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EVALUATION OF PHASE IV (10/1/89-6/30/92)
REGIONAL NON-FORMAL SKILLS TRAINING PROJECT
(538-0073)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Overview

A. Project Did Achieve Most of its End of Project Outputs

- All countries are administering the program without external assistance.
- The project has become institutionalized in every country having gained over the years the political endorsement of the national governments. This support is most tangibly demonstrated in the appointment by the government of a permanent program staff and the commitment of funds to finance all training activities through at least the end of 1992 and, in one cases, until mid-1993.
- Women comprised over 40 percent of the trainees in all countries, although few were trained in non-traditional occupations.
- Most countries came close to meeting the job placement target of 80 percent. This is noteworthy given the slowdown in economic growth experienced in the region during the past few years.

II. Project Purpose

A. The main purpose of the final phase of the Youth Skills Training Project (YSTP), 10/89-6/92, was to institutionalize the training in all six countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines). Secondary purposes were to:

- Continue training youth for employment, but with a greater emphasis on preparing them for self-employment;
- Train a greater percentage of females overall (40%), and a sizeable portion of them (20%) in non-traditional skill areas, such as, for example, construction, auto mechanics and appliance repair;
- Provide technical assistance and opportunities for the exchange of dialogue and technical expertise among national programs through Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) coordinated horizontal cooperation arrangements and semi-annual meetings of national directors and permanent secretaries.

III. Major Findings and Conclusions

A. Institutionalization

1. Most programs directly employ four professionals: a director; job-developer; instructor-trainer; and social skills instructor. The quality of staff varies widely among the programs. It is clear that those countries with the most qualified, experienced, and committed staff tend to have the most successful programs, irrespective of the employment situation in the country or level of financial resources available to the training program. Dominica and St. Lucia are examples of two programs which regularly train their core staff. Most of this is done by either the national government training unit or a regional organization.

Strengths

2. All programs appear to have become a permanent part of the government's technical training system. Every ministry in which the program is housed has pledged to fund the program through, at least, the end of 1992 and, in one case, through mid-1993.
3. Every government recognizes that the program has provided a useful social and economic service to the country. There is complete agreement about the continued need to help transform idle youth into productive members of society.
4. While there is no disagreement regarding the benefit of the program, a debate is brewing about how the YSTP fits into each government's overall technical training system. In view of mounting fiscal pressure, each government is seeking to better rationalize its technical training to eliminate duplication and overlap. This is a positive contribution to the institutionalization process.

Weaknesses

5. None of the program staffs possess the technical know-how to properly conduct labor market surveys, training needs assessments and tracer studies, nor are there plans to equip them with such skills. This handicap limits their ability to fully understand the labor market and skill needs of employers.

B. Impact on Youth Unemployment and Income

Strengths

1. The project was able to enroll about 4100 youth during the final phase, of which 3208 completed the training. Irrespective of the level of skill competency achieved during training, every graduate is far more employable as a result of the project. At a minimum, they are familiar with a trade, understand the responsibilities associated with wage employment and, hopefully, are motivated to become productive members of society. In this sense, the project has had a significant impact on unemployed youth.
2. While no program data were available on the change in income generated for youth from the training (due to the lack of follow-up studies conducted by the programs), in general, skilled labor in the EC region is reported to earn 40-50 percent more than unskilled labor. However, many graduates of the program initially earn wages comparable to those of the unskilled. This is especially common among those employed in industrial sewing. Following a period of informal apprenticeship, the wages of program graduates begin to approach those of skilled labor.

Weakness

3. Due to a lack of resources, the programs collectively were able to enroll only about 1 of every 6 unemployed youth in the EC region. National programs were partly responsible for this situation as several countries did not utilize fully their USAID project grant.

C. Linkage w/Private Sector and Other Technical Training Programs

Strength

1. Most training is in direct response to a skill need identified by program staff through contact with local employers and community leaders.

Weaknesses

2. Not one of the advisory committees established in the initial years of the project is functioning today. This has contributed to a relationship between the YSTP and employer community and other training bodies that is not as strong and expansive as it could be.

3. It is not clear who, if any staff member, is communicating regularly with the other technical training programs in the countries.
4. Consequently, training is not as demand-driven as it could be since the program does not have a comprehensive understanding of the economy's technical skill needs; the training quality may not be as effective as it could be without regular input from the employer community regarding course design and instruction methodology; and some of the YSTP activities may overlap with those of other training programs leading to inefficiencies in training delivery.

D. Training and Job Placement*

Strengths

1. Every country except Antigua and Barbuda and St. Vincent met the EOP target of training 450 individuals. The drop-out rate averaged 20%, ranging from a low of 10% in St. Vincent to 35% in Grenada.
2. The percentage of females trained was 66 percent, far exceeding the EOP target of 40 percent. The relatively higher rate of female participation was driven largely by the strong demand for training in the female dominated areas of industrial sewing and data processing. In addition, much of the training conducted for self-employment was in the area of craft production, a trade which also tends to be dominated by women.
3. The broader project goal of making youth more employable was clearly achieved given the large numbers of individuals trained under the program. As employment opportunities begin to expand, most of these individuals should move quickly into the workplace as a result of the technical and social skills and enhanced self-esteem they obtained through the YSTP.

* The reliability of the placement data is uncertain since it is based mainly on casual reports to the programs by graduates regarding their employment success. None of the programs conducts systematic follow-up surveys to determine whether its graduates obtain jobs. Information on trainees prior to graduation is reliable, however, since all programs routinely collect and maintain this data.

Weaknesses

4. Few of the programs were successful in preparing women for employment in non-traditional occupations. Only 9 percent of females were trained in those areas, far below the 20 percent EOP target. This was the result of few females electing to be trained in those areas because of their own discomforts about learning a predominantly "male" trade, as well as by a legitimate concern that employers, most of whom continue to possess traditional beliefs about men and women in the workplace, would not hire them.
5. The overall placement rate averaged 70%, below the 80 percent EOP target. The lower rate can be attributed, in part, to worsening macro-economic conditions in all countries during the fourth phase of the project. Growth rates among the OECS countries fell from 7% between 1984-87 to less than 4% during the 1988-91 period. Placement rates were also adversely affected by the emphasis in the fourth phase on self-employment which is much more difficult to successfully prepare individuals for, particularly youth, than wage employment.
6. The expectation of the project that trainees could graduate to self-employment following 8-12 weeks of technical and business skills training may not be realistic. To succeed in business, new entrepreneurs need accessible and affordable credit and intensive technical assistance during the formative stages of their enterprise, neither of which is offered by any of the programs nor was ever part of the project design.

E. Quality of Training

1. Varies widely, depending to a great degree on the workshop instructor and care taken by employers providing on-the-job (OJT) training to truly equip trainees with skills rather than simply use them as a form of cheap labor. Most workshop instructors are contracted local craftsmen who possess little, if any, teaching experience.

Strengths

2. Uniformly, the training is very practically oriented. Some programs have even put the trainees' skills and labor to public service. For example, in Dominica and St. Lucia, trainees in the building trades have constructed several needed community facilities.

3. Appropriately, training provided on-the-job is designed and executed entirely by employers to suit their particular skill needs and systems of operation.
4. Training facilities are adequate for the most part. Most training conducted outside the work site is held in either community centers or the instructor's workshop.
5. The social skills instruction is considered in most countries to be extremely valuable, especially by employers. This training seems to have a real impact on the attitudes, work performance, and motivation of youth. Employers in one country are so convinced of its effectiveness that they have expressed a willingness to purchase this training for their existing workforce.

Weaknesses

6. All programs use the course modules developed with assistance from the Organization of American States (OAS) during the initial phase of the project. However, contrary to the project's design, the curricula does not contain any basic performance standards nor testing and certification requirements to assure graduates meet those standards.
7. While most equipment is in good condition, replacing it may prove difficult as no current government budgets include funds for capital purchases; they only cover recurrent costs. Moreover, many training workshops suffered from a shortage of supplies due to frequent delays in purchasing and delivering the material.
8. Monitoring and evaluation of instruction to assure some standard of quality is relatively weak, especially in the case of OJT. Few programs have staff routinely observe and evaluate course modules and OJT. Most programs do not even require instructors to submit reports at the conclusion of the training.
9. Business skills instruction is not considered very effective for preparing individuals for self-employment. In most programs, the business skills instructor has little, if any, experience and/or education in small business development. Further weakening its effectiveness is the timing of the training as it probably would be more advantageous to offer it while the trainee is starting his/her business.

10. None of the programs conducts surveys of program graduates or employers to receive periodic feedback regarding the design, quality and method of training.

F. Management Information System

Strengths

1. Most programs collect and maintain a minimal amount of information on trainees, training activities, and training outcomes. This data is maintained in a well organized filing system.
2. In a few programs, staff is required to provide management with monthly work plans and activity reports. In addition, information is collected routinely from trainees on the quality of instruction, and from instructors on the performance of trainees.

Weaknesses

3. In some cases, the amount of information gathered was inadequate to measure results against project targets.
 - For eg., some programs in the reporting of project outcomes in their semi-annual reports neglected to disaggregate trainees by gender, essential for measuring results against the project target of having females comprise, at least, 40% of trainees.
4. Except in the case of comparing training results against project targets, none of the programs analyze the training data systematically as part of their planning process, nor utilize routinely relevant economic data collected by other government agencies and international organizations.
5. None of the programs collects data in the detail required to fully understand program outcomes. For example, regularly scheduled surveys of a sample of graduates to determine their employment status, income level, and whether they are applying their learned skills; and surveys of employers to determine their skill needs as well as obtain feedback on the performance of employed graduates.

6. Several programs possess computers which would greatly facilitate the maintenance and analysis of program data. However, none of these computers was being utilized, usually because the staff was not versed in computer operation.

G. Training Efficiency

Strengths

1. Nearly half the training is conducted on-the-job by employers. This training approach not only is less costly than workshop training but also has a higher success rate in employing graduates.
2. In part, because of the high percentage of OJT conducted, the unit cost of training is lower than it would be otherwise. The average cost was about US \$1.84 per participant hour of instruction. This is consistent with the cost of national training systems in the Latin America and Caribbean region which average between US \$1.50-2.00 per participant hour.

H. OECS Component

Strength

1. All governments found the semi-annual directors' meetings and horizontal cooperation activities to be extremely useful. In a formal resolution adopted at the final directors' meeting they recommended that the OECS continue to fund these activities.

Weaknesses

2. The OECS staff responsible for coordinating the regional activities of the project was criticized by several of the national programs for not dedicating enough attention to project management.
3. The technical assistance coordinated by the OECS staff in business skills development and project management was not particularly well regarded by the national directors.

IV. Recommendations

National Programs

- A. Concentrate on Improving Program Quality and Efficiency: Now that the programs have, for the most part, achieved the goal of institutionalization, program staff should direct their attention to upgrading all aspects of the training program. This can be done at little financial cost to the programs by utilizing other donor provided services. The focus of this effort should be to:
- o Rationalize the national training system to eliminate duplication and overlap and to improve the degree of collaboration among training deliverers
 - o Collect more detailed data on program outcomes on a regular basis and automate the management information system to facilitate program analysis and planning
 - o Strengthen the linkage with the private sector through establishment of a formal employer-YSTP working group to gain a better understanding of their skill needs and to expand the number of placement opportunities for graduates
 - o Establish a system to monitor and evaluate training and employment outcomes
 - o Train staff in the conduct of tracer studies, labor market surveys, and utilization of economic data to better match training with the demand for skills in the market place
 - o Assess whether to continue training youth for self-employment in view of the lack of affordable credit and appropriate technical assistance for graduates
 - o Develop performance standards for each trade and a testing and certification system to assure that graduates meet those standards
- B. Utilize OJT to Greater Degree: On the job training which is closely monitored to insure that trainees are equipped with productive skills is far more cost-effective than training conducted outside the employment site. To the extent possible, programs should expand the amount of OJT offered.

C. Expand Program Revenue: Due to scarce government funds, the program needs to aggressively generate outside income to support its activities. Some promising examples would include:

- o Where feasible, having employers pay a training/employment fee for each graduate they hire who was trained by the program in a workshop (as opposed to OJT)
- o Where feasible, having employers pay a stipend to trainees during the training period
- o Promoting and selling the social skills training to companies
- o Marketing more of the goods produced by trainees

Additionally, the programs should study the feasibility of instituting a training fee for participants (with a credit program for those with limited liquid assets), as well as a national training tax or tax incentives to support all national public vocational training and education programs.

D. Exploit the New Funding Provided through the SDF: The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) is expected to soon augment the Special Development Fund (SDF) by over US \$126 million to finance new economic development and poverty alleviation programs. Grants totaling US \$5 million have been targeted for skills training programs in the region, and are expected to be awarded by early 1993. Working through their respective governments, national program staff should undertake the requisite steps to obtain these grants.

OECS

E. Continue to Support the National Programs Through the Coordination and, possibly, Funding of Regional Activities: As the regional representative of the Eastern Caribbean states, the OECS is the natural choice for continuing to coordinate the information and exchange activities noted to be extremely worthwhile by the directors of the six national programs. Specifically, these would be the annual meetings of the national directors, and horizontal exchanges between national staff. To the extent possible, the OECS should finance these activities as well.

- F. Discontinue the Provision of Technical Assistance to the Programs: The national programs should obtain technical assistance directly from experts in the field as there is no inherent advantage in procuring these services through the OECS.

USAID-RDO/C

- G. Utilize to a Greater Extent Existing U.S. Government and other Donor Funded Programs to Support YSTP: There are a number of U.S. and other donor supported development programs which could provide valuable technical assistance to the national training programs. RDO/C staff must actively promote these programs to national directors and identify how they can help to improve their training programs. Examples of collaboration between YSTP and other donor programs include:

- Recruiting Peace Corps Volunteers with relevant expertise to design and develop automated management information systems, and develop performance standards and a certification system for the technical training
- Providing training to national program staff through USAID participant training programs (such as the Caribbean Leadership Development Training), in social survey research, testing and evaluation methods, and administration of employment and training programs
- As noted above, linking the CDB initiative to award grants for skill training activities with the YSTP

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation was to review Phase IV (10/89-6/92) of the Regional Non-Formal Skills Training Project (538-0073) to assess the extent to which the project has achieved its goals, purposes and outputs, as specified in the project grant agreements, and to provide recommendations to further strengthen the institutionalization of the training program in each of the six participating Eastern Caribbean (EC) states.

B. Methodology

This evaluation was a collective effort, utilizing the services of six local consultants to conduct individual evaluations of the project in each of their respective EC countries. These consultants were financed through the regional component of the project, managed by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (O ECS). This was done to expedite completion of the evaluation by the regional evaluator and also to further build the local capacity to conduct independent evaluations of technical training programs.

The evaluation is based on information obtained through interviews with key individuals as well as a comprehensive review of national program office files, and a series of project related documents, including grant agreements, past evaluations, financial records, and annual reports and work plans. Discussions were held with national staff, relevant ministers and permanent secretaries, training instructors, trainees, graduates, local employers, the director of the O ECS component of the project, and the USAID project manager. In addition, several of the local evaluators conducted surveys of former graduates of the program to determine their employment status and satisfaction with the training. Employers of program graduates were also surveyed by several of the evaluators to obtain their impressions of the training (see appendices A and B for a complete listing of the individuals and documents consulted).

It should be noted that the individual national evaluations varied considerably in quality and scope which complicated somewhat the execution of the regional evaluation. Nonetheless, the information contained in those reports was extremely useful, without which this document could not have been completed within the prescribed time frame.

II. Project Background

A. History

This project was initiated by USAID in 1982 to provide non-formal skills training to a growing number of unemployed, out-of-

school and, increasingly, disenchanting youth in the EC as well as to improve the prospects for economic expansion in the region by equipping greater numbers of individuals with productive employment skills. The project sought to fill an identified void in the existing educational systems of the EC. A series of Project commissioned labor market surveys found that while structural changes in the formal educational system might address manpower needs in the long run, there was no program which could address these needs in the short term other than the Youth Skills Training Project (YSTP).

The project was executed through a grant to the Organization of American States (OAS) which served as the implementing agency. Initially, project activities were confined to Barbados, Dominica, and St. Lucia, but were later expanded under an 1985 amendment to include Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent; Barbados graduated from the project in 1985.

The project provides non-formal technical training in the agricultural, commercial, industrial and service sectors to unemployed and underemployed youth aged 15-25. Training is short-term, 3-6 months and practically oriented, conducted in workshops and on the job, in an apprentice like fashion. There is also a job placement component of the program to assist graduates in obtaining employment or in starting their own business.

From the start, participating governments have been meeting the cost of core national staff salaries and office space. USAID has been subsidizing the cost of regional coordination activities, long and short-term technical assistance, student stipends, instructor salaries, staff travel, and equipment and supplies. During this fourth phase, USAID has been gradually reducing its financial contribution to these costs, to the point where several countries have been fully funding their training activities since October 1, 1991.

B. Past Evaluations

Two previous evaluations have been conducted of the project. The first, completed in June 1984, served as the mid-term evaluation of the first phase of the project. The second assessment was conducted in January 1987.

The results of both reports were sufficiently favorable to warrant expansion and extension of project activities, though each evaluation identified a number of areas in need of improvement.

1. 1984 Evaluation

Highlighted favorably in the report was the attainment by the three participating countries of a high level of political support for the project at the ministerial level, the fulfillment of

prescribed tasks to institutionalize the project at the national level, and the training and placing in jobs large numbers of formerly unemployed youth. Deficiencies noted in the training programs related to the absence of standardized testing and a certification system for graduates, the inability of programs to adapt to changing labor market conditions, and a need to improve the preparation of youth for self-employment. These shortcomings were addressed to some extent in subsequent phases of the project, but remain areas of concern.

2. 1987 Evaluation

The evaluation found that the project had been successful in making youths employable, implementing the Modules of Employable Skills developed with assistance from the International Labor Organization, applying practical training methods, generating positive economic returns to trainees and employers of the region, and creating a functioning training network in each of the six countries that could administratively stand on its own. At the same time, these countries were found to need additional time to assume the full costs of the training. In response, the evaluation recommended extending the project, but under a structured timetable aimed at phasing out gradually all USAID financial support for the training. Under the extension, it also was recommended that USAID continue to fund the regional cooperation activities and the provision of technical assistance to further strengthen the capacity of the programs to deliver training effectively, especially in preparing individuals for self-employment.

III. Current Evaluation

A. End of Project Targets

This evaluation covers the final phase of the project, from 10/1/89-6/30/92. During this period, each participating country was to steadily increase its administrative and financial control of the training, assuming complete responsibility by June 30, 1992. The OECS also was given a grant during this period to coordinate the semi-annual National Directors' meetings, horizontal cooperation among staff of participating countries, and technical assistance in small business development, instructor training, self-financing and other areas, as required.

The end of project targets (EOPS) for the six countries during this period, as prescribed in the grant agreement were:

1) Project to be fully institutionalized, evidenced by:

-- members of project staff will be accorded established positions in the government or in a non-governmental statutory organization;

- each national office will undertake without need for external assistance, a) planning and scheduling of training modules, b) promotion and delivery of modules to private and public enterprises, c) continuity in staffing, d) training and professional development of staff, e) prudent and timely budgeting of expenses, f) timely and accurate reporting of expenses and activities, and g) timely decision making and problem solving;
 - provision of financial resources sufficient to pay the costs of operating project activities, including instructor salaries, training materials and training stipends.
- 2) The minimum number of additional people trained will be 150 annually for a total of not less than 450 over the three years. About 20% of those trained will be in self-employment. Not less than 40% of the trainees will be women and no less than 20% will be trained in areas which are non-traditional for women in the Caribbean.
 - 3) Eighty (80) percent of trainees will be placed within three months of graduation.

B. Inputs

During the project period, 10/1/89-6/30/92, USAID was to provide a total of US \$990,000 to the six Eastern Caribbean States for continued partial payment of the training. USAID's subsidy of the training was to decline gradually each year of the project. In the cases of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and St. Lucia the subsidy would fall to 0% by FY 92, at which time each national government would be responsible for fully funding the YSTP. For the other participating countries (Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent), the subsidy would fall to 20% between 10/1/92 and the PACD of 6/30/92. To finance the regional component of the project, the OECS was provided with a grant of US \$115,000.

USAID's contributions to each national program subsidized trainee stipends, instructor salaries, and supplies, tools and equipment. Each program provided 100 percent of the cost of core staff salaries and office space. Technical assistance and regional coordination was provided for entirely by USAID through the grant agreement with the OECS.

The funding mechanism prescribed in the grant agreements was for USAID to reimburse governments for their training expenses. Thus, national governments had to advance expenditures for the training services in order to receive grant funds from USAID. This created problems for some countries which were not able to expend their full grant allotment. A summary of project funding during the fourth phase for each country and the OECS follows. (It is

important to note that these figures were obtained on 6/30/92, and may not reflect the actual closing balances.)

**FUNDING SUMMARY
(US\$)**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Balance</u>
Antigua/Barbuda	\$110,000	\$109,775	\$ 225
Dominica	137,000	124,732	12,268
Grenada	248,000	226,000	22,000
St. Kitts/Nevis	194,000	170,000	24,000
St. Lucia	110,000	104,000	6,000
St. Vincent	191,000	26,419	164,581
OECS	115,000	115,000	0

C. Outcomes

1. Training and Employment

a. Training Program Structure

The training consisted of a mix of modular, short-term courses of 2-3 months provided in workshops, and on the job training (OJT), conducted in small businesses as well as larger, mainly foreign owned plants for a period of 3-6 months. The delivery mode was driven largely by the economic structure of the local labor market. For the most part, training was offered throughout the country, as well as the outer islands of the multi-island states of St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and Grenada. An exception was Antigua and Barbuda where all the training was held around the capital of St. Johns.

In rural areas, most training was modular, conducted in a workshop by a contracted instructor, usually a local craftsman. Many of these modules were aimed at preparing individuals for self-employment in the construction, clothing, confectionery, auto repair, and craft industries. Few programs possessed a permanent training site outside the capital. Usually, the facility was a community center, church annex, or the instructor's home workshop.

On the job training (OJT) tended to prevail in larger urban areas because of the greater number of employers there, both large and small. Training in the larger enterprises was mainly

concentrated in the areas of industrial sewing, and computer data entry; in smaller businesses, the training was more varied, tending to replicate that offered in the modules. Among the programs, OJT was the preferred method of training because it proved to be far more cost effective: training costs were much lower as equipment, tools and instruction were supplied by the employer, and most trainees were able to secure employment with the business upon completion of their training attachment.

All countries provided trainees with a stipend, ranging from EC \$5-10/day to cover transportation and meals. Stipends absorb between 30-60 percent of the training budget, excluding core staff salaries. Trainees placed in OJT often received a training wage from the employer, equal to the daily stipend. In April 1992, St. Vincent eliminated the stipend in order to augment the scarce amount of national funds available for training. For similar reasons, the program in Grenada is also considering eliminating the stipend. In addition to expanding the amount of national resources available for other training related expenses, such as instructor salaries, equipment, and tools, removing the stipend provides the added benefit of filtering out the less motivated youth who are unlikely to self-finance their transportation and meal costs. On the other hand, such action may prevent many motivated, but indigent youth from participating in the program. It is important for St. Vincent to monitor closely the effect of this policy. If enrollments drop significantly because few can afford the training, it may be necessary to reinstate the stipend, but on a needs basis only.

b. Training Performance

Collectively, the countries were successful in meeting the prescribed training outputs. A total of 4,096 individuals enrolled in training during phase IV, of which 3,208 graduated, for a drop-out rate of 20%. The aggregated end of project target was to train 2700 youth. All countries except Antigua and Barbuda and St. Vincent and the Grenadines exceeded their individual target of 450 graduates. Where training outputs were disaggregated by gender, it was evident that more than 65 percent of the trainees were female, thus exceeding the EOP of 40 percent. In large part, this was due to the significant amount of training in data entry, industrial sewing, and craft production which are predominantly female occupations. Programs were far less successful in training women in non-traditional areas as only about 9 percent of females were enrolled in these, far below the 20 percent target. The poor performance of the programs in this area is due, in part, to the competing objectives of the project which set a high job placement target of 80 percent, while at the same time requiring programs to train a significant portion of female youth in non-traditional occupations which, because of the socio-cultural attitudes of employers, make it difficult to attract women to those trades.

Every program but one failed to meet the project's 80 percent job placement target. The exception was St. Vincent and the Grenadines which had a placement rate of 85%. The overall placement rate during this fourth phase averaged 70%, significantly below the 81 percent average reported in the 1987 evaluation. The National Directors attributed this to the slow down in economic growth experienced in the region during the last several years as well as to the increased emphasis in this phase on preparing more youth for self-employment, a much more difficult outcome to achieve. This is borne out by the data which indicates that only about 8 percent of trainees became self-employed, far below the 20 percent EOP target. The programs should not be completely held accountable for this, however, as two critical elements of a successful training program for self-employment were absent under the YSTP: affordable credit for graduates and any follow-up training or technical assistance for them during the formation of their businesses. For this reason, the self-employment target of 20 percent may have been unrealistic. Unless the country programs can provide such support to graduates, either directly or through other local programs, it may not be cost-effective for them to continue preparing individuals for entrepreneurship.

c. Impact on Youth Unemployment and Income

The unemployment rate for youth (15-25) in the six EC countries is estimated to range from 20 to 40 percent. This project was initiated, in part, to help alleviate the problem of high unemployment by equipping youth with employable skills and assisting them to either secure wage employment or start their own business. In spite of having come close to meeting most of its end of project outputs during the fourth phase, the project was not able to significantly impact the target group as only one in six unemployed youth in the region received training under the YSTP. Moreover, of course, not every trainee was able to secure employment. The programs simply did not have the financial resources to seriously combat the employability problem of youth in the region. To expand their impact, the programs will need to obtain additional funding as well as use their existing training resources more efficiently.

The effect of the training on the income levels of youth is much less precise due to the absence of reliable income data for program graduates. None of the programs collects such data from participants either prior to or following training. Consequently, the information obtained from National Directors on trainee income levels is speculative. Unskilled youth tend to earn the minimum wage, approximately EC \$20/day. Following training, wages can increase up to EC \$30/day, depending on the occupation. Skilled construction work tends to pay well, while work in an industrial sewing plant pays only marginally more than the minimum wage.

The following table provides a summary of the training and

employment outcomes among training programs.

PROGRAM OUTPUTS*

<u>Output</u>	<u>Ant/B</u>	<u>Dom</u>	<u>Gre</u>	<u>StK/N</u>	<u>StL</u>	<u>SVG</u>	<u>Tot</u>	<u>Av</u>
# Trainees Start	295	515	1088	586	1119	493	4096	682
# Trainees Complete	236	472	708	471	878	443	3208	535
Drop-out Rate	20%	13%	35%	20%	22%	10%		20%
% Trainees-Female	56%	60%	60%	54%	89%	**		66%
% Female-Non-Trad.	13%	10%	13%	5%	1%	**		9%
% Training-OJT	71%	0%	50%	20%	80%	40%		48%
# Employed	91	375	686	425	876	420	2873	479
% Employed	58%	73%	63%	73%	78%	85%		70%
% Self-Employed	5%	7%	20%	1%	10%	**		8%

* The reliability of the data on placement rates is uncertain due to the casual nature in which it was collected by program staff. Job Developers (J-D) were responsible for identifying graduates who secured employment immediately following training. Graduates were monitored in this fashion by the J-D usually for no more than 2 months following graduation. No formal follow-up surveys of graduates were taken by any of the programs to validate their employment outcome. Moreover, due to time limitations it was not possible for the regional evaluator to verify through sample testing methods the quantitative data regarding the number of individuals trained and employed by the national programs.

** No data available.

2. Training Quality

a. Responsiveness to Training Needs

While the programs have been relatively successful in placing graduates in jobs, they still may not be responding adequately to the training needs of the region. This is evidenced by a complete lack of utilization by the programs of labor market surveys, comprehensive training needs assessments, tracer studies, and related economic data to assist them in designing their training programs to meet the skill needs of employers.

Of particular note is that none of the country programs is being advised by a functioning Country Advisory Committee (CAC). Formation of this committee was made a condition precedent in each of the project grant agreements. The project paper proposed the establishment of smaller technical and community committees as well. The CAC was to be represented by employer associations, other relevant government departments, such as the Ministries of Labor and Education, youth and community development organizations and other technical training institutions. Members were to provide a vital formal linkage between the YSTP and the private sector and other training deliverers. An active committee would offer consistent feedback to the YSTP on the training demands of employers, the occupational skills needed by rural communities, and the opportunities for collaboration with other training programs, both public and private. Employer representatives were deemed especially important as they would serve to validate the programs' training methods and curriculum, and encourage other employers to participate in the YSTP by training and/or hiring program graduates.

However, neither the CACs, nor the other committees have been utilized to the extent envisioned by USAID. This was made clear in the 1987 evaluation, wherein it was noted that "only the CACs are functioning and, in most cases, the CAC is not very active after the first year of the project." During the fourth phase of the project the CACs never met. The absence of a functioning CAC has precluded the YSTP from developing a strong, formal linkage with the private sector, relevant government agencies and other training institutions. This creates an information gap between the supply and demand for training, the results of which could be manifested in lower job placement rates, skill shortages, and a duplication of training throughout the country.

The only link between the YSTP and the private sector is the job developer who is responsible for identifying both training and employment opportunities with businesses and conveying this information to the instructor-trainer, the principal designer of the training programs. Contact between the job developer and employers appears to be unsystematic as evidenced, in part, by the absence of an employer roster among the programs. In some cases,

the YSTP program is contacted directly by employers or their representatives. The national development agencies of Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent, for example, have at times asked the YSTP to conduct training for newly established foreign plants, usually in the areas of industrial sewing and data processing. The program in Dominica appears to use the most systematic approach to determine training needs. The job developer routinely holds meetings with community groups to gather information about their training needs. This information forms the basis of future training programs outside the capital area.

Contact between the YSTP and other relevant government agencies and technical training institutions is even less formal than its relationship with employers. In such cases, no one among the staff is responsible for establishing and maintaining these contacts. Consequently, the training provided by the YSTP is in many cases duplicated by other training organizations in the country, creating inefficiencies in the national training system. At the same time, opportunities for collaboration among the training programs are rarely exploited, largely due to the absence of a formal communication channel among the skill training institutions. Consequently, the YSTPs have not been able to benefit from the technical expertise, financial resources, and facilities and equipment of other national organizations.

b. Curriculum and Instructors

Training is provided both on-the-job by employers as well as in modular based workshops by contracted technical instructors. Workshop based training is held 6-8 hours daily for a period of 3-6 months. The workshops are taught utilizing the modules developed by the Organization of American States during the earlier phases of the project. Training is very practical, reflected in the lack of theoretical instruction and usage of written materials by instructors. Most often, trainees are involved in "hands-on" projects, and evaluated on the quality of their output. Some programs have involved trainees, particularly those in construction modules, in community projects as a means of investing their skills in the public good. In Dominica, for example, trainees refurbished a youth center in one community, and in St. Lucia, trainees have been involved in constructing four new YSTP training centers around the island.

Workshop instructors are generally qualified local craftsman with little, if any, formal teaching experience. Instructors in Antigua and Barbuda are on loan to YSTP from the Ministry of Public Works, ostensibly to reduce government training costs. Only three programs, Dominica, Grenada and St. Lucia, conduct regular training programs for new instructors. None of the programs utilizes the competency-based instruction method. As a result, the quality of training varies widely among the programs as does the competency level of program graduates.

Training provided directly by employers (OJT) ranges from 2-6 months, after which time most graduates are able to convert to full-time employees. Most OJT is conducted in urban areas and industrial zones where the larger employers are located. The training is designed and executed entirely by employers, understandably to suit their particular skill needs. The proportion of OJT conducted by the programs ranges from a low of 0 percent in Dominica to a high of 80 percent in St. Lucia. This type of training tends to be more cost effective than the workshops as a result of its lower cost and higher incidence of placing trainees in jobs.

All programs supplement the technical training, both workshop and OJT based, with two hours weekly of training in social skills and business skills. Social skills training covers mainly the areas of human relations and individual responsibility in the work place. Some programs have expanded the social skills training to include instruction in "life-related areas", such as family planning, drug abuse, and preventive health care. Instructors are usually full-time employees of the national staff and, in some cases, double up as the business skills instructor. Outside speakers are also recruited periodically to provide expertise in a particular area. Uniformly throughout the region, social skills instruction is rated highly by employers, especially those who train individuals on-the-job as they are able to witness firsthand the impact of the instruction on improving the trainees' attitude, work behavior and performance.

Business skills instruction is considered less effective, however, in its impact on trainees. This training is designed to help prepare trainees for self-employment by offering instruction in financial management, marketing, pricing, and employer relations. Except for Dominica which contracts with a local business person, all the programs rely on a member of their core staff to conduct this training. Most of these individuals have never owned a business nor been educated in business management or economics. Most of their backgrounds are in either teaching or social work. Moreover, very few have received formal training in business since they began instructing.

c. Pre- and Post-Training Counseling

All training applicants are interviewed for acceptance into the program. The competition for enrollment varies greatly depending on the demand for the program and supply of training slots. In a few cases, more applicants are denied entry than are admitted to the program, while in others, every applicant is accepted. During the interview, program staff seek applicants who appear well motivated to learn, and who meet the minimum entry criteria of being unemployed or underemployed and between the ages of 15 and 25.

None of the programs counsels applicants during their selection of a trade. This decision is left entirely to applicants based on their individual preference. At times, this creates false expectations among applicants who enter training programs poorly suited for their particular strengths and, consequently, drop out of the program. The number of early withdrawals might be reduced were the programs to provide applicants with a battery of diagnostic tests beforehand to determine the particular trade for which they are most naturally qualified.

Most programs provide new participants with an orientation to the training to insure that they have a full understanding beforehand of the program and what is expected of them. The program in Grenada has integrated its orientation into the social skills instruction module which is provided during the first two weeks of the training period, prior to the start of technical instruction.

Every national program provides some form of employment counseling to trainees. In most cases, this counseling is provided as part of the social skills instruction module, wherein trainees are taught the proper approaches to searching for employment, interviewing for a job, and advancing within the company. Most programs also assist graduates in locating employment through the efforts of the job developer who normally has a wide network of contacts within the business community. Most trainees enrolled in OJT programs are immediately placed in a job upon graduation with their employer-trainer. Graduates of workshop programs have to rely much more heavily on themselves and the job developer to secure employment. A few programs, namely Antigua and Barbuda and St. Lucia, also refer graduates to other government agencies providing job referral and placement services to the general population, such as the Ministry of Labor and the Human Resources Unit of the Ministry of Economic Development. This utilization of other government resources to help graduates find jobs is an excellent way to stretch scarce program resources as it liberates the job developer to devote more time to developing linkages and identifying training opportunities with new employers.

d. Facilities, Equipment and Supplies

The quality of the central offices and training facilities varies considerably among the national programs. For the most part, the offices are adequate in size and construction. The two exceptions are Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada. In Antigua there is not sufficient space to process training applicants. In response, in 1990 the program began construction of a more spacious headquarters but has been unable to complete the remaining work due to a lack of funds. The Ministry of Economic Development has been unwilling to provide the additional US \$64,000 requested by the YSTP to finish the building. In Grenada, the program office building suffers from periodic flooding, and chronic noise from the

adjacent highway.

The training facilities are of two general kind: workshops; and job sites where OJT is conducted. In most countries, the workshops are held in local buildings, such as community centers, schools, church annexes, and the home of the instructor who, often, is a local craftsman. Naturally, these facilities vary greatly in terms of their physical space, lighting, and ventilation. To standardize the quality of the physical training structures as well as to eliminate the continuous job of searching for available training sites in the community, St. Lucia recently constructed four industrial training centers around the island. Nearly all the workshop training will be conducted at these four centers. Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada also have permanent classroom facilities which house a good portion of their workshops.

In general, the supply of training equipment is adequate. In a few cases, trainees are forced to share a piece of equipment, such as an industrial sewing machine or typewriter. Most of the equipment is in good condition, having been purchased within the last six years and been well maintained. The audio-visual and computer equipment used by the program staff is greatly under utilized, however. All the programs had purchased a video camera, VCR and television to use as teaching tools. It was expected that the programs would either produce their own instructional videos or purchase a number of them in appropriate trades. It was learned that only a couple of programs had actually used this equipment and, then, only to show an off-the-shelf video for the social skills instruction module.

Two programs possess a personal computer, but both are completely inoperative as they have yet to be equipped with the appropriate software to provide needed administrative and analytical support to the central office.

Many programs experienced problems with the timely ordering and delivery of supplies. At times this was due to bureaucratic bottlenecks within the Ministry in approving supply purchases, but also was the result of poor planning by program staff. Often supplies would not be available at the start of a training module. Examples would be nails, screws and wood for training in construction, or fabric for training in industrial sewing. This, obviously, reduced the effectiveness of the training.

Most programs inventory their equipment and tools and store it in secure locations. Equipment based in the outlying communities is more vulnerable because of the absence of a continued presence of national staff who might deter potential thieves. It was reported in Grenada, for example, that 50% of the tools and equipment based outside the capital had been stolen during the first several years of the project. Since then, the program staff has transferred the equipment to better secured facilities.

Training conducted on the job, by implication, guarantees that the equipment will be relevant. The quality of the facility and equipment does, of course, vary widely. Some facilities are the workshops of small business persons, while others are larger industrial assembly plants, usually located in specially designated export processing zones.

Nearly all the training equipment was purchased with project funds during the earlier phases of the project when USAID was financing 100 percent of the training. The current national program budgets do not include funds to cover capital costs. Some programs, such as St. Lucia and Dominica, are aggressively pursuing assistance from other donors to finance necessary equipment purchases. St. Lucia received recently several kilns for a new program in ceramics, and Dominica was able to purchase a new vehicle with funds from the Organization of American States. The other national programs will need to do the same and/or secure additional budgetary resources to cover anticipated capital expenditures.

e. Standardization and Evaluation

This area represents one of the most significant shortcomings of the training. No minimum standards exist among any of the national programs with respect to the material to be covered in the curriculum of each trade, method and quality of instruction, and adequacy of equipment and physical training facility. The potential for inferior instruction is, perhaps, greatest in OJT where employers could easily abuse the program by using the trainees as a cheap form of unskilled labor. While employers should have the liberty to train individuals under their own methods, the national programs have a fundamental responsibility to insure that minimum standards of training quality are met by them.

The absence of standards also extends to the competency levels of program graduates. None of the national programs has established a minimum set of competency standards which trainees must meet in order to graduate from the program. Consequently, some trainees are completing the training without having learned even the most basic aspects of the trade. Such a situation can adversely affect the program's reputation among employers, some of whom might be less apt to hire graduates. While the degree to which this is happening is uncertain, it is clear that a vocational program which graduates individuals without any assurance that they have learned the fundamental elements of a trade is not being responsive to either the trainee or to the employer community. The standardization of courses and graduation requirements are inseparably linked as any imposition of minimum graduation requirements will, by necessity, force the programs to standardize the quality of their instruction.

Every national program evaluates the training, to some degree.

Most of this evaluation is ad hoc, however, conducted by job developers and instructor-trainers who periodically visit the training sites. Few programs require the Job Developers or Instructor-Trainers to report formally on their visits. The lack of systematic evaluation of the training precludes program staff from detecting weaknesses in the training and applying corrective measures.

Several programs provide students with an opportunity to evaluate in writing the quality of the instructor. This feedback is analyzed by program staff and does influence future selections of training instructors. Trainees are evaluated systematically by instructors of modular courses in nearly all national programs. However, the evaluation forms tend to focus predominantly on the attitude and behavior of the trainee rather than his/her technical competency. Trainees are not evaluated on every skill task they are taught. Generally, they are assessed on their overall understanding of the technical trade. In contrast, trainees enrolled in on the job training programs are rarely evaluated by the employer-instructor. The evaluation is reflected implicitly in the employer's decision to hire the trainee.

f. Trainee and Employer Feedback

Except for the evaluations conducted by trainees of their instructors, no other efforts are made by any of the programs to collect information from participants about their training or work experience following graduation. The programs tracked whether trainees secured employment immediately following graduation, but this appears to have been done solely to comply with USAID project reporting requirements. Further, in the case of employed graduates, the national programs failed to assess whether their jobs related to their training. This information is important for understanding the cost-effectiveness of the program. If large numbers of employed graduates are working in jobs unrelated to their training, there is less of a need to continue training youth in technical areas; perhaps, equipping them with social skills and providing them with employment counseling would be sufficient to move them into the workforce.

None of the programs conducts systematic surveys of employers to determine their opinion of the training program. This information is critical to knowing whether the programs are demand-driven; train participants adequately; and utilize relevant training equipment and methods. The only feedback from employers is obtained casually during periodic visits by the job developer to businesses to recruit them as either trainers or employers of program participants. This feedback does not appear to be analyzed routinely by any of the national programs, so its effect on future programming and policy decisions is probably minimal.

3. Training Efficiency

a. Internal

The internal efficiency of the project is reflected in the average cost per participant hour of training. Internal efficiencies improve as the completion rate among trainees increases. The completion rate among the six programs averaged 80 percent, ranging from a low of 65 percent in Grenada to a high of 92 percent in Dominica. During the fourth phase of the project, the cost per participant hour among the six programs averaged US \$1.84. This is consistent with the cost of national training systems in the Latin American and Caribbean region which average between US \$1.50-2.00 per participant hour. For graduates, the cost of the training was higher, averaging \$2.34 per participant hour; it was lowest in St. Vincent (\$1.57), and highest in Antigua and Barbuda (\$4.06). Overall, training costs would have been far higher were it not for the significant portion of OJT conducted by each of the programs.

A comparison of the training costs per participant hour for each national program is contained in the table below.

	START	COMP	COMP RATE	COST	COST PER START	COST PER GRADUATE
A&B	380	313	82%	\$444,659	\$1170	\$1420
STL	1119	878	78	516,592	461	588
DOM	515	472	92	556,018	1079	1178
STV	493	443	90	244,235	495	551
STK	586	471	80	395,160	674	839
GRN	1088	708	65	535,803	492	756
TOT	4181	3285		2,692,467		
AVG	697	548	79%	448,745	644	819
AVG. Per participant hour:				\$1.84		
AVG. Per graduate hour:				\$2.34		

b. External

The external efficiency of training is the second comparative measure of the overall efficiency of vocational instruction. External efficiency is measured by the percentage of training entrants that are able to obtain wage employment or become self-employed. If graduates are not obtaining employment it is evident that the training programs are not sensitized to employers' needs and the realities of the job market, and/or the quality of training is so poor that employers are reluctant to invest in program graduates.

The average placement rate among the six programs was 70%, which was below the EOP target of 80%. Trainees learning on the job tended to have much higher placement rates as few employers would accept trainees that they were not planning to hire at the conclusion of the training period. This further underscores the need to increase the proportion of OJT conducted.

The placement rate during this 4th phase was lower than the preceding phase 1984-87, when 81 percent of trainees obtained employment. Fewer trainees were able to secure employment during this last phase which was due, in part, to the weaker performance of the economies of the region between 1988-91. Economic growth among the OECS countries averaged about 7 percent annually between 1984-87, but since then has fallen to 4 percent. Further, the employment success of trainees may not improve anytime soon as a consequence of the structural economic adjustments that several OECS countries are undertaking at the moment. In the immediate term, these programs are certain to have an adverse effect on the work force, adding to the region's number of unemployed.

c. Program Coordination

A determinant of efficiency not captured by the participant training cost nor the job placement rate is whether the youth skills program is the most effective way to use scarce resources for non-formal vocational training given the number of other similar training programs in each of the six countries. While initially the youth skills training project may have filled an important niche that wasn't being met by other programs at the time, it is evident that today there exist a host of other technical training institutions and programs in the region that compete to some extent with YSTP. Consequently, every government in the region suffers to varying degrees from program redundancies in the delivery of vocational education and training. The other principal deliverers of VET are formal secondary schools, national colleges, ministries of community development and labor, and non-governmental organizations. Efforts to reduce these inefficiencies have been hampered by the absence of any formal mechanism to coordinate the work of the various training programs in each country. The country advisory committees, which functioned during the early years of the project but which are now inactive, were to serve this purpose as well as to facilitate interaction with the employer community.

The most extreme cases of program duplication are in Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada. In Antigua and Barbuda, another program operating out of the same ministry as YSTP also places individuals into OJT attachments with employers and pays trainees a stipend. The National College of Grenada operates a Continuing Education Program which provides non-formal skills training in communities throughout the country. The governments of both these countries

have come to recognize these redundancies and are taking remedial action; none of the other governments, however, have begun to formally address this issue, though they are aware of it.

The need to rationalize non-formal vocational training is especially pressing in resource scarce environments such as the Eastern Caribbean as these countries cannot afford to waste limited public funds on redundant programs. As part of this rationalization effort, a formal mechanism, either an advisory committee or some other representative body, needs to be established to coordinate training activities on an on-going basis to safeguard against such wastage in the delivery of vocational training.

4. Administrative Institutionalization

a. Quality of Staff

All of the national programs have converted the staff of the YSTP into permanent positions of the national civil service. This represents a significant step by the governments to fully institutionalize the training program. The size of each national staff ranges from a low of 4 in Dominica to a high of 8 in Grenada. All national staffs consist of at least a Director, Job Developer, Instructor-Trainer, and Secretary. Some programs also have elected to employ directly a driver/messenger and an instructor of social skills and one of business skills.

The core staffs are successfully managing the training program without any external assistance. Most of the Directors are highly motivated individuals, strongly committed to the program. The job developers remain the critical link between the training and the labor market as they continually work to identify the training needs of businesses and job opportunities for participants. While most job developers are performing adequately in this sense, the linkage would be far stronger were input from businesses provided systematically to YSTP through some sort of private sector advisory committee.

The instructor-trainer has become more of a coordinator of training than a trainer of instructors. Only two programs, Dominica and St. Lucia, provide contracted instructors with any in-service training in their technical trade or in modern teaching methods. This is not surprising since none of the instructor-trainers has any prior experience or academic training in technical trades or vocational instruction.

Most of the professional staff have experience in teaching, usually at the primary level, or have been career civil servants. Few, if any, are skilled technicians, human resource development specialists or have any prior experience with other vocational training programs. Consequently, the core staff lack the

technical know-how to properly conduct labor market surveys, formal training needs assessments and tracer studies. In spite of the staffs' lack of relevant experience in vocational training, only two of the programs, Dominica and St. Lucia, have provided training directly to their staff. This training has been in the areas of micro-enterprise development and modern instruction methods. The other programs, while recognizing the need for staff training, were unable to secure training funds from the ministry. The little training they were able to offer their staff was that provided under the OECS component of the project. In addition, some national staffs received training through the horizontal exchanges, also funded under the OECS component of the project.

Given the amount of training conducted by each of the programs during the fourth phase, a core staff of more than 5 individuals (Director, Job Developer, Instructor-Trainer, Secretary, and Driver/Messenger) is difficult to justify. The full-time social and business skills instructors, though they may be well qualified, are very under utilized as most teach no more than 4-5 hours per week. Programs like St. Vincent, Grenada, and St. Kitts and Nevis which have chosen to hire permanent full-time staff to teach social skills and business skills could significantly reduce their program costs by contracting out this instruction in the same way that the technical instruction is procured.

b. Management Information Systems

Most programs collect and process a minimal amount of information related to the training process and training outputs. Core staff of several programs file monthly activity reports. For example, the Job Developers report regularly to the Director on the identification of new training and employment opportunities for participants while instructor trainers often report on the progress of training courses. These reports were read regularly by the Director and do influence program decisions.

Every national program was directed under the project to collect and report on training outcomes. The data was incorporated into a report which was presented by each of the six program directors at the OECS sponsored regional conferences, held every six months during the fourth phase of the project. This process of collecting, storing and analyzing the data was entirely manual as none of the programs utilized the services of a computer, even though two programs possessed the necessary hardware. Further, some of the programs failed to collect the data in the detail required to report training outcomes against the EOP targets. For example, in one case training was not reported by gender, and in several others no information was available on the number of self-employed graduates.

Finally, none of the national programs made an effort to collect more data than was necessary to fulfill project reporting

requirements. Consequently, no information was available to program staff on such important items as, for example, graduates' income levels, their employment status several months after the training, employers' impressions of the quality of training, and employers' training needs. Collecting this information would have necessitated the use of sample surveys by program staff, who according to the Directors, did not possess the technical know-how to carry out that type of work.

5. Financial Sustainability

a. Budgetary Commitment

Since the termination of the project on June 30 1992, each of the recipient governments has been fully funding the training. Under the project plan, the governments of Dominica and St. Lucia assumed full financial responsibility for the program even earlier, in October 1991. At present, every ministry in which the training program is housed has pledged to fund the program at levels consistent with previous government budgetary commitments through at least the end of 1992, and one government, St. Lucia, has authorized funding through March 1993. None of the governments plans to compensate for the loss of USAID funds, however, so the estimated total budget for YSTP activities will be significantly less than earlier years. Further, the budgeted funds will only cover recurrent costs. Thus, any necessary capital purchases will have to be financed from other sources, most likely a donor agency. Although, no program director could guarantee that funding would continue beyond the current fiscal year, they were all fairly certain that the training of youth in non-formal skills would continue indefinitely as a public program.

While all governments have indicated a willingness to continue funding the training, several of them were not very committed to financing the program during this fourth phase of the project. Under the funding arrangement provided in the project grant agreements, each government was to fund the training, after which time they would be reimbursed by USAID upon submission of the requisite vouchers. Thus, in order to receive USAID project funds, the governments had to commit budgetary resources of their own to the program. The percentage of available project funds that each government expended is one indicator of the level of financial commitment exercised by each government during the fourth phase. By far, the weakest supporter of the training was St. Vincent which expended just 14 percent of available project funds. The government of Grenada also failed to utilize a significant portion of available project money as only 69 percent of its allocation was spent. The other governments demonstrated a far greater commitment to the programs, spending between 88 percent (St. Kitts and Nevis) and 100 percent (Antigua and Barbuda) of their project funds.

b. National Political Support

All of the governments, including St. Vincent, consider the program to play an important role in transforming idle, potentially troublesome youth, into productive members of society. This support for the program was verbalized repeatedly during interviews with the ministers and permanent secretaries associated with the youth skills training program. It is well known that support for the program emanates from the highest office of government as Prime Ministers of the OECS countries have consistently praised the program for improving the welfare of youth.

While political support for this type of training remains universally strong, not all governments are convinced that the current mode of delivery is the most effective. In response, several governments are looking to merge YSTP with other similar vocational training programs to exploit available technical expertise and physical resources and to avoid wasteful amounts of duplication and overlap in the provision of technical training. In Grenada, a study recommended folding the activities of the YSTP into the National College's non-formal vocational training extension program. The Ministry of Economic Development of Antigua and Barbuda is strongly considering merging the YSTP with two other vocational training and apprenticeship programs of the ministry. Though not as far advanced in addressing this issue, the other governments all expressed a need to rationalize the provision of vocational training in their countries, both formal and non-formal.

The importance of having an effective vocational training system in place is likely to become even more important in the short-term as several OECS countries undertake significant macro-economic reforms which are certain to have displacement effects on the work force. These individuals will need to be retrained quickly in newly emerging economic sectors to minimize individual hardship, assist the development of new industries, and mitigate potential political opposition to the economic reform process.

c. Alternative Funding Mechanisms

All of the national programs are financing the recurrent costs of the YSTP entirely with government funds, and at a level consistent with previous government budgetary commitments. To cover needed capital purchases two programs, St. Lucia and Dominica, have successfully obtained funds from other donors. In the case of Dominica, a new program vehicle was obtained with funds from the OAS, and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provided two kilns for a new training course in ceramics in St. Lucia. No other program has solicited other donors for this type of financial assistance, though each recognizes the need to pursue such channels if they are ever going to be able to cover their capital costs.

Under the project, governments were able to reduce their training costs by asking employers who train participants to finance 50% of the trainee stipend of EC \$10 per day. About 70 percent of participating employers are making these contributions today. Encouraging businesses which hire graduates they do not train to pay a placement fee to cover a portion of the individual's training costs is one possible way to raise additional revenue for the training and, at the same time, encourage greater involvement of the business community in the training program. Employers will have far more interest in the training if they are required to purchase it. The drawback is that if employers view the training negatively they may elect to not hire program graduates rather than pay a placement fee.

Another way to increase program revenue is to begin selling aggressively some of the more marketable goods produced by trainees, such as crafts and furniture. While this may not generate a significant amount of income it could cover the cost of those particular training modules. Finally, businesses which are not currently participating in the program in any way, may be willing to purchase for their employees a course in social skills. The social skills portion of the training was reported to be highly valued by both participants and employers, to the point where several employers in St. Vincent have expressed a desire to buy this training for their current work force.

Other potential sources of revenue include an employer payroll tax and training fee. The national training systems of most Latin American countries are funded by a payroll tax. The main advantages of such a tax are that it provides a stable source of funding and is equitable to the extent that the taxpaying employers utilize the training system. But such a tax possesses inherent weaknesses as well. The relatively abundant tax base has created bloated bureaucracies which tend to be removed from the private sector and, consequently, unable to effectively detect and respond to changes in the demand for technical skills. Several countries, such as Chile, have replaced the payroll tax with tax credits for those employers who invest in training in order to better rationalize the allocation of resources for training.

A training fee is the most efficient method of funding training as the supply of and demand for training services will tend to move toward equilibrium. It also creates stronger, more direct linkages between enterprises and training providers. In developed countries, progressively more of non-formal vocational training is being funded by direct purchase. This is possible where individual trainees have sufficient liquidity to finance the training. In cases where they do not, loans are often available through educational credit programs.

Any decision to establish a payroll tax in the OECS countries to finance the YSTP and other publicly financed vocational training

activities should be predicated on a thoughtful policy analysis. Introduction of such a tax at this time seems highly unlikely given the current trend among governments of the Eastern Caribbean countries to reduce existing tax and regulatory burdens on the private sector to help stimulate economic growth. The use of tax incentives to encourage the purchase of training by employers would seem to be an approach more in line with the market-oriented movement found in the region today.

The direct purchase of training by participants of the YSTP is not a viable option without the availability of credit for the vast majority who lack sufficient resources to pay for the training. With the average 10 week training program costing US \$668, loans of several hundred dollars would have to be made to each eligible trainee. Education credit programs are costly to administer and in developing countries have had a poor track record of recovering debts. Rather than impose a full fee initially, it may be more feasible to introduce the fee at a relatively low level. This would reduce the burden on participants, while at the same time introduce them to the concept of a training fee. Over time, the fee could be increased gradually to cover a greater percentage of the full training costs. Credit would still need to be made available to needy participants, but at levels which would not impose such a heavy financial burden on borrowers.

6. Economic Soundness of YSTP

In evaluating the YSTP project, it is important to know whether the benefits of investing in the training exceed the costs. Benefits from the training accrue to both employed graduates, measured in terms of added income, and to society as a whole, reflected in the social utility of having a better educated population. Studies measuring the impact of general education indicate that individuals with additional years of schooling are more likely to participate in civic affairs, practice better family health care, and avoid criminal behavior. These spillover effects, while certainly benefiting society, are difficult to quantify, however.

In quantifying the economic utility of the YSTP it is necessary to have reliable data which measures both the costs and benefits of the project. Cost data can be obtained from the financial records of the project. However, no reliable data was available on the change in the income of program graduates as neither the program staff nor the local evaluators who were contracted to evaluate each national program surveyed graduates to obtain this information. Further, constraints on the regional evaluator's time in the field precluded him from conducting this type of research.

7. OECS Project Component

Under the project, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) was given a grant in the amount of US \$115,000 to provide technical assistance to and facilitate coordination and exchange among the six national programs. As an established regional institution of the Eastern Caribbean, the selection of the OECS to manage this component of the project was an appropriate one. Specifically, the OECS was to:

- 1) Contract for and provide office space for one year for a Small Business Specialist to develop local capacities to train young people in technical skills required for self employment and assisting youth skills training project graduates to develop business plans, secure credit and guiding them for a period of up to 6 months following training;
- 2) Organize bi-annual planning and coordinating meetings of national project directors and respective permanent secretaries;
- 3) Coordinate exchange of information through horizontal cooperation among national project staff;
- 4) Work in conjunction with national project offices to identify and contract the services of short-term consultants from within and outside the region to assist the process of institutionalization, particularly in the areas of designing revenue generation strategies, and relevant training for project Directors, instructors and supervisors.

Based on feedback from the staff of the six national programs, the semi-annual Directors' meetings and horizontal exchanges were considered the most useful regional activities. The meetings provided directors and participating permanent secretaries with regular opportunities to exchange information on program activities. These meetings were so highly valued that a formal resolution was adopted by the national Directors calling for the OECS to continue coordinating the regional meetings after termination of the USAID project. During this fourth phase, the OECS coordinated a total of six horizontal exchanges among all the programs but one. Under this activity, Dominica was host to most of the other national programs which sought to gain from Dominica's additional years of experience under the project and innovative program of training prisoners in various vocational trades.

The national programs were considerably less laudatory of the technical assistance (TA) provided by the OECS in small business development and project management. A small business development specialist was contracted for one year by the OECS to provide TA to

individual national programs. During her time, the specialist conducted four workshops in business skills (Grenada, Carriacou, Petit Martinique and St. Vincent), and traveled to all six national program sites. In assessing the performance of the specialist, the program directors complained that her one year tenure was too brief to adequately evaluate the business skills training component of each national program and provide appropriate TA. In addition, they commented that the workshops, though useful in helping Grenada and St. Vincent to develop their curriculum for the business skills training, should have been offered to the other national programs.

The funds available to the national programs for short-term technical assistance were used by the OECS to conduct three workshops: two in project management; and one in social skills instruction. These were rated as mediocre by the program directors and not relevant to the needs of several national programs. All the directors indicated that they would have preferred for the funds to have been spent on individualized TA.

The national Directors were most critical of the management of the regional component by the responsible OECS staff. In the future, the OECS staff needs to become more attentive to project management concerns.

D. Evaluation Methodology

1. Appropriateness/Effectiveness

Rather than rely on a team of U.S. experts to conduct the final project evaluation, RDO/C elected to utilize the services of local evaluators and the RSSA from AID/LAC/DR/EHR. The RSSA was responsible for conducting the regional evaluation of the project, but was to rely heavily on the reports of the local evaluators whom were contracted to assess the YSTP in each of their respective countries. This approach was taken to both conserve funds as well as to further support the institutionalization process of the project in each country.

The local evaluators were contracted by each of the national programs, and paid by the OECS out of funds from the project grant. Every evaluator had completed study at the post-secondary level; some were educated as teachers while others had obtained a university degree. The evaluators were all familiar with the YSTP in their respective country and had conducted evaluations of a similar nature in the past.

In order for the regional evaluator to make country comparisons, it was necessary for the local evaluators to collect a standard set of data on each of the national programs. A meeting was held in Dominica in April 1992, between the regional and local evaluators to try and develop as much commonality as possible in the terms of reference among the six national evaluations, and to

establish a timetable for completing the work. During this meeting it became apparent that it would be difficult to balance perfectly the regional evaluator's need for uniformity with the local evaluators' need for independence in developing their own terms of reference in support of the institutionalization process. The meeting concluded with most evaluators agreeing to collect a minimum set of uniform data.

The quality of the local evaluations varied dramatically. All of the national evaluations contained basic information on training outputs (courses, enrollees, graduates, and employed), training costs, and a description of the programs. The regional evaluator was able to supplement this information during his field research through interviews and a review of project related documents.

The evaluation process could have been improved had the terms of reference among the individual reports been more uniform. This could have been done without undermining the goal of strengthening the local capacity to conduct evaluations of this nature by having scheduled an early meeting among the national evaluators, regional evaluator and directors of the national program to develop common scopes of work and standard terms of reference for the evaluations.

IV. Conclusions

1. The end of project outputs concerning institutionalization have been realized. All countries are administering the national youth skills training program without external assistance. Further, every government has committed budgetary funds to support the training through at least the end of 1992 and, in one case, through March 1993.
2. Every program but two, Antigua and Barbuda and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, met the EOP target of training 450 youth during the fourth phase of the project. The average completion rate was 80%. Women accounted for 66% of all trainees, far greater than the 40% EOP goal. However, only about 8% of women were trained in non-traditional occupations which was well below the 20% EOP target.
3. Placement rates ranged from a low of 58% in Antigua and Barbuda to a high of 85% in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The average placement rate was 70%, below the EOP target of 80%. This was partly the result of a slower growing regional economy during the fourth phase as compared to earlier phases of the project. The percentage of participants who entered self-employment was 8%, below the EOP target of 20%. Limiting the number of graduates who became self-employed was the absence of an affordable credit program in the region for aspiring young entrepreneurs. Overall, the data on placement are not considered very reliable, however, given the casual way in which it is collected by program staff.
4. None of the programs have strong, formal linkages established with the private sector. Consequently, employers are not available to systematically validate the training to ensure that it responds adequately to the skill needs of businesses.
5. The relationship between youth skills training and the other vocational training programs operating in each country has also not been formalized. This has resulted, to some extent, in redundancies among the different deliverers of vocational training as well as lost opportunities for collaboration.
6. A significant proportion of the training was conducted on the job. This benefitted the program by helping to reduce training costs and by facilitating the placement of graduates into relevant, skilled jobs.
7. The social skills instruction was an excellent complement to the technical training, providing practical information on expected behavior and responsibilities in the work place. It was highly valued by trainees as well as employers. In fact, employers from one country, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, were so impressed by the instruction that they expressed an interest in purchasing it for their current workforce.

8. The business skills instruction was not nearly as well received as the social skills instruction. Part of the problem was that it was rarely applied by graduates since so few entered self-employment. It also was not considered to be well taught. This is not surprising since most instructors were former teachers with little, if any, business experience.

9. All programs either provided employment counseling directly to trainees or referred them to other appropriate government agencies, such as the Ministry of Labor, to facilitate their transition to work.

10. No pre-training counseling is offered to program applicants to assist them in the selection of a trade. In some cases, this may have created false expectations among applications who entered training programs poorly suited for their particular strengths and who, consequently, dropped out of the program. The number of early terminations could have been reduced had the programs given applicants a battery of diagnostic tests to determine beforehand the particular trade for which they are most naturally qualified.

11. The quality of the central offices and training facilities varied considerably among the national programs. Major deficiencies in the central office space were noted in two countries. In Antigua and Barbuda, the office is not adequate in size to receive applicants. In Grenada, the central office suffers from periodic flooding and chronic noise from the adjacent highway. The training sites were considered adequate in every country, 48% of which were places of business.

12. One of the most visible shortcomings of the training relates to the lack of instructional standards and methods of evaluation to assess the skill competency of each trainee. No set of standards exists among any of the national programs with respect to curriculum, method and quality of instruction, and appropriateness of training equipment. Further, none of the national programs has established a minimum set of competency standards which trainees must meet in order to graduate from the program. Consequently, some trainees are completing the training without having learned even the most basic aspects of the trade.

13. None of the programs conducts systematic internal evaluations of their training. This obviously limits the ability of staff to detect and respond to program deficiencies. The only source of feedback on the quality of the training comes from trainees who are asked to comment on the quality of their instructor. Employers, whose opinions are extremely valuable, are completely excluded from the evaluation process.

14. The hourly cost to train each participant ranged from a low of US \$1.41 in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to a high of \$3.34 in Antigua and Barbuda. The average cost was \$1.84 per hour. This

amount is consistent with the cost of training delivered by the national training systems of Latin America and the Caribbean which average between \$1.50-2.00 per participant hour of instruction. Overall, training costs of the YSTP were held down by the large share of training conducted on the job.

15. Every program collected a minimum set of data on training outputs to comply with USAID project reporting requirements. The process of collecting, storing and analyzing this data was entirely manual as none of the programs utilized the services of a computer, even though two programs possessed the necessary hardware. None of the programs made an effort to collect more information than was required by the project which precluded the programs from obtaining information considered critical to making informed policy and programming decisions. This would include data on graduates' income levels, their employment status several months after graduation, employers' impressions of the training, and employers' training needs.

16. The national programs are well aware of the need to better coordinate youth skills training with other vocational training programs. To this end, Antigua and Barbuda and Grenada have taken steps to consolidate the delivery of vocational training.

17. The national programs must search for alternative sources of finance in order to secure continued funding of the training. Two programs, Dominica and St. Lucia, have successfully sought financial assistance from other donors.

18. It was not possible to calculate the economic return of the project due to the absence of reliable income data on program graduates.

19. All governments found the OECS coordinated semi-annual directors' meetings and horizontal cooperation activities to be extremely useful. The OECS sponsored training workshops and business skills instruction were rated as mediocre, however. The OECS also needs to pay more attention to the details of project management.

20. The quality of the regional evaluation was compromised somewhat by the significant variance in the scope and quality of the national evaluation reports. This was due largely to the absence of a broad set of standard terms of reference to guide the evaluation process.

V. Recommendations

National Programs

1. Concentrate on Improving Program Quality and Efficiency: Now that the programs have, for the most part, achieved the goal of institutionalization, program staff should direct their attention to upgrading all aspects of the training program. This can be done at little financial cost to the programs by utilizing other donor provided services. The focus of this effort should be to:
 - o Rationalize the national training system to eliminate duplication and overlap and to improve the degree of collaboration among training deliverers
 - o Collect more detailed data on program outcomes on a regular basis and automate the management information system to facilitate program analysis and planning
 - o Strengthen the linkage with the private sector through establishment of a formal employer-YSTP working group to gain a better understanding of their skill needs and to expand the number of placement opportunities for graduates
 - o Establish a system to monitor and evaluate training and employment outcomes
 - o Train staff in the conduct of tracer studies, labor market surveys, and utilization of economic data to better match training with the demand for skills in the market place
 - o Assess whether to continue training youth for self-employment in view of the lack of affordable credit and appropriate technical assistance for graduates
 - o Develop performance standards for each trade and a testing and certification system to assure that graduates meet those standards
2. Utilize OJT to Greater Degree: On the job training which is closely monitored to insure that trainees are equipped with productive skills is far more cost-effective than training conducted outside the employment site. To the extent possible, programs should expand the amount of OJT offered.

3. Expand Program Revenue: Due to scarce government funds, the program needs to aggressively generate outside income to support its activities. Some promising examples would include:

- o Where feasible, having employers pay a training/employment fee for each graduate they hire who was trained by the program in a workshop (as opposed to OJT)
- o Where feasible, having employers pay a stipend to trainees during the training period
- o Promoting and selling the social skills training to companies
- o Marketing more of the goods produced by trainees

Additionally, the programs should study the feasibility of instituting a training fee for participants (with a credit program for those with limited liquid assets), as well as a national training tax or tax incentives to support all national public vocational training and education programs.

4. Exploit the New Funding Provided through the SDF: The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) is expected to soon augment the Special Development Fund (SDF) by over US \$126 million to finance new economic development and poverty alleviation programs. Grants totaling US \$5 million have been targeted for skills training programs in the region, and are expected to be awarded by early 1993. Working through their respective governments, national program staff should undertake the requisite steps to obtain these grants.

OECS

5. Continue to Support the National Programs Through the Coordination and, possibly, Funding of Regional Activities: As the regional representative of the Eastern Caribbean states, the OECS is the natural choice for continuing to coordinate the information and exchange activities noted to be extremely worthwhile by the directors of the six national programs. Specifically, these would be the annual meetings of the national directors, and horizontal exchanges between national staff. To the extent possible, the OECS should finance these activities as well.

6. Discontinue the Provision of Technical Assistance to the Programs: The national programs should obtain technical

assistance directly from experts in the field as there is no inherent advantage in procuring these services through the OECS.

USAID-RDO/C

7. Utilize to a Greater Extent Existing U.S. Government and other Donor Funded Programs to Support YSTP: There are a number of U.S. and other donor supported development programs which could provide valuable technical assistance to the national training programs. RDO/C staff must actively promote these programs to national directors and identify how they can help to improve their training programs. Examples of collaboration between YSTP and other donor programs include:
- Recruiting Peace Corps Volunteers with relevant expertise to design and develop automated management information systems, and develop performance standards and a certification system for the technical training
 - Providing training to national program staff through USAID participant training programs (such as the Caribbean Leadership Development Training), in social survey research, testing and evaluation methods, and administration of employment and training programs
 - As noted above, linking the CDB initiative to award grants for skill training activities with the YSTP

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Individuals and Organizations Contacted

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APPENDIX B

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