

**PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID)
IDENTIFICATION/CONCEPT STAGE**

Report No.: PIDC106339

Project Name	Strengthening the Capacity to Produce and Use Quality Education Statistics
Region	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN
Country	Dominican Republic
Lending Instrument	IPF
Project ID	P163049
Borrower Name	Ministerio de Hacienda
Implementing Agency	Ministerio de Educacion de la Republica Dominicana - MINERD
Environment Category	C - Not Required
Date PID Prepared	18-Jan-2017
Estimated Date of Approval	28-Feb-2017
Initiation Note Review Decision	The review did authorize the preparation to continue

I. Introduction and Context

Country Context

Despite rapid growth over the past few decades, the Dominican Republic (DR) continues to experience high levels of poverty and inequality. Between 1991 and 2014, Dominican Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at an average annual rate of 5.3 percent, among the highest growth rates for Latin America and the Caribbean over the same period, which led to sustained convergence in GDP with the rest of the region. This sustained growth, however, did not translate into a reduction of poverty during the period: in 2013, 41 percent of the country's population was living in moderate poverty, up from 32 percent in 2000, and above the average for the region. Moreover, inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, reduced from 0.51 in 2000 to 0.48 in 2010, a reduction equivalent to about half of that experienced across the region.

Ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity through investing in education to increase human capital is at the heart of the Government's National Development Strategy for 2010-30 that aims to establish a culture of planning and public policy actions with a long term vision for developing the country, overcoming poverty and increasing welfare. Human development plays a key role within this Strategy, as embodied in the second of its four axes: a society with equal rights and opportunities, education, health, housing and quality basic services.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

This education system is managed by a complex set of institutions, resulting in policies that, while laudable, are implemented unevenly and seldom robustly evaluated, or effectively monitored. The sector is governed by two separate ministries: the Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic (Ministerio de Educaci3n, MINERD), and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and

Technology (Ministerio de Educación Superior, Ciencia y Tecnología-a, MESCyT). The first is responsible for the service delivery of public pre-university education (initial, basic, and intermediate education), and has a governance role over all pre-university schools (both public and private). The second, the MESCyT, regulates higher education, including courses related to pre-service teacher training; it is, however, limited by laws protecting the autonomy of universities.

Early childhood development (ECD) programs also face institutional and governance challenges, including in the monitoring of services and the development of indicators. The Government's flagship program Quisqueya Starts with You (Quisqueya Empieza Contigo, QEC) is under the MINERD's decentralized National Institute of Comprehensive Care for Early Childhood (Instituto Nacional de Atención Integral a la Primera Infancia, INAIPI). This new institute regulates the provision of ECD services under QEC for children 0-4 and will need to operate in harmony with the other levels of the education system (especially initial and basic) and including the monitoring of services, as well as across other sectors (especially health), and programs from other instances of government such as the Social Cabinet (Gabinete Social).

Poor student learning outcomes is the main challenge facing the system despite remaining challenges in terms of access. According to regional student assessments from 2006, Dominican students ranked last among test takers, performing well below regional averages in all subject areas. Even students from upper income quintiles, while performing considerably better than poorer students, performed badly relative to similar socio-economic groups in the region. New preliminary results from regional assessments in 2013 show improvements in student learning, but confirm the lag in comparison to all other countries in the region.

In order to improve learning outcomes, the DR needs to have the foundations and systems in place to formulate and implement quality-enhancing policies, and for that MINERD's capacity to produce quality data, integrate and use that data for effective management, monitoring and decision making needs to be strengthened. There are five main underlying challenges that significantly constrain the performance of the education system, as measured by the learning outcomes of children: i) MINERD's capacity to recruit and train teachers according to quality standards; ii) MINERD's capacity to assess student learning, in particular in basic education, and the dissemination and use of that information by different actors in the system (i.e. teacher training institutions, schools, parents) for better decision making and accountability; iii) MINERD's capacity to evaluate and ensure the quality of service provided for initial education that contributes to school readiness of children entering basic education; iv) MINERD's capacity to decentralize the school management system; and v) MINERD's capacity to produce quality data, integrate and use that data for effective management, monitoring and decision making.

The Government has shown commitment to tackling the first four of these challenges. It has done so through a strategy of broad reform of the education sector, starting with a doubling of the pre-tertiary education budget to 4 percent of GDP since 2013, the signature of the Pacto Educativo (National Education Pact, NEP), and the implementation of several initiatives to implement the Government's strategy, including the full-time school program (Programa de Jornada Extendida, in Spanish), which increase the school day from 5 to 8 hour per day.

The Government has also shown commitment to improve MINERD's capacity to produce quality statistics, integrate and use data for effective management, monitoring and decision making,

in coordination with the National Statistics Office (NSO) and under the National Strategy for Development of Statistics (NSDS) 2013-2016. Through MINERD's National Office for Planning and Educational Development, the MINERD has already implemented a series of actions aimed towards the strengthening of its information systems in coordination with the NSO (e.g. modernization of the EMIS system, including more flexibility in SIGERD and new modules, the definition of operational manual for schools and school districts; the development of a school quality index; the development of management indicators at the school level). The goals of these actions are to: (i) ensure the quality of data, the production of statistics and educational indicators that are updated periodically and that are used for planning purposes, monitoring, and decision making by all levels of the Ministry; (ii) increase accountability of different levels of the MINERD to parents and the education community in general using data integrated into the EMIS system; (iii) increase integration processes and systems for the collection, processing, consolidation, verification, analysis and dissemination of data that to ensure the reliability, access, and use of educational statistics; and (iv) advance on the implementation of the Education Chapter of the NSDS.

Despite the Governmental commitment to increase capacity to produce and use data for decision making in the education sector, several challenges remain: (i) integration of different data systems (e.g. school decentralization system, school management system, student learning assessment, early childhood education systems, the República Digital Program), its alignment with the Education Chapter of the NSDS and international commitments on the production of education indicators (e.g. SDGs); (ii) a quality assurance system for data production and collection that integrates protocols, responsibilities, training material, training data quality audits and other procedures; and (iii) data dissemination, analysis and use, including open data initiatives that allows access to multiple stakeholders in a user-friendly way, and using the variety visualizations and analytic tools available.

Based on the challenges constraining the education system management and its relation to MINERD's capacity to produce quality data, integrate and use that data for effective management, monitoring and decision making, the proposed Project would finance a set of activities that would integrate data systems, set up systems to guarantee the quality of data, and improve data use analysis and dissemination, all in line with the education chapter of the NSDS and in coordination with the NSO. In addition, the proposed Project would complement activities and current operations with the MINERD, in particular the Support to the National Education Pact Project (P146831). The outcomes of the project would help to deepen the changes in policy and decision-making through improved availability and use of information and statistical data in education. In addition, they would contribute to more efficiency in the use of public resources through better-informed decision making and the same time that improves effective monitoring of education trends.

Relationship to CAS/CPS/CPF

The proposed Project would align with the current Country Partnership Strategy (CPS), Report No. 89551-DO, between the Bank and the Dominican Republic. In particular, the proposed activities and outcomes would contribute to Results Area 3 (Promoting equitable, efficient, sustainable management of public resources), and Result Area 5 (Strengthening social service delivery) of the CPS. These would be done by improving data quality and education statistics for evidence-based decision making that would support the efficient use of resources and its allocation, increase accountability, and in the long-run contribute to the reforms of the Ministry of Education

aimed at improving service delivery. More integrated, quality information would foster better monitoring, and would provide the necessary evidence to make decisions.

II. Project Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The development objective of this project is to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic (MINERD) to produce high-quality data, consolidate data from different systems, and use that data to inform actors in the education system.

Key Results

1. Protocols for data collection and data quality verification are available, disseminated and piloted.
2. EMIS systems is improved to consolidate different statistical data from the Ministry, and new modules for data collections are developed and incorporated.
3. Open data portal is available to allow all stakeholders to access timely and relevant education data and analytics, including user-friendly reports.

III. Preliminary Description

Concept Description

IV. Safeguard Policies that Might Apply

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

V. Financing (in USD Million)

Total Project Cost:	0.5	Total Bank Financing:	0
Financing Gap:	0		
Financing Source			Amount
Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building			0.5

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