The quality of education on offer holds the key to our future developments and long term prosperity.

## **5.2 Main Lessons learnt with regard to each EFA Goal**

Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

The major lesson learnt is that there needs to be continued and even better private and public sector partnership to improve quality and access, and to avoid duplication. The Ministry of Education has learnt that working together with private providers of early childhood education to improve their facilities have been beneficial to both parties. The government working with external donor agencies has been able to improve and expand many private preschools in rural areas so that more low income families can access these

preschools. This partnership meant that government was able to provide public pre-schools in areas currently underserved by the private sector without any disagreement or any major adverse effect on the preschools located close proximity.

The second lesson of note is the low quality of the teacher stock in the pre-school school sector. It should be highlighted that this sector attracts the least qualified set of teachers. The Ministry of Education has been working with the private providers to organised professional training to enhance the competence of teachers at this level. There is still the need to provide more specialized training to improve their pedagogical skills and development. The Ministry of Education is however aware that many of the teachers in the private sector have been enrolling in numerous programmes at the college and university level to improve their current status. This development must be encouraged and every opportunity that becomes available to train teachers in this sector must be embraced and acted upon.

With greater collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the private providers, it is envisaged that going forward when the Early Childhood Education Services standard comes into force that it will be accepted with little or no resistance. The private sector preschools would have seen the benefits of working together with the many upgrades and retrofitting of private facilities that were undertaken with the assistance of funds provided by the government. As St. Vincent and the Grenadines expands and improves its early childhood care and education, the private sector and public sector partnership of working together has to be further embraced and strengthened.

The overall improvement in the quality of education can only be sustained if the foundation built at the early childhood level is of a very high quality. The expansion and improvement of early childhood care and education will benefit the education system in the long run as the government moves to improve the overall quality of education on offer to all Vincentians. If we continue to expand and improve early childhood care and education then all levels of the education chain will reap significant future rewards.

Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particular girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Boys and girls in St. Vincent and the Grenadines have enjoyed the same privileges of accessing free primary education. In fact, universal access to primary education has been achieved a few decades ago. Every primary school age child is afforded the privilege of being able to attend school without be discriminated against. The government continues to allocate the largest share of the education budget to primary education. All primary schools have a school feeding programme that provides daily meals to students whose parents cannot afford to supply them with such meals. In addition to meals, some children from vulnerable background are provided with school books and school uniforms by the Ministry of Social Development to ease the burden off poor parents.

Primary school teachers training and development have received greater focus in the last two decade. The percentage of trained primary teachers now stands at about 85%. This percentage of trained teachers is among the highest in the OECS. There has also been a significant decline in the teacher to student ratio especially for primary schools located in rural communities. However, there are still too many students leaving the primary system without the requisite literacy and numeracy skills to cope with secondary education. Our teachers have to strive for greater efficiency and effectiveness to increase the learning outcomes of students in the future.

At the primary level more has to done to improve the literacy and numeracy of the students so that they can scope better with their transition to secondary school. Too many students especially boys encounter difficulties at the secondary level. This often leads to many of them dropping out of the secondary programme at an early age without the necessary qualifications and skills for the job market. The Ministry of Education is working robustly to ensure that there is smoother transition of students from the primary level to the secondary level. Various programmes have been implemented to assist those students who

are most vulnerable to get them to receive remediation at the very early stage of their secondary school life so that they can cope with the secondary curriculum.

Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programme.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines achieved universal access to secondary education in September of 2005. This meant that more and more young people now have access to secondary education. Pressure is now being placed on the education system to find appropriate learning and life skills programmes that meet the diverse needs of today's learners. The curriculum in many schools has been expanded with many rural secondary schools now offering Physics, Chemistry, Biology and some of the other sciences to their students. The upgrading and retrofitting of some of the rural secondary schools meant that students in some of the rural communities now have access to the same curriculum on offer at many of the urban secondary schools.

Greater emphasis is now placed on the Technical and Vocational Education with many girls enrolling in such programmes. A National Qualification Department (NQD) has been established and there was the passage of the Sector Skills Development Act 2010. The NQD is responsible for developing and implementing training programme in the TVET sector. This agency is responsible also for the certification of National Vocation Qualifications (NVQ) and will be responsible for the implementation of the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQ). The agency has the mandate to certify all vocational programmes delivered in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The major lesson learnt is that providing many young people with a sound technical education background can help to ease the rate of high youth unemployment. Many of the students leaving schools with TVET qualifications are now finding it easier and faster to be employed than those who left the system with traditional academic qualifications. TVET graduates are also more likely to be self-employed or to start a business venture.



Goal 4: Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

The Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) Unit continues to promote programmes to curtail illiteracy. The results of the last literacy assessment conducted in 2002 showed that 83.1% of the persons 15 years and over demonstrated prerequisite literacy competence (Ashton, 2002). The no new survey has taken place in recent time hence the current level of literacy cannot be confirmed however with increased enrolment and participation of students at the secondary it is believed that the illiteracy level is on the decline.

The Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) Unit has on-going programmes that teach basic literacy and numeracy throughout the country. The Unit currently prepares adult learners to take the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence (CCSLC). Most of the adult learners have returned excellent results in these examinations and have moved on to write the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate examinations. The challenge for the Unit is to get more males to participate in these programmes. The records show that most of the programmes are dominated by females. Many of their male counterparts are taking not advantage of the many opportunities for a second chance at their educational attainment.

As the Adult Education and Continuing Education (ACE) unit looks to the future it has to look at finding creative ways to get more males participation in adult learning and development. Too many males downplay the need to seek a second chance at their formal education. The key focus has to be on getting more males to return to complete their formal education. The onus is on the Unit to make the programmes more attractive to the male population.

Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

The gender parity issue is not a major concern for St. Vincent and the Grenadines since boys and girls have equal opportunity to attend primary and secondary school. At the primary level both males and female participation are on par with each other. The transition to secondary has seen the girls performing much better than the boys. For this reason more girls than boys complete their secondary education. Too many boys are dropping out of the secondary programme while many of their female counterparts prevailed to the end of secondary school with the necessary matriculation qualifications to move into tertiary education.

More has to be done to make the secondary programme more attractive to boys. These programmes have to be enhanced to improve the learning outcomes for boys. The secondary programme has to be designed to keep their interest and teachers have a key role in ensuring that their teaching style cater also for the needs and development of the male gender which may at times be different from that of their female counterparts. We have to come up with new strategies and approaches to improve the learning outcomes of boys and young men as we seek for improve academic performances. We also have to encourage them to stay in school by providing the right incentives and motivation for them to remain as long as possible in school.

Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Teachers training and development has been a key driver in the move by St. Vincent and the Grenadines to lift the quality of education at all levels. The government continues to invest heavily in teachers training and professional development. The teaching profession at the primary level now has many teachers who have obtained bachelor's degrees from University throughout the world. The majority of principals at the primary level also have degree level training in education administration and management or related fields. To sustain quality, continuous training and professional development of all teachers remain a key priority in the government's thrust to lift the quality of education at all levels.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been using Information and Communication Technology to enhance the quality of teacher training and learning outcomes. The introduction of the 'One Laptop per Student Initiative' and the supply of broadband internet access to all education institutions have opened up access to range of online resources to both teachers and students. St. Vincent and the Grenadines has to take full advantages all the digital technologies that will aid the development of the education system.

It is important that we use the available technologies to train our teachers so that they can fully integrated ICT in the curriculum in schools. The use of ICT in education can help us to train more teachers at reduce cost using various online media. Now that all teachers at the primary and secondary levels are provided with laptop computers supplied by the government, the opportunity exist for teachers to receive more and more training and professional development.

## **Prospects for Post 2015**

### **Quality Education**

The future of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is highly dependent on quality education that prepares students for the labour market. In order to achieve sustained economic growth and development all aspects of the education system must be enhanced. We have to also maintain gender parity at all levels of the education system. A key focus of the education system has to be improved career path for teachers especially male teachers.

### **Conclusion**

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines continues to work with the private sector to enhance the quality of education for all citizens. The goals of Education For All have been embraced and the government continues to work with local, regional and international organisations to ensure that all children have equal access to quality education. St. Vincent and the Grenadines is in full support of all the organisations around the world that contribute to global educational initiatives. International organisations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, UNICEF, Commonwealth and the European Commission must be commended for their investment in education.

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