

PROJECT ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Project Title: Urban Sector Technical Assistance
Project Number: 532-0117.01
Funding Period: August 30, 1985 - September 30, 1989
LOP Funding: \$350,000
Implementing Agency: College of Arts, Science and Technology
PACD: September 30, 1989

I. Purpose

The purpose of the project, which was authorized in September 1985, was to strengthen the Building Department of the College of Arts, Science & Technology (CAST) to train technicians and professionals for the construction and related industries.

II. Background

The goal of the project was to improve the capacity of CAST in general, and the Building Department in particular, to recruit and retain staff through the provision of technical assistance, training, and commodities.

AID's intent at the outset was to finance four categories of inputs, namely technical assistance, training, commodities, and administrative support. These were to be achieved through staff development, in-service training, the provision of equipment, and administrative support.

Under the staff development program, it was intended that the following activities would be undertaken.

- i) Approximately 8 seminars, lectures or short courses would be conducted by external experts in relevant subject matter currently unavailable to the program. This would allow for curriculum inputs and professional exchange, and/or introduce new ideas and technology.
- ii) The development of approximately six technical manuals in selected subjects related to the construction industry and urban development. This would serve several purposes, including providing staff extra compensation; provide relevant classroom instructional materials; focus staff energies more on departmental matters; and provide a product for sale to the industry at large.

- iii) To assist in the development of an annual summer institute aimed at upgrading the skills and knowledge of public and private sector urban and construction industry professionals as well as the CAST Building Department faculty. This would be accomplished through CAST developing a working relationship with a U.S. university.
- iv) Promote the development of a professional services unit which would actively seek opportunities for the Building Department to perform work for fees. This would assist CAST in attracting and retaining experienced professionals.
- v) To assist the Building Department to strengthen its in-service activity by developing and implementing an in-service program to upgrade the knowledge and skills of public officers engaged in examining and approving development and building plans. It was expected that approximately 45 public officers (building inspector and planners) employed throughout the island would be trained over the four years.

Under the training component it was intended that at least 3 Building Department graduates would receive long term training in the U.S. and assume faculty positions at CAST upon their return. In addition, the project would finance approximately 9 short-term training and research opportunities for the faculty in areas of special need and interest.

The grant also provided funds to upgrade present stock and purchase new equipment such as structures testing lab, drafting, survey and photographic equipment and a micro computer. These purchases would provide the basic support equipment necessary for current and expanded Department programs.

1. Technical Assistance

During the first year of the grant it became obvious to both CAST and AID that there was a need to shift slightly from the original planned activities, especially regarding the technical assistance component. Because CAST was faced with a situation of severe shortage of staff, it did not appear physically possible to develop the lectures, seminars and short courses in addition to the annual summer institutes and in-service workshops. CAST therefore requested and received permission from AID to contract with two long term lecturers who have provided valuable service during their tenure. The first, in addition to lecturing in the Architectural Department, was mainly responsible for the drafting of the curriculum of the newly established School of Architecture at CAST. This particular activity has been one of the most successful outputs of the grant. The other contractor set up and ran a Soils and Materials Laboratory at the Building Department. This laboratory was equipped with commodities funded under the grant and with the assistance of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). It has provided CAST with a testing lab which is unlike

any other in the English speaking Caribbean, and will provide the opportunity for testing and research work to be conducted by the College, as well as provide valuable practical experience for their students.

Also under the technical assistance category were three other activities: the Summer Institute, the preparation and marketing of manuals, and the Professional Services Unit. The Summer Institute, which was originally intended to provide continuing education courses during the summer for professionals in the construction industry, met with limited success over the four years. CAST found it difficult to attract the level of professionals targetted for a week to two weeks. Most of these persons found it impossible to leave their practices for such extended periods. However, over the four years, approximately 120 persons participated in the program.

One of the intentions of the grant was to assist CAST in setting up a professional services unit which would market professional services for staff and students in the Building Department. This was not established during the project, for several reasons. These included the problem of liability (CAST or the Building Department); organizational problem (should the company be only the Building Department or the whole college); the problem of marketing (several professional groups in the Department are bound by ethical codes which govern marketing); individual versus institutional benefits (individuals have always marketed their services and did not necessarily see an advantage in formalizing this arrangement); plus the fact that full-time staff are already overloaded. These issues were not resolved up to the end of the project. It was therefore decided to put the small amount (\$8,000) earmarked for that activity into the commodities line item. We have recently been advised, however, that these issues have been resolved and a unit has now been established.

2. Training

A total of \$134,373 was earmarked for training activities under the grant. From these funds, two persons received long term training in the U.S. and are now full-time lecturers at CAST. One participant completed his BSc in Architecture from Howard University and the other a BSc in Civil Engineering from City College of New York. Both participants are now on bond at CAST for a minimum of three years.

Another training activity was the establishment of an In-Service Workshop for building inspectors throughout the region. The In-Service Workshops were held each July for a period of three weeks and were intended for building inspectors not only from Jamaica, but from the other islands in the region. These workshops were held in collaboration with the Office of Disaster Preparedness (ODP) and were well supported. Unlike the Summer Institute, CAST has continued these

sessions and is still enjoying very good support from organizations throughout the region. Under the grant, the course was conducted with little charge to the participants. Over the four years, a total of 64 persons attended which was 19 more than the targetted figure. This figure includes 16 from outside Jamaica, the last workshop having the largest number of external participants.

This component also funded the attendance of four lecturers to various short term seminars and conferences in the U.S. and various countries in the Caribbean.

3. Commodities

The project assisted the Building Department in purchasing a number of much needed furniture and equipment. These included a blue print copier, furniture and equipment for the School of Architecture, computers, equipment for the Soils and Materials Laboratory, and typewriters for the administrative section of the Building Department. These commodities have not only provided an opportunity for a better equipped institution in terms of learning tools, but has provided in most instances an opportunity for the Department to provide research facilities which will generate income for both faculty and students. This has been one of the main goals of the project.

4. Other Administrative Costs

The final element in the project provided limited financial assistance towards the administrative costs incurred by the College in managing the project. A total of \$8,250 was committed in this category.

Of the \$350,000 obligated for this grant, at the end of the project a total of \$339,275 was disbursed. The shortfall was mainly due to the fact that most of the services and equipment were procured locally and with a devaluation close to the end of the project, more local currency was available than intended when the goods and services were procured. Overall, however, the project accomplished most of its objectives. There is no doubt that much more could be accomplished, but bearing in mind the limited resources at CAST the overall assessment must be positive. At the end of the project in September 1989, an assessment of the grant and the College was conducted by AID.

Lessons Learnt

Generally, the assessment found that CAST had made good use of aid resources, particularly in curriculum development using foreign and local consultants; building programs to expand classroom and special purpose space; in-service training programs; acquisition and use of equipment; staff development training programs (particularly long-term training); and scholarships for awards and courses of study at CAST.

The grant provided an opportunity to learn a number of lessons about CAST and how future activities by donors should or could be structured. These are elaborated below:

- 1) CAST has the capacity to effectively implement projects within the planned time-frame.
- 2) CAST has a clear vision of where it is headed, with good understanding of how to use foreign donor assistance to its best advantage in meeting its own goals.
- 3) Not all activities proposed by Donors and Administration are perceived as in the interest of the staff and Council. Consequently, project planning could benefit from wider involvement of CAST characters.
- 4) External assistance can help to solve the institution's critical need for long-term development to continue to grow and develop during periods of economic recession.
- 5) Its areas of operation and its quality of staff, equipment and operational strategies provide tremendous potential to earn additional revenue from outside sources.
- 6) The provision of staff training programs appears to be an effective strategy for assisting in staff recruitment.
- 7) AID funding conditions can reduce the intended effectiveness of staff development programs proposed for CAST, e.g. CAST staff is not totally Jamaican.

This grant has no doubt made a positive impact to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Building Department of CAST. It has assisted in providing technical assistance, training, furniture and equipment to the institution, as well as making a positive impact on helping to level off the drift of faculty. One of the observations of CAST personnel was the fact that the grant allowed the College to shift from its original focus when it was necessary to do so and therefore they did not feel "trapped" in a path if they did not see the logic or benefit.

The attached table provides a breakdown of planned vs actual outputs.

Planned Vs Actual Outputs

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Planned</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>\$s Spent</u>
Technical Assistance:			\$ 90,599
Lectures, etc.	8	--	
Long Term TA	--	2	
Manuals	6	2	
In-service Workshop	45	64	
Summer Institute	--	120	
Training:			\$134,373
Long term	3	2	
Short-term	9	4	
Commodities			\$116,780
Administrative Support			\$ 8,250