

Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines

**6 International Conference on Adult Education
(CONFINTA V1), UNESCO,
Brazil in 2009**

**National Report on the Development and State of the Art of
Adult Learning and Education (ALE),
St Vincent and the Grenadines**

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Abbreviations

MPC	Multi Purpose Centre
NAT	National Assessment Test
NCACE	National Council for Adult and Continuing Education
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NTVC	National Technical and Vocational Council
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PS	Permanent Secretary
PSC	Public Service Commission
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
STABEX	EU support for Development
SVG TU	St. Vincent and the Grenadines Teachers Union
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UWI	University of West Indies
ACE	Adult and Continuing Education
ACED	Adult Education and Continuing Education Division
ACE	Adult and Continuing Educational
ALE	Adult Learning Education
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CEO	Chief Education Officer
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EDF	European Development Foundation
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
EU	European Union
GOSVG	Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines
HRD	Human Resource Development
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MOFP	Ministry of Finance and

Section 1

1. General Overview

Introduction

The 6th International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) will be held in Brazil in May 2009. It is a UNESCO led inter-governmental conference for policy dialogue and policy assessment on adult learning and education. The conference is supported by a series of regional conferences on the theme to be organised by UNESCO and in close cooperation with UNESCO Headquarters and relevant UNESCO offices in the region, and in partnership with various adult education stakeholders (UN agencies, NGOs/CSOs, Trade Unions, Corporate and Private providers), These preparatory processes leading up to the conference is coordinated by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning.

UNESCO has been organising International Conferences on Adult Education since 1947. The last CONFINTEA, was hosted by Germany in July 1997. Almost 1500 participants came together at CONFINTEA V to debate and advance an integrated and holistic vision of adult learning which cuts across all sectors and is based on partnerships of governmental and non-governmental actors and the private sector in the perspective of lifelong learning. At this conference two major documents were adopted namely a) the *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* and the b) *Agenda for the Future*. Their documents recognized adult learning and education as key components for addressing current social and development challenges across the globe.

The aim of CONFINTEA VI is to:

Renew international momentum for adult learning and education by highlighting the crucial role that they play in achieving the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in building of knowledge economies and learning societies, as well as other major international policy frameworks in relation to education and development, in particular the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD).

The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning was adopted at CONFINTEA V. The conference represented an agreement between countries, principally by governments wishing to recognize and give impetus to the shifts taking place in the world of adult learning. It has emerged as a tool to highlight the importance of women's learning for strengthening women and their local communities.

The key outcomes of the Hamburg Declaration include:

The right to education and to lifelong learning. It is the right to read and write, the right to question and analyse, the right to have access to resources and to develop and practice individual and collective skills and competencies.

Adult education thus becomes more than a right; it is a key to the twenty-first century. It is both a consequence of active citizenship and a condition for full participation in society.

It is also being viewed as a concept for fostering ecologically sustainable development, for promoting democracy, justice, gender equity, and scientific, social and economic development, and for building a world in which violent conflict is replaced by dialogue and a culture of peace based on justice.

Adult learning can shape identity and give meaning to life. Learning throughout life implies a rethinking of content to reflect such factors as age, gender equality, disability, language culture and economic disparities (UNESCO, 1997).

The Conference defines Adult Learning and Education (ALE) as:

“the entire body of ongoing learning processes [...] whereby people regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, and improve their technical or professional qualifications or turn them in a new direction to meet their own needs and those of their society.” (Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, adopted by CONFINTEA V, July, 1997”.

The purpose of the report is to assess the achievement and pitfalls of the Adult and Continuing Education mechanism/process in St Vincent and the Grenadines during the period under review in relationship to the outcomes highlighted in the a) *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* and the b) *Agenda for the Future*.

1.1: Geography and Socio Economic Perspective of SVG

St. Vincent and the Grenadines is an independent plural Caribbean state located in the Caribbean archipelago and comprises one main-island (St Vincent) and thirty-two small islands and cays (The Grenadines), (see **Appendix 1**). The island is located in the South Eastern corner of the Caribbean archipelago, north of Grenada and south of St. Lucia and lies approximately 1,600 miles (100 km) South-east of Miami, USA. It is some 389 square kilometres and has a population of about one hundred and ten thousand people mainly of African descent with about 10% of mixed East Indian, European and Indigenous people (the Caribs).

St. Vincent and the Grenadines obtained its independence from Great Britain on the 27th October, 1979. Like most former British Colonies, it inherited a Westminster Parliamentary system of Government. Currently, a Constitutional Review Commission has embarked on a process of consultation and education on the reform of the Constitution. St. Vincent and the Grenadines holds membership in a number of regional and international organizations. It is a member of the region's economic and political sub-grouping the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) comprising the Windward and Leeward Islands; and also a larger regional grouping the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The country is in the forefront of the movement for closer political and economic integration of the Caribbean region.

From a global economic perspective, the international community has defined St Vincent and the Grenadines as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS). Small island states are particularly vulnerable due to the absence of critical mass and subsequent reliance on export to sustain their economies. Many of the products exported have been dependent on preferential trade arrangements extended by developed countries (under the EU Lome Convention and US Caribbean Basin Initiative). St. Vincent and the Grenadines was subjected to unwanted vulnerabilities from the erosion of the trade preferences by multilateral trade liberalization under the GATT/WTO and unilateral trade liberalization in emerging market countries worldwide (ITC, 2004).

The economy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is fuelled by agriculture and tourism. Developments in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and trade liberalization have severely reduced income from the banana industry which was regarded as the mainstay of the economy. In 1989, export of earnings from bananas amounted to EC\$89.9 million. The uncertainty of the market and adverse weather conditions over the last ten or so years, has resulted in a very significant decline in export earnings from bananas. In 2000, earnings dropped to EC\$49.49 million. In fact, the agricultural sector recorded a decline of 7.2 per cent in 2001 and its share of GDP fell to 11.2 per cent from 12.5 in 2000. Although there has been a decline in the contribution of agriculture to GDP in recent years, it is still the most important productive sector in terms of its contribution to employment and the government's fight against poverty, particularly in rural areas.

The Tourism sector experienced a 0.8 per cent decline in visitor arrivals in 2001. This was mainly due to the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Centre which discouraged many North Americans and Europeans from travelling. However, estimated tourism expenditure expanded by 8.55 per cent in 2001 or EC\$217.2 million from EC\$205.5 million in 2000 (Digest of Statistics, 2003). The resulting impact of such economic difficulties resulted in decrease in economic growth from 5% to 1% in 2000-02. The effect of this was an increase in poverty in communities that were once prosperous during the banana era.

In an effort to attract tourists from North America and Europe, the Government has embarked on the development and expansion of a robust security system at its multi island ports of entry (7 airports and 20 seaports) in order to reduce any incidence of terrorism. This project has diverted scarce resources that normally would be allocated to social development programmes such as education and health.

1.2: Development process of Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in St Vincent and the Grenadines

The Adult and Continuing Education Division was created in 1986 in the Ministry of Education under the name Adult Education Unit. It was originally established to respond to the growing illiteracy problem facing the productive work force in St Vincent and the Grenadines. The establishment of the Unit was prompted by the Fordham report (1975) on the status of illiteracy in St Vincent and the Grenadines which was estimated at 40/50 % of the adult population. In addition the Government in its National Development Plan (1986-1988) contended that the exclusion of Adult Education from the overall education system has led to serious problems in the

coordination of efforts in this vital area. The Adult Education Unit collaborated with National Association of Mass Education to establish a network of over 50 community based programmes throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines. These programmes were facilitated and managed on a voluntary basis by a cadre of trained community literacy and development animators and practitioners.

A comprehensive programme leading up to International Literacy Year (1990) was developed by the Adult Education Unit in collaboration with these community based organisation and implemented both at national and community levels. The programme included training of facilitators, a weekly radio programme and the provision of trained professionals by the unit to guide the development process. An injection of resources was provided by the Ministry of Education and other development partners to facilitate material production to enhance the methodology and content of the literacy movement. Schools, churches and other community facilities housed these programmes.

The Adult Education movement adhered to a people-centred integrated development philosophy which was supported by the community. It focused on the empowerment of people and their communities to participate actively in addressing the fundamental challenges affecting themselves and their communities. Besides acquiring skills in literacy and numeracy, most 'learners' acquired employable and business development skills which enabled them to become self employed through the creation of their own businesses and the establishment of community cooperative projects. They were also involved in 'aided self-help' activities as a means of enhancing basic community infrastructures such as day care facilities, village and agricultural feeder roads and community recreational facilities. Didacus Jules, literacy and development expert, hailed the literacy movement in St Vincent and the Grenadines as one of the most innovative in the Caribbean. The community literacy movement in St Vincent was spearheaded by Fancy Together, Chateau Stars, JEMS, AATCA, Rosehall Community Working Group, SUDO and LEAP just to name a few organisations.

During the first half of the 1990s, the programme lost momentum due to lack of political interest at the policy level within the Ministry of Education. Adult Education was moved from the centre of the education development paradigm to the periphery of this process. The situation was further compounded by the lost of some valuable staff and reduction of financial and material resources to support the voluntary nature of the literacy movement at the community and national levels. Browne (1995) therefore propounded that 'the Unit's work in this sphere of Human Resource Development borders on tokenism' (p.16).

The programmes regained momentum when the Unity Labour Party Government was elected to office in April 2001. A national literacy assessment was conducted (Ashton, 2002) which estimated that 20% of the population are illiterates. The government therefore upgraded the Unit into a Division and developed a new education sector plan 2002-2007, which grounded the literacy movement philosophy of life long learning.

The tenets of the philosophy include:

- Education is a fundamental human right and all citizens should be enabled to achieve a basic required minimum standard.
- Education should not be limited to age, time and place but should be a lifelong process which goes from beyond normal school.
- All forms of education whatever the content should be developed to meet the varying needs of the population.

The mission of the division and the literacy crusade was developed. Its overarching purpose is to “assist in the social economic development of St Vincent and the Grenadines by facilitating education and training of all citizens over the age of fifteen who are outside of the formal system”. The division has built on the experiences of the literacy movement of the 1980s by creating the mechanism for all stakeholders (namely other governmental ministries, public institutions, church leaders, the private sector and civil society) to participate in the decision making process of the literacy crusade.

Hugh Wyllie, Deputy Education Officer and Director of the Adult and Continuing Education Unit perceives it as “the development of human resources, not capital nor income nor material resources which constitutes the ultimate basis for the wealth of the nation...once we are provided with the means to put our programmes in place the Division intends to create a learning society in St Vincent and the Grenadines”.

The programmes of the Division include:

- Basic literacy programmes in numeracy, literacy and basic life skills development
- General academic upgrading and development programmes which may lead to certification.
- Basic computer and advance Information and Communication Technology programmes (ICT) and
- Basic employment skills and craft development programmes which would lead to poverty reduction.

Community Education in areas such as disaster preparedness and mitigation, vector control, HIV/ AIDS awareness and mitigation and nutrition are some of the programming areas the Division is currently implementing. Other programmes of the Division include special area of programming such as farming, fisheries, vending and other areas of employment.

1.3: The Evolution of the Education System in St Vincent and the Grenadines

The education system mirrors the colonial era. It consists of pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The government of St Vincent and the Grenadines regards education as a social development institution essential for quality production, order, progress, reduction of poverty and development of individuals and society (St Vincent and the Grenadines Education Sector Development plan 2002-2007). The Ministry of Education manages the education sector of which Early Childhood

Education is one component. St Vincent is currently implementing the OECS Education Reform Strategy 2010 (Miller, Jules & Thomas, 2000).

A public education system was established in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in 1849. Presently, the government supports all public schools by providing full funding to schools without religious affiliation and partial funding to schools that are affiliated with churches. All schools throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines follow a common curriculum determined by the government. Primary and Secondary education in the country is free, but not compulsory. Public school lasts for seven years. About 25% of children do not complete elementary school because they are required to work in the banana and cottage industries as a means of enhancing their family's income. This is seen as the major factor for the mounting illiteracy problem facing St Vincent and the Grenadines.

For many years, education was influenced by the British system. Textbooks and lessons presented a European perspective on history and culture. Standardised exams were set and marked in England. The English Language was used exclusively in schools, creating a barrier for students who were more comfortable speaking Vincentian Creole. The curriculum also emphasized academic rather than practical subjects. Education reforms have been introduced in recent years. Creole has become accepted in school skits and public speeches, and students can study Caribbean history and literature. The curriculum also offers practical courses such as carpentry and agricultural skills.

Secondary school offers a five- year programme, followed by a more advanced two- year programme. Less than one half of the country's children attend secondary school. This is of great concern given the high rate of unemployment among youths.

The Department of Education in the Ministry of Education and Sports is the executive body with responsibility for planning, executing and evaluating the educational policy of the state. The formal system of education is stipulated under the *Education Act* of 1992. This *Act* is the main instrument that governs, organizes, administers and regulates education in the state. Under this new act, provision for compulsory education and education for children with special needs was made for the first time. The mission of the Ministry of Education focuses on "Life long education for all". This emphasizes the right of all learners to gain access to an education which has equity; with high quality teaching within well-resourced and managed institutions (ESDP, 1999).

In his 2003 Budgetary address, the Prime Minister of SVG allocated 20.49 million East Caribbean dollars (EC\$) to the education sector. This was an increase of 5 million EC\$ from the 2002 education budget. Although this was a significant increase, the focus of the education spending (15.3 million dollars) is on upgrading and extending the physical infrastructure. This involves building five (5) new schools and six learning resource centers, upgrade and expand the primary schools and provide five hundred (500) additional secondary places. At the post secondary level, 6 additional classrooms would be constructed at the Technical College and the Community College and five multipurpose centers would be refurbished (Budget Address, 2003). No mention was made of any allocation of funds to pre-primary education.

Section 2

Policy, Legislation and Financing

1.1: Legislative, policy and administrative frameworks of ALE

The Legislative and policy environment which govern ALE is quite favourable and supportive. As early as 1995 Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines began to look at AEL seriously. The Education Policy of 1995 states that government of St Vincent and the Grenadines consider Adult and Continuing Education as:

- Lifelong process and is therefore committed to having a comprehensive and dynamic Adult and Continuing Education programme.
- Parallel learning opportunities, outside of the formal learning situation, will be made to accessible to all individuals. This will be achieved through an integrated education programme, and joint planning by government and non governmental agencies.
- Facilities at all levels of the education system will be made available for the delivery of the various adult and continuing education programmes throughout the state.

Although there have been much changes and improvements in the area of policy development within the education sector in general and ALE in particular there has been little changes in legislation. The Education Policy located the ALE within the Ministry of Education – the ADULT Education and Continuing Education Programme (ACEP) which is administered through the Adult Education and Continuing Education Division. The government's policy on ALE views Adult Education as lifelong Education i.e. it is the process which requires a comprehensive, dynamic approach that provides parallel learning opportunities for learners outside of the formal education system. A critical aspect of the policy is to ensure that the services provided are accessible to all Vincentians.

Life long learning is also being viewed within context of vocational training. Adult and Continuing Education is being set within the context of Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Article 46 of the CARICOM Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas Establishing the Caribbean Community including the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), 2002 states:

Without prejudice to the rights recognised and agreed to be accorded by the Member States in Articles 32, 33, 37, 38 and 40 among themselves and to community nationals, Member States have agreed, and undertake as first step towards achieving the goals set out in Article 45, to accord to the following categories of community

University graduates; media workers; sportspersons; artistes and musicians.

Recognised as such by the competent authorities of the receiving Member States.

2. Member States shall establish appropriate legislation, administrative and procedural arrangements:

- a) facilitate the movement of skills within the contemplation of the Article;*
- b) Provide for movement of Community nationals into and within their jurisdictions without harassment or the position of impediment including:*
 - 1) the elimination of the requirement for passport for community nationals travelling to their jurisdictions*
 - 2) the elimination of the requirement for work permits for Community nationals seeking approved employment in their jurisdictions*
 - 3) Establishment of mechanisms for certifying and establishing equivalency of degree and accrediting institutions*
 - 4) Harmonising and transferability of social security benefits.*

St Vincent and the Grenadines is known throughout the region for producing some of the most skilled builders, musicians and artisans within the Caribbean region. Conversely, it cannot take advantage of the opportunities which present themselves through the CSME because over 90% of their skilled workers are not certified. Through the ALE programme, the government has embarked on strategy to enhance the quality of learning and certification through modular development, improvement of physical infrastructure through the Community Learning Centres, facilitation and infrastructure, competency development and material development. During the period under review, it provided technical assistance and guidance to institutional development of agencies involved in the delivery of ALE programmes as a means of meeting the requirements of the CASM as well as addressing the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment.

On this issue of legislation, the St Vincent and the Grenadines Education Bill or the Education Act was passed by an act of parliament in 2005. The previous Bills were passed in 1995 and 1975 respectively. The Bill evolved out of a series of public consultations and debates among stakeholders on the relevance and future of education, the impact and implications of globalisation on development of the state and its link to local, regional and global development. The Act defines Adult and Continuing Education as

‘education or training on a part time basis for persons over compulsory school age to advance knowledge, skills and cultural awareness, but does not include tertiary education’.

Division 4; section 118 states that ‘the Minister may make provision for Continuing and Adult Education programmes and may regulate such programmes in existence at the commencement of this act or which comes into existence at the date’.

Section 117 of the Act also states ‘the Minister may make provision for distant learning programmes and may regulate such programmes in existence at the commencement of this act or which comes into existence at the date’

The provision of distant learning programme enhances the opportunities and quality of ALE in St Vincent and the Grenadines because it means that the government can deliver ALE in the distant learning mode. Government has experimented in 2007 on delivering literacy instructions via television and radio.

1.1.1) Legislative and policy environment of ALE (Indicate which policies and laws related to ALE have been established since 1997 (CONFINTEA V).

The government has committed itself to make available facilities at all levels for this nation wide programming. Distance Education is seen as an important vehicle to deliver adult and continuing education throughout the country. The government is also collaborating with the UWI School of Continuing Studies to provide learning opportunities through distance education for selected target groups.

The Adult and Continuing Education Division (ACED) in the Ministry of Education is the lead agency responsible for the development and implementation of adult education. The ACED provides support to agencies and the various governmental organisations and departments that provide adult education.

The policy of adult and continuing education is based on Lifelong learning. The key principles of the policy concern the provision of equal access for all persons to both formal and non-formal education of comparable quality. It is also being viewed as one of the main strategy for reducing the impact of poverty and boost national productivity.

Quality and relevance of the principles are:

Achievement - the prime function of Education s to raise the standard of achievement in all aspects of education, but, in particular, in literacy and numeracy to support life long education.

Excellence will be promoted and rewarded throughout the system, leading to the raising of educational standards.

Quality will be improved through the extension of teacher training, constant upgrading of the curriculum and related materials, leading to more stimulating and challenging learning environments.

Efficiency will be improved through restructuring the Ministry/sector to focus on delivery and monitoring of the progress, and in effecting changes within each teaching/learning situation to optimise resources utilisation.

Effectiveness will be increased through measures to motivate teachers, provision of incentives, training of principals/zonal coordinators and closer supervision of learning institutions by Education Officers/Adult Education Field Officers.

Relevance will be assured by reviewing and revising the curriculum offered to learners of all ages so that it more closely matches the development needs of individuals and the state, in keeping with the principles of life-long learning.

Creativity will be encouraged through the delivery of programmes across the range of the arts.

New technologies will be adopted as tools to continue to improve teaching and learning, and to ensure that learners in St. Vincent and the Grenadines are technologically literate to access national, regional and world-wide employment opportunities.

Environments will be improved so that they are more conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Partnership principles

Partnerships will be fostered with civil society to create greater national involvement in educational development and ownership by stakeholders.

Consultation and dialogue between the Ministry and partners will ensure that the plan is constantly reviewed and updated on a rolling programme to meet new and emerging needs.

Teamwork will be developed within Ministry and among ministries to solve problems as they emerge and to keep the Education Sector Development Plan on track.

Management principles

Capacity building will be pursued to assist the Ministry and the learning institutions to implement plan effectively.

Sustainability will continue to be a guiding principle in decisions about actions to ensure the long-term success of the ESDP.

(Education sector Plan 200-2007, Ministry of Education September 2002)

The Education Act which defines Adult and Continuing Education and provides specific provision for Adult and Continuing Education and Distant Learning was passed in 2005.

1.1.2) Priority goals for ALE in St Vincent and the Grenadines

In 2001, a new government was elected under the leadership of the Unity Labour Party. The Adult Education Programme regained a new momentum after their election to office. An Education Sector Development Plan for the period 2002 – 2007 was developed (Volume 1 - Policy, Strategy and Logical Framework and Volume 2 – Action Plan). The Adult Education Unit was elevated to the status of Division and was since expanded to include the Skills Training Unit.

The overall goal of the ALE in St Vincent and the Grenadines is to:

Provide widespread appropriate opportunities for continuing education throughout adulthood

The priority goals of the ALE programme were:

- Establish a comprehensive and relevant programme of adult literacy, life skills, TVET, and academic subject provision operating in a variety of locations throughout St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Increase support to Governmental, Civil Society and Community Based Organisations providing AEL services and programmes at community and national levels.
- Develop and distribute relevant learning materials in support of the national literacy crusade initiative.
- Provide appropriate training for facilitators to enhance their efficiency and programme delivery and management.
- Establish a comprehensive network of non-formal programmes across St Vincent and the Grenadines.
- Strengthen the institutional capacity of the Adult and Continuing Education Division in the Ministry of Education so as to enhance programme management, operation and delivery.

The outputs indicated were:

- Implementation of a literacy and numeracy survey by 2003 to assess the incidents of adult literacy in the country.
- Established a series of Resource Centres/MPCs at community levels to provide quality programmes to the adult population as a means of upgrading their literacy, numeracy and employment skills and competencies
- Implemented mechanisms to register and monitor all literacy programmes across the state.
- Developed local materials that are relevant to the development needs of the country and a National Literacy Test to assess the achievements made by participants.
- Developed training curriculum for facilitators who are working in the adult literacy programmes within their respective communities. This would be supported by a dynamic and comprehensive training programme of which Civic Education programme and mobilisation of the media to solicit their involvement and participation in Adult and Continuing Education were key components.

Another important objective of the Adult Learning and Education strategy is to utilise these programmes as a mechanism for reducing the impact of poverty among the work force specifically women and young people in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

In 2002, The Prime Minister, Hon Dr Ralph Gonsalves states:

“This government is concerned about the unacceptably high levels of poverty and unemployment that we inherited. We are also concerned that recent analyses of the economy have shown that the skewed pattern of income distribution has worsened over the last ten years. We are determined to reverse these trends and to put measures in place to ensure that St. Vincent and the Grenadines will move up from the bottom of these indicators in the OECS.”ⁱ

Poverty in St Vincent and the Grenadines is defined by Thomas (2001) as a sustained deficiency of resources. He added that poverty is a multi-dimensional, complex phenomenon and that it exists to a troubling degree in developing countries. The 1996 SVG Poverty Assessment Report highlights the fact that 30.6% households, and 37.5% of the population were poor; 20.4 % of households and 25.7% of the population were indigent. Other statistics on poverty includes a) the head-count ratio is 37.5 per cent (the highest in the OECS); b) the poverty gap measure is 12.6; c) the FGT₂ score is 6.9. d) high levels of unemployment estimated at 20 percent in 1998 with the level of young males over 30% and high levels of income inequality, with the Gini coefficient the worst in the region at 0.56.

The government of St Vincent and the Grenadines acknowledges that education "is a basic indicator of poverty". It identifies five educational issues that are of particular concern to poverty reduction:

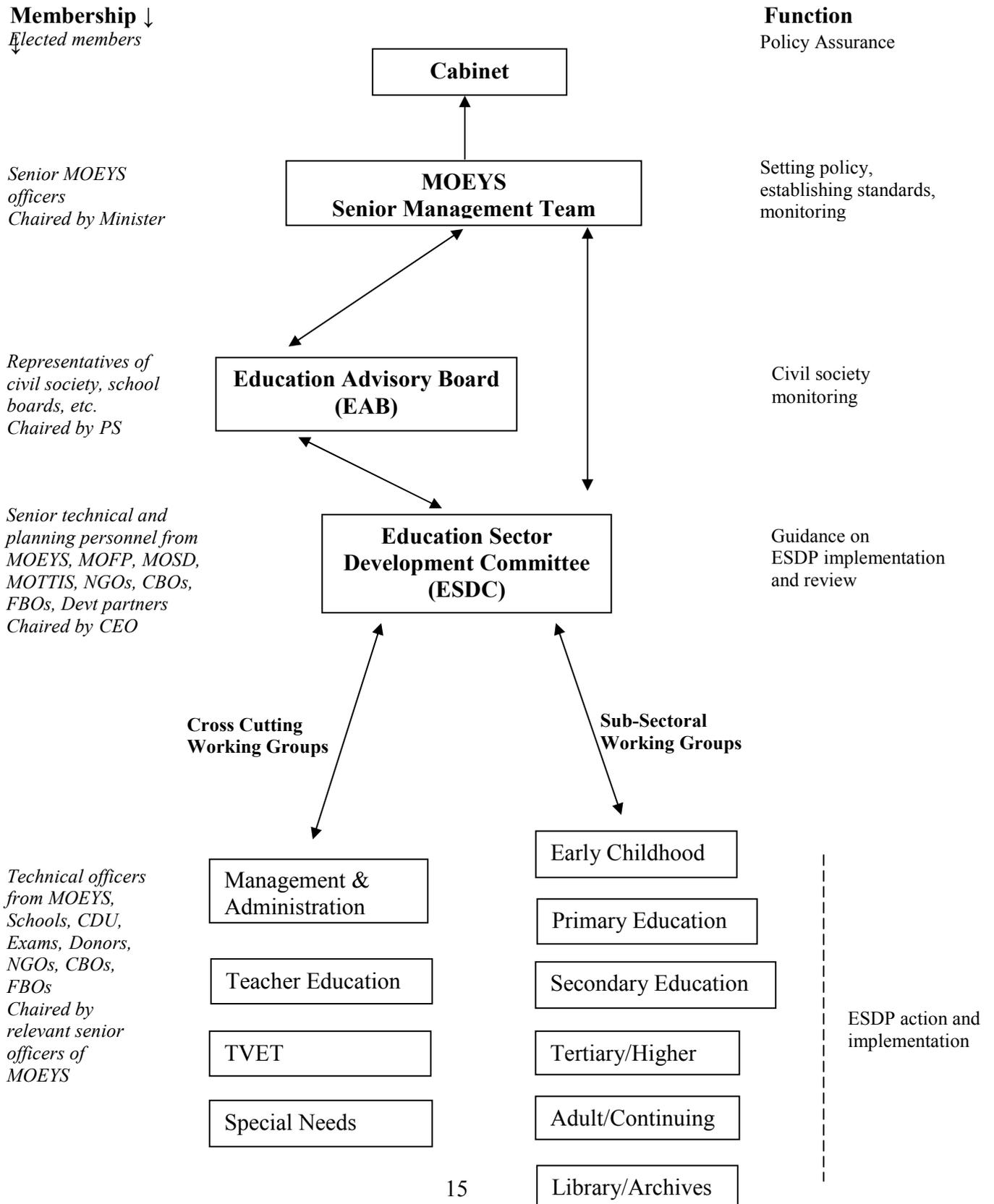
- a) Inadequate provision of early childhood education
- b) Child labour and truancy during school hours
- c) Insufficient access to secondary education
- d) Quality improvement through improved teacher training and a relevant curriculum
- e) Restructuring of TVET

The Strategy reduction Strategy Paper (2002) notes that lack of education, skills and training and the prevalence of severe disabilities are characteristics of poverty.

1.1.3: organisation of ALE within the government

Management Structure of Adult and Continuing Education Division as it relates to the Education Sector Development Programme.

Table 1: Organogram - ESDP Operationalisation/Implementation
(*Education Sector Development Plan Volume 1, 2002*)



The Ministry of Education is responsible for the overall management and development of the ACED. The Ministry works in partnership with other governmental and non-governmental organisations to guide the implementation of the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP). The Education Sector partnership is also responsible for checking how the plan is being implemented, that targets are attained, that progress against agreed indicators is being made and that feedback is adequately utilised. The implementation of the plan required joint co-ordination and widespread commitment from all stakeholders. ACSD, being one of the components of the Education Sector Plan, fits into this governance mechanism.

A steering committee was established to oversee the management of the Education Sector Development Plan. *Education Sector Development Committee* (ESDC) is responsible for overseeing a series of working groups that reflect the sub-sectoral approach of the ESDP. Members of the ESDC comprise representatives from the following stakeholders group:

- SVG Teachers Union
- Denominational Boards of Management
- The Education Advisory Board
- Private sector/NGO/community-based organisations
- School Boards and/or Parents Teachers Association
- Ministries of Social Development (MOSD); Telecommunications, Technology, Industry and Science (MOTTIS); Health (MOH), Finance (MOFP) and MOEYS
- Development partners, including external funding agencies

The ESDC is responsible for initiating and following through on all proposals in the plan such as:

- a) establish the sub-sectoral and cross-cutting Working Groups,
- b) approve Terms of Reference for these Working Groups,
- c) request work-plans and budget break down from each Working Group,
- d) preparing a co-ordinated implementation programme of the plan.

Each Working Group is responsible for producing a fully operational, prioritised annual work plan with cost for their overall programme proposals. The work plans consist of the development of more detailed activities on the programming areas outlined in the Action Plan. The work of these groups consists of informing the ministry's annual planning and budget process. A working group was established for spearheading the work on ACE.

ACE Terms of Reference for the Working Group

The composition of the working group would consist of private and public sector representatives selected to ensure adequate contribution at this crucial stage of development. The Permanent Secretary would endorse the appointment of the working group. The Director of ACE is responsible for facilitating the meetings of the working group.

They will:

- Attend and participate in discussions in order to confirm policy document in relation to its sustainability to realise:
 - a) SVG education vision and mission: in life long learning.
 - b) Discuss and contribute to its potential to realize the CARICOM/CSME OECS Agenda
 - c) The document's potential to include and realise the current Education Master plan Vision of 2020 in the sub sector plan and related sub sectors (i.e. Secondary Education, Post Secondary Education and TVET)
- Contribute to insights into current job market trends and training needs within a global competitive environment.
- Ensure adequate levels of participation by the private sector in enhancing workforce participation
- Discuss and identify the document's potential to focus comprehensively now and links in the future on TVET management, quality and access;
- Validate its potential to increase continuous learning/lifelong learning education to future improvement of the sector;

The Permanent Secretary and Chief Education Officer would meet regularly with the senior officials of the Minister who will report on the progress of the overall work of the sector. These reports would be submitted to Cabinet for further consultation. The Education Advisory Board (EAB) was reconstituted during the period under review. The EAD would be kept informed of progress on the achievement of the education sector and the ESDC would seek its advice and views on any issues arising as necessary and appropriate.

1.1.4: Policy and implementation strategies aligned for example with

a) Policies in other sectors (health, economy, labour, rural development, etc.)

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines adopted an integrated development approach to policy development. ACE/ALE is integrated in the various sectors within the government development and operational machinery including health, economic, social, labour, tourism, youth etc. The ministries are responsible for the implementation of the aspect of ACE that is relevant to their development plan/programme (refer to table 2).

b) Other goals, such as gender equality, social cohesion, active citizenship, cultural and linguistic diversity;

Gender equality, social cohesion, active citizenship, sustainability and cultural diversity are important components of the ACE/ALE process. These programmes are cross-cutting issues which form the main plank of the ACE/ALE strategic programmes.

Gender Equality

Gender considerations are adopted across and throughout the policy development and programming process. Operationally, it is implemented in the following ways a) selection of participant/learners, b) delivery of learning process, c) material production/development d) selection and training of facilitators and instructors and e) curriculum/content development processes.

Social Cohesion

It is the government's strategy to ensure that all persons irrespective of colour, social status or religious allegiance have access to its programmes and are provided with the opportunity to access and participate in the development and governance of these programmes.

Active Citizenship

The Government's intension is to utilize ACE/ALE to create active citizenry among its populace i.e. a citizen who is committed, dedicated and actively participates in the development and governance of the country.

Sustainability

This concept is part and parcel of the government's development philosophy and programme. The Government is committed to provide opportunities through the division to pilot sustainable innovations in ACE/ALE. These initiatives include:

- the creation of knowledge economies and/or the building of learning societies;
- national development plans and strategies; or in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers;

c) Development challenges facing St Vincent and the Grenadines and the ACE/ALE goals defined in relation to meet these challenges

The development challenges affecting the country include poverty, increase in crime and drugs related issues, HIV/AIDS and related health issues, unemployment, environmental and economic sustainability.. The ACE/ALE programme has relevance to the development priorities of St Vincent and the Grenadines. During the period under review, the strategic programme is impacting positively on the development challenges facing the country by contributing to reduce the incidence of poverty and crime at community levels. It has provided opportunities for learners to share their views on the issues affecting the country as well as using their skills and competencies to resolve these development challenges. ACE/ALE programmes are contributing to building the capacity of the workforce by enhancing their literacy, numeracy and employment creation skills. Thus these participants are impacting positively on the socio economic and cultural development of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

Approximately 75% of literacy facilitators/instructors of ACE/ALE are teachers working in the formal education system. Building the skills base and competencies of teachers/literacy facilitators would enable them to utilize a variety of skills and methodologies in the formal education system. These innovative methodologies would enhance teachers' planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation skills thus making teaching in the formal education system more interesting. There has been an increase of up to 20% in the performance of students at primary level at the 11+ Proficiency Common Entrance and the CXC Secondary School Examination over the past two years. Due to the absence of empirical evidence it is too early to state whether the ACE/ALE programme has contributed to these positive performance. Nevertheless, there is the belief that the literacy crusade has contributed to these results. The ACE/ALE programme has relevance to the development of the Education Sector Development P (ESDP) which is a component of the over all National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP).

The ACE/ALE initiative is aimed at enhancing the human development capacity of a larger portion of the Vincentian work force, thus contributing to national productivity. To date, over 500 professionals were trained as facilitators/instructors through the Training of Trainers programme administered by the ACED. The project has reached over 9000 participants/learners. It is deemed a model of best practice for utilising ACE/ALE as a strategy for improving literacy and numeracy and employment skills thus contributing to national development. There is need to conduct studies/research to assess to what extent ACE/ALE has contributed to enhancing the human development capital of St Vincent and the Grenadines, modernising the society and providing opportunities for the new group of literates to utilize technology to contribute to the development of their community.

d) Issues and Challenges facing ALE in St Vincent and the Grenadines

St Vincent like other Small Island Developing States is faced with numerous development challenges. Limited capacity and resources are fundamental challenges which plague these programmes.

The challenges facing ACE/ALE are:

- a) Although the ACED budget was increased by over 300% after 2002 in comparison to previous years, the division would need an injection of resources for it to continue to meet the increasing demand placed on its resources since the implementation of the Literacy Crusade.
- b) There are competing demands on the limited resources available to the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines. ACE/ALE would have to maintain high visibility and performance at levels beyond the outcomes stipulated in the national development plan to enable it to continue to receive increase in resources.

- c) Political will - whether ACE/ALE would continue to be a high priority area of the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines. This would determine whether it would continue to receive the necessary injection in human and financial resources to sustain the development and expansion of its programme.
- d) There is need for a clear assessment of the level of functional literacy in the country and, in relation to this, a need for a widely accepted definition and tests of functional literacy (and numeracy). Analysis of the 2002 Adult literacy survey indicated that this is absolutely necessary.
- e) There is a potential requirement for 10,000 out-of-school people to be trained and certified over the next five (5) years to meet the needs of the emerging ICT industries, building construction industry, electronics, communications services and e-commerce.
- f) There is limited capacity for training the numbers of persons available/required. The critical question is whether these persons are willing to participate in such training and whether ACE/ALE possesses the technical competence to mobilise them to access such training.

1.1.6: Other policies in place that have an impact on ALE

The Agriculture Development Policy, National Youth Policy, Information policy, National Emergency Management Policy, Employment Policy, Health Development Policy, HIV/AIDS Development Policy and other development policies have relevance to the development of ACE/ALE in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Most of these policies utilise ACE/ALE approaches as strategies for achieving their goals. They implement training, public awareness campaigns and other popular methodologies for enhancing the competencies and skills of their targeted population. ACE/ALE is viewed by government as the vehicle for enabling them to achieve their national development goals.

1.2: Financing of ALE

1.2.1 Public investment in ALE: Share of the budget allocated to adult education within the education sector

In 1999, public expenditure on education was estimated at 6.5% of GDP. Over the years, Government has allocated 23% of recurrent expenditure on the education sector (Education Sector Development Plan 2002 – 2007). During the period under review the programme a rapid injection in resources from 2005 to 2007. Annually, the programme accounts for 0.47% (EC \$271,778) of the resources allocated to the education sector from 1997-2004. It had increased to 2.9% (EC\$2183460) of the resources in the education sector from 2005. This injection in resources is as a result of the high priority being placed on ACE/ALE by the government. It views ACE/ALE as a development strategy. These funds are allocated to assist ACE/ALE to implement three (3) strategic programming areas. The strategic programmes are a) Basic literacy, b) Academic upgrading and c) special programmes.

Basic Literacy

The basic literacy programme concerns itself with the provision of literacy and numeracy training to the 20% Vincentians (17,000) adults who are deemed functionally illiterates. The programme provides opportunities to adults who are seriously challenged due to their limited numeracy and literacy skills to become literate. Persons who lack basic skills in reading, writing, and numeracy are targeted by this programme.

Academic up-grading Programme

The Academic up-grading programme provides opportunities for persons who did not complete secondary school or those who completed but did not get the required number of CXC and GCE to enable them to gain meaningful employment or pursue tertiary level training.

Special Programmes

The Special Programmes component of the division's programme concerns with the provision of special skills training/upgrading type development programme to special interest groups. The courses range from fine arts courses to general skills enhancement in areas of carpentry, building construction to computer and technology training. This programme is necessary to enable participants to be certificated to meet the requirement of the CSME.

b) Share of the budget allocated to adult education from other sectors, made either directly or indirectly within their policies (indicate responsible ministries, describe activities):

Due to high priority accorded to ACE/ALE by the Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines, other ministries and divisions located outside of the Ministry of Education have contributed over EC\$9 million to ALE during the period under review. The Ministry of National Mobilisation has contributed a substantial amount of resources to enhance the institutional capacity of community through the development of capacity development programmes for community, development of cooperatives and credit facilities at community levels as the vehicle for building sustainable communities, development and servicing by Local Authorities and other social development and sustainable livelihoods initiatives.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has embarked on a programme to enhance the skills base and competencies of farmers and small croppers and persons responsible for marketing of agricultural produces etc. The Forestry and the Fisheries division within the ministry embarked on respective capacity development programmes to enhance the competencies and skills of clients within their respective sectors.

The Labour Division located in the Ministry of Urban Development, Culture, Labour etc. implemented programmes on job recruitment, jobs skills development for the unemployed and low skilled workers and is in support of the international farm labour and other types of programmes.

The Ministry of Health and the Environment continually utilise ACE/ALE approaches to train the general populace and special target groups on issues of health, healthy life styles (Wellness Revolution) and the general environmental issues/challenges of living in a small island developing state. The HIV/AIDS Unit of the Ministry implemented ACE/ALE strategies for raising awareness of the special target groups and the general population on mitigation strategies to combat HIV/AIDS.

A substantial amount of resources was allocated to support Sports and Gender development activities. These resources were used to promote skills and competency development programmes for youths, women and special interest groups.

Information and Telecommunication Technology (ICT) is viewed by Government as a strategy for promoting employment, the development of trade and commerce, both regionally and globally. The Ministry is collaborating with ACED, other divisions, public sector and civil society to implement programmes aimed at enhancing the skills base and competencies of participants/learners (youth, women etc) in the areas of computer development (hard ware and soft ware) and the use of ICT as means of making these groups of persons employable and linking them to markets world wide via the internet. The changes to society that ICT is capable of making are captured below as;

‘We are entering a world where no one knows what the narrow will bring. And so we must equip every man, everyday, in every way in every moment of his life to be master of his fate, for he too is changing and must change the society around him.’
Adieseshiah (1970) p.170.

Other special programmes/projects that are implemented including the Social Investment Fund and HIV/AIDS Fund etc. are designed to provide resources to support ACE/ALE initiatives at community and national levels. However these programmes are new and time did not permit the researcher to assess their contribution to enable the ACE/ALE strategy moving forward.

c) ACE/ALE in decentralized/local budgets (local governments and authorities, municipalities, communities);

Although there is a local government council in place in St Vincent and the Grenadines, however, due to the smallness of the country, the budgetary resources are managed through centralised systems administered by the Ministry of Finance and Planning in collaboration with the Ministry of National Mobilisation. Kingstown Town Board is the only local authority that is responsible for the management of its allocation. The bulk of its programmes is concerned mainly with public health and sanitation provision and small scale infrastructural development. This authority does

not allocate any of its resources to support ACE/ALE initiatives within the Kingstown area. The resources of other local authorities are managed centrally by the Local Government Division in the Ministry of National Mobilisation.

The ACE/ALE model in St Vincent and the Grenadines during the 1980s and first half of the 1990s was driven by a vibrant network of Community Based Organisations delivering literacy and adult education programmes in over forty communities. The network was coordinated by the National Association for Mass Education (NAME) and supported by the Adult Education Unit in the Ministry of Education. The number of community based Adult Education programmes has since declined due to the following: lack of resources (HR, financial and material) to support the volunteer contribution, decline in donor funding for these programmes, the decline in local voluntarism and the absence of government assistance in utilising the community ACE/ALE model during the implementation of the Literacy Crusade. Currently, the only programmes in existence are JEMS and the New Horizon (formerly SVUT Adult Education Programme).

1.2.2.)Other investments; Foreign bilateral/multilateral donor investment in ALE: listing of annual amounts and key areas/activities.

During the period under review, over 80% of the resources invested in ACE/ALE were allocated from central government funds. Some of the funds to support the literacy Crusade were provided by UNESCO and the Japanese Aids Fund (US \$100,000). The funds were allocated for the development of reading materials, training of facilitators and delivery of television programmes which provide instruction to learners.

The Special Financial Assistance (SAF) under European Union provided funding to support the enhancement of the quality of ACE/ALE initiative at community and national level. This project was developed in response to regional and local trends (CSME). SAF EU is contributing US\$1.8 million to provide technical assistance to enhance the institutional capacity of the ministry of Education towards the development of the CSA/ALE, Multi Purpose Centres and machineries within the formal system to take advantage of the opportunities which are available at the CSME. A Caribbean Certification for Secondary Level was implemented to allow students to do core subjects and 1 subject in TVET. These students can then proceed to either the vocational or academic stream. Modular typed training was also implemented to enable skills artisans to be certificated. The project would also provide training for facilitators/instructors as well as up-grading and construction of new Learning Resource and Multi Purpose Centres.

1.2.3: Support to ALE from private/corporate sector: provide data on annual expenditure from corporate sector; provide relations to e.g. overall national budget, overall expenditure from selected national and multinational enterprises.

Private sector agencies like Flour Mill, CK Greaves Ltd, PH Veira and Company Limited, St Vincent and the Grenadines Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Central Water and Sewage Authority (CWSA) and VINLEC provide funding to train their

staff. Data is not available on the amount of resources these agencies employed to undergo such training or number of persons who accessed these training programmes.

1.2.4: Civil society support to ALE (e.g. religious institutions, unions, NGOs).

During the latter half of the 1990s, the contribution of NGOs to national development declined severely in comparison with the 1980s and the early 1990s.

According to Jules (1988) 'the Adult Education and Literacy programmes in St Vincent and the Grenadines are the most dynamic in the Caribbean region'. (page.377). He goes on to say that the St Vincent and the Grenadines experience is worth observing as it may refute the belief that only government is capable of successfully undertaking large literacy efforts. Simmons (1995) attributed this to: the programmes in St Vincent and the Grenadines are initiated and administered by members of Community Based Organisations.

This is due mainly to a) closure of these organizations resulting to the ineffectiveness of the Community Development Division, b) the absence of donor funds to this sector and c) decline in volunteerism. Although GOSVG had created mechanism such as the Social Investment Fund (SIF) and HIV/AIDS Fund to support the work of community-based groups and other civil society organizations, these mechanisms are ineffective in meeting these desired outcomes.

Marion House, Project Promotions, Windward Island Farmers Association, JEMS and New Horizon continue to provide ACE/ALE service to communities even though they continue to encounter grave financial difficulties.

1.2.5. Learners'/individuals' contributions to ALE.

On the individual level, participants/learners use their resources to purchase material as well as covering transportation costs to and from their classes. At the programme level, skilled learners/participants would also participate as facilitators/instructors in these programmes, participate on boards and management committees and would provide their services to implement 'aided self-help' project to address felt needs at the community level.

Participants/learners contribute to the ACE/ALE process by participating in demonstration exercise to pilot new and innovative methodologies/ processes and research.

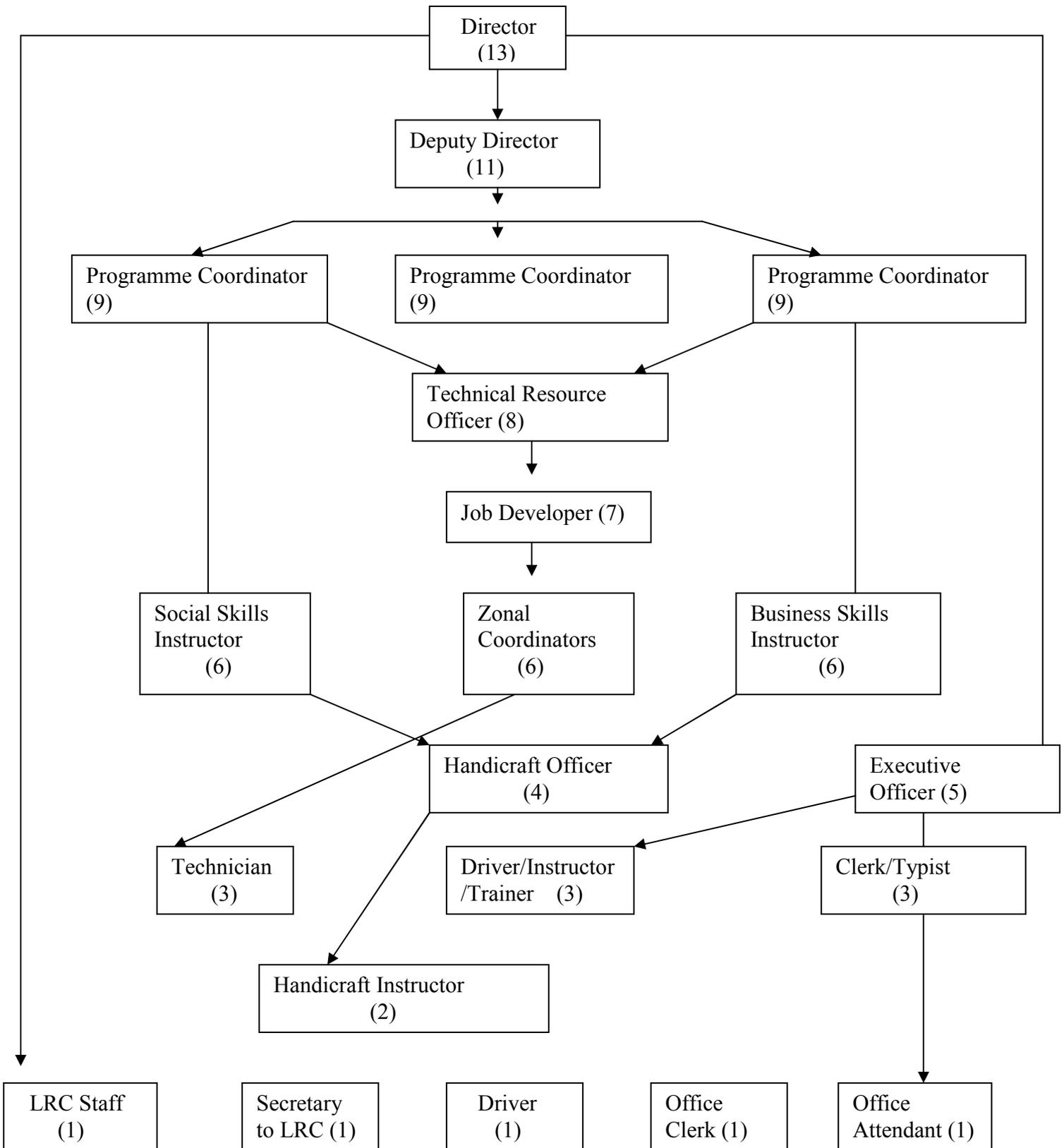
1.2.6: Specific direct or indirect financial incentives in support of ALE e.g. learning vouchers, scholarships, paid educational leave, special funds and funding schemes etc.

All ACE/ALE programmes conducted by government are free except the Academic up-grading class where participants/learners are requested to contribute towards subsidising the cost of facilitators. Although incentives are limited, government agencies and businesses would provide 'time off work' and other incentives to allow their staff to attend the ACE/ALE programmes.

2: Quality of Adult Learning and Education: Provision, Participation and Achievement

2.1.1: Institutions responsible for managing and co-ordinating ALE at national level

Chart 3: Organisational Structure of the Adult and Continuing Education Unit of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.



The Adult and Continuing Education Division in the Ministry of Education is responsible for the management and coordination of ACE/ALE at the national level. ACED work in partnership with other governmental and non-governmental organisations to administer the ACE/ALE component of the ESDP. It would check how the plan is being implemented, that targets are attained, that progress against agreed indicators is being made and that feedback is adequately utilised.

2.1.2.) Table 1: indicate the different type of providers (Government, Civil Society, Private Sector etc), area of learning they address, target groups, cost and funding source.

Programme-(name and brief description)	a) Provider (please choose the appropriate one from below):			b) Area of learning (please choose the appropriate one/s from below):			c) Target group/s
	Public/ State	CSO/ NGO	Private	General competencies	Technical skills	Knowledge generation, innovation	
Agriculture development -Provision of training to enhance the competencies of farmers	Ministry of Agriculture	National Farmers Union Project Promotions LTD WINFA	Banana Growers Association National Properties	Farm management, crop and animal husbandry	Cropping and production techniques Marketing	New way/ processes of producing crops and other agricultural produce	Farmers Agricultural Cooperatives
Labour Programmes/employment creation/cooperative development - Development of employment skills and recruitment of skills/semi unskilled labour for overseas market. - Development of cooperative as a vehicle for employment creation - provision of small business training and credit support	Labour Division National Skills Training Unit Youth Division Cooperative Division	Projects Promotions LTD JEMS	National Commercial Bank	Literacy and numeracy	Live skills Employment – carpentry, computer, building construction Utilising tools	Knowledge of the area of employment/ trade	Un-skilled youths, women
a) Literacy and numeracy – provide resources to create programmes to enhance literacy and numeracy of participants as a mean of enhancing employability	Adult and continuing Education Division and its net-work of Rural Resource centres	New Horizon	Flower Mills	Enhance literacy and numeracy levels of learners Provision of live skills	Employment skills	Civic responsibilities	Illiterate young women, youths and adults
b) Literacy Crusade - Development of national strategic programme to address utilising a services of innovative approaches to engage youths, women and other disadvantaged group to enhance their literacy,	Adult and continuing Education Division and its net-work of Rural Resource centres and network of over 400 volunteers	New Horizon	Flour Mills News Papers (Vincentian News and Search Light), Radio Stations, SVG Broad	Enhance literacy and numeracy levels of learners Provision of live skills	Facilitating skills for teachers and facilitators Marketing and media promotional skills	Management and organisation of literacy networks – resource centre and volunteer facilitators	All; women, youths and adults

numeracy and employment skills (2004-2006). - Creation of the Adult and Continuing Education Division - Utilising media and other innovative medium to promote and sustain momentum			Casting Corporation (SVG BC)			Partnership and collaboration among networks of agencies and partners (gov't, NGOs and private sector)	
GCE/CXC Up-grading -	Adult and Cont'd Ed. Unit	UWI CBOs NGOs		Enhance knowledge		Academic up-grading	Semi professional, young men and women

2.1.3) Links between formal and non formal approaches

The Adult Education Unit is located in the Ministry of Education and is responsible for the implementation of Government's Lifelong Learning Policy in the context of vocational training. The unit must be cognisant of what is happening in the formal and informal sector and merge the two approaches to enable it to achieve the outcomes stipulated in the National Development Plan.

At the policy and administrative level, ACE/ALE is governed by the Education Act of 2005 and guided by the Education Sector Development Plan 2002-2007. The Education Sector Development Committee (ESDC) as administered by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education has responsibility for overseeing its work to ensure that it is performing within the context of the outcomes stipulated in the plan. The working group on ACE/ALE reports to the ESDC.

On the issues of certification, ACE through the ASF EU recognises the progress being made in the formal system which led to the establishment of the Caribbean Certification in Secondary Education. The lessons learned and models of best practices evolving from this experience would be used to implement the modular certification programmes for skills workers stipulated under the CSME.

The majority of facilitators/instructors of the ACE/ALE are practicing and professional teachers within the formal education system. ACED had conducted formal training for 400 facilitators/instructors to enhance their skills and competencies to deliver quality service to learners. Facilitators posited that the performance of students in the formal system improved tremendously when they utilised these methodologies and practices in the classroom (Review of Literacy Campaign in St Vincent and the Grenadines, GOSVG/UNESCO, 2007).

2.1.4: ALE leads to Certification and National Award.

Although it is too early to assess the performance of this programme, ACE through the Ministry of Education and SAF EU assistance support project is deploying a considerable amount of resources to build the capacity of Adult and Continuing Education in the context of CSME. It is collaborating with Heart Trust (a regional competency institution) to build the competency standards and appropriate

institutional capacity on the ground. It is developing modular type training which would lead to certification of the Vincentian work force.

2.2: Participation in ALE

The ACE/ALE programme in St Vincent and the Grenadines targets persons who are outside of the formal education system i.e. 16 years and over. The emphasis is on engaging young females and males and marginalized groups such as disabled and the dispossessed in programmes to enhance their numeracy, literacy and vocational skills as a means of achieving certification.

The programme used a combination of innovative approaches such as the media (CD, television and radio programmes), ‘on the block’ meeting/consultations, sports groups and ‘one to one’ consultations with their spouses. These approaches did not bring the desired results as anticipated. Specifically, young men were not that keen to attend these activities.

The ACED has developed an innovative structure to de-centralize the programmes at community levels. There is a network of ten (10) zones created across the country. Each zone is managed by a zonal coordinator who is responsible for ensuring that the programme is successfully delivered to participants/learners within their respective catchment area. Approximately 1000 participants/learners are being targeted per zone annually. Financial constraints and limited Human Resources capacity are factors influencing the programme not realizing its full potential. Currently, there are on average 300 learners/participants attending classes in each zone, 37% of which are males.

2.3: Monitoring and Evaluation and Assessing Learning Outcomes

A monitoring and evaluation system was developed and instituted (Education Sector Development Plan, 2002). During the period under review, the programme sets out to accomplish the following outcomes/impacts:

- Review assessment of the literacy needs
- Literacy programme registered/supported; national literacy test
- Cadre of trained facilitators
- Raised profile for Adult and Continuing Education support
- Adult and continuing education supported
- National involvement and partnership in ECE Affairs.

During the Literacy Crusade (2004 – 2006) emphasis was expended on developing relevant indicators to assess learning outcomes.

Monitoring and evaluation were conducted at all levels to determine the effectiveness of the programme. At the zonal level, coordinators and facilitators were responsible for ensuring that these programmes were achieving the specific outcomes that were agreed in collaboration with ACED. Meetings were organised with the learners and the wider community to solicit feed back on the operation of the programmes. At the national level, a comprehensive ‘Review on the Literacy Campaign in St Vincent and the Grenadines (2007) was conducted with support from UNESCO. The report states

that ‘from all accounts the literacy campaign was a tremendous success....UNESCO funding provided the opportunity for the project to reach a larger audience through the medium of television and radio’.

2.3.2: Tools and mechanism used to monitor and evaluate programmes

A comprehensive diagnosis test was implemented for individual programmes centres to assess learners’ competencies before entering the programme. The information provided was used to allocate them to their respective levels/classes. This information was also used to monitor the progress of the learners throughout the programme.

A combination of survey methods were used to assess the performance of the programme. These included desk audit of student records and reports on the programmes, interviews and questionnaires administered to stakeholders, observation of actual classes and demonstrations of specific practices.

More efforts should be made by ACED to ensure that monitoring and evaluation strategies are effective and a balance between learning output, assessment of quality of content and methodology are achieved.

2.3.3: Results use for a) legislation, b) policy formulation and c) programme development

Records were kept on individual learners by the coordinators and facilitators of the various programmes to monitor participants’ progress. At the national level field officers of ACED were also responsible for carrying out monitoring and evaluation at community and zonal levels. These were undertaken to assess levels, quality and participation of learners, general performance of learners in relationship to the curriculum/content outputs and operational issues facing the programme

a) Legislative

The outputs of the National Literacy Assessment in 2002 and the zonal consultations held between 2002 and 2003 were collated and fed into the process which led to the formulation of the 2005 Education Act.

b) Policy Formulation

In 2002, the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines conducted a National Literacy Assessment which a) provided an indication on the level of literacy among the adult population b) determined the impact of any of the adult education programmes and c) provided data that informed the policy and programme of the ACED. The assessment was supported by an on-going data collection process resulting from the monitoring and evaluation system adopted by ACED.

The information provided was used to restructure government policy on ACE/ALE as well as influenced the development of the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2002 and the Education policy of which ACE is a component. Due to the importance accorded to ACE/ALE by the government of St. Vincent and the

Grenadines, the Adult Education Unit was elevated to divisional status. This was followed by an injection of resources to enable ACED to further develop and expand its programmes to urban and rural centres. A permanent zonal system/network was developed linking all programmes operating within a specific zone. Due to the successful performance of individual programmes and zonal programmes, ACE/ALE received recognition from policy makers and the nation as a whole.

c) Programme Development

The information provided also informed and influenced the design and development of a comprehensive programme and curriculum. The programme was extended to focus on the attainment of sustainable livelihoods measures including skills development and vocation training to meet the requirements of CSME.

New learning materials were developed reflecting the content needed to meet the changing local, regional and global environment i.e. more depth in content were realised. The materials included historical, economic, social, health and cultural content including HIV/AIDS. The programme utilized traditional and electronic media namely the television, radio and news paper as media to deliver content/information to learners and the general public. These media provided opportunities for ACED to reach a 60% percent of target groups as well as approximately 75% of CED also implemented innovative and popular methodologies to deliver its programme in the classroom and the wider community.

A number of the Learning Resource Centres such as Upper Cane Hall and Marriaqua developed aided self-help projects to address felt needs with their respective communities.

2.3.4: Bench mark in relation to outcomes of ALE: Realistic benchmarks related to outcomes

The formal education system was used to benchmarks the ALE.

These include:

a) Certification

ACED provided certificates for learners completing the Pre Basic Literacy and Numeracy programme. Senior officials of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports signed the certificates. Although they do not carry the same weight as a CXC/GCE certificate, they did provide some level of accomplishment to the learner and his family.

The Ministry is working with Heart Trust Foundation of Jamaica and other development institutions across the region to develop a system of accreditation and certification for persons completing skills component of the programme. Preliminary discussions were held with the Officials of the Ministry of Education and the St Vincent and the Grenadines Teachers College to explore the provision of an accredited certificate for facilitators of ALE. This would be followed up.

Other forms of benchmarking of ALE include attainment of GEC/CXC and other professional certification as a means of enhancing the employability and marketability of learners, building the capacity and competence of learners to enable them to better express themselves, display high levels of confidence and self esteem and contribute meaningfully as citizens to the development of the state.

2.4: Adult Education/Facilitators status and training

2.4.1: Education/qualification/training required for facilitators

ACE has over 400 trained facilitators available to deliver its programmes. The qualifications of facilitators ranged from persons without any formal certification (possess skills and competencies for grade 10/form 4) to those possessing certificates, diploma and degrees.

The minimal basic requirement for a facilitator of the pre-basic level of the literacy programme is completion of or being able to operate at Form four (4) or grade 10.

ACED implemented an ongoing comprehensive programme of training of the facilitators. The capacity building programme focuses on training of facilitators to enable them to develop new innovations in strategies/methodologies. The content of these training programmes consist of Adult Psychology, Methodologies, Human Relocations, aspect of development education, governance and organizational development and material. Through the SAF EU project, the ACE is providing training in Adult Education at certificate, diploma and degree levels. It is currently training 25 facilitators in literacy and 25 instructors in upgrading methodologies for working with Adults. The government provides a stipend of EC\$400 monthly to volunteer facilitators to cover transportation and other costs.

3: Research innovation and Good Practices

3.1.1: key Studies in Adult Education within the last five years

Two (2) studies were conducted during the period a) Adult Literacy Assessment (2002) and b) the Review of the Literacy Crusade in St Vincent and the Grenadines (2007).

3.1.2: Major Question address by these studies

a) The Adult Literacy Assessment

The study was administered between March–October 2002. The purpose of the survey was to:

- establish existing levels of literacy among the adult population of St Vincent and the Grenadines
- determine the impact of the adult education programme and
- gather data that would inform policy and programmes of the Adult Education Unit.

b) Review of the literacy Crusade in St Vincent and the Grenadines (2007)

UNESCO contributed US\$100,000 to support the National Literacy Crusade in St Vincent and the Grenadines. The project was entitled 'Capacity building in literacy production in St Vincent and the Grenadines'. The aim of the evaluation exercise was to assess the performance of the project in relation to the outcomes set out in the project proposal.

The survey assessed the project activities, project outcomes, the achievement of the objectives/results, lessons learned, recommendations, sustainability strategies, effectiveness and relevance of the public information, benefits to people/learners and the utilisation of equipment purchased.

3.1.3: Key findings of the studies

a) Adult Literacy Assessment

The purpose of the survey was to determine the literacy rate among adults, according to the following levels: prerequisite or minimum level, basic level and advanced level.

The National Literacy Assessment has established a) minimum literacy level of 83.1% and b) basic literacy level of 75.5% with Central Windward and Marriaqua belt performing above the national average.

The assessment further indicated that approximately one quarter of the national population is performing at the highest level of functional competences. This figure extends to 58.9% along the lower end of the Advance level competences continuum. The results show that this level of competency is greatly influenced by post secondary training. Thus, while national policy do influence trend, individual choices do carry some weight.

b) Review of the Literacy Crusade in St Vincent and the Grenadines (2007)

The findings showed that the literacy crusade was a tremendous success. The UNESCO funding offered opportunities for the project to reach a large audience through the medium of television, news papers (learning page) and radio as well as through informal literacy programmes implemented at Learning Resource Centres, schools and other community facilities. These programmes reached approximately over 6000 of the adult population. Although there is no mechanism available in St Vincent and the Grenadines to measure the reach of the literacy programme via radio and television, it is estimated that the TV programme was viewed by approximated 25,000 people on a weekly basis. Books and other printed learning materials were produced by the project.

The report/study also states that the project impacted on the formal and non-formal education system in St Vincent and the Grenadines. Teachers (literacy facilitators) in the formal education system used the training and competencies developed through

the Literacy Crusade/programmes (informal) to enhance their teaching methodologies and content in the formal school system.

3.1.4) Extent to which findings informed policies and practice

The findings from these studies assisted the government to redefine and re-brand its Adult and Continuing Education programme. They positively influenced and shaped the content of the Education Sector Development Plan in 2002 – 2007 and the 2005 Education Act.

The philosophy and policies of the programmes are outlined in the plan as follows:

- Education is a fundamental human right and all citizens should have facilities available to enable them to achieve a basic required minimum.
- Education should not be limited by age, time or pace but should be a lifelong process which goes beyond formal schooling.
- All forms of education, whatever the content, should be developed to meet the varying needs of the population.

This renewal of the programme results in the following:

- Upgrading of the AEU to the status of a division located in the Ministry of Education.
- The Skills Training and Craft Units were added to the new Adult and Continuing Education Division.
- Increases in resources of up to 400% receiving .i.e. 2.9% of the resources allocated to the Education sector.
- Reorientation and raising the profile/status of the Adult Education by the government as the vehicle to enable it to certify skilled workers and fulfil its obligation under the CSME.

A new mission statement for the division was developed.

To assist in the socio-economic development of St Vincent and the Grenadines by facilitating the education, training and developmental needs of all persons over the age of fifteen years old who are outside of the regular school system.

The division consists of Adult Education Unit, the Non-formal Skills Training Division, Craft Unit and a network of Learning Resources Centres scattered across the country. The programme is subdivided into ten (10) zones with over fifty (50) full time staff and over six hundred (600) part time staff and volunteers. These include skills instructors, basic literacy facilitators and tutors for various academic upgrading classes. The creation of the Learning Resource Centres provides opportunities for these programmes to be located within villages thus reducing difficulties such as transportation cost etc. It also enables learning content and material to be relevant to the needs of the community. ACE programmes are also involved in doing self help work in communities to address felt needs.

Due to the limited resources available by government to implement these programmes private sector agencies were persuaded to participate in ACE. The division is supported by a network of programmes implemented by the private sector. These include Mountain Top, the St Vincent Flour Mills Ltd etc. The private sector agencies support the initiatives by a) providing resources to train their staff in basic literacy skills or b) running basic literacy classes for members of their staff within respective businesses or at community levels.

3.2: Innovation and Examples of Good Practices

The ACED developed an innovative programme of best practices:

a) Programme of selection, recruitment and sustainability

ACED had collaborated with a network of Adult Literacy programmes and Resource Learning Centres across the country to institute a process of selection and recruitment of participants/learners in the ACE/ALE process.

Through surveys, community consultations and ‘one to one’ discussions the zonal coordinators would identify the learners who need the specific training. A considerable amount of effort would be made to work with perspective learners to prioritize their learning needs.

Zonal coordinators and ACE field officers would examine national and regional trends to enable them to determine the type of courses they would implement within their respective programmes. They would also finalise the training modules, agree on the number of the persons to be trained and the resources (human and material) that would be needed to train these persons. At all times, efforts are made to ensure that training meets the goals of the individual, the community and the country. ACED would collaborate with a range of partners from public, private sector and civil society to implement these programmes as a cost sharing measure.

ACED has placed a considerable amount of effort on a) deciding where these trainings are to be held and b) the most appropriate time/dates to implement such training. It has decided that these programmes should not be organised between July - August and December due to the carnival festivities, school vacation and Christmas periods. Facilitators and instructors may not be available for these dates.

If they were organising training in the Grenadines, it was advisable to hold these trainings sessions in the evening due to the work schedule of learners. The programme has grown considerably over the years in terms of its budget. It has grown from 0.45% in 1999 to over 2.9% of the total allocation to the education sector in 2005-2007. Staffing has also grown from three (3) full time professional staff in 1997 to sixty (60) full time staff and over 400 part-time staff (facilitators/instructors) at present.

b) Addressing Community felt needs

The ACE/ALE model in St Vincent and the Grenadines still maintains a semblance of its Community Based Oriented and Programming strategy. This model evolved out of

the Adult Education movement of the 1980s/90s. Although resources were injected to cover the cost of facilitators/instructors, material production and media outreach strategies such as utilising radio and television programmes, there still exists a strong element of building volunteerism, active citizenship and addressing community felt needs (such as poverty reduction) through skills training/enhancement. The Learning Resource Centre at Upper Canehall implemented an environmental project engaging learners in clearing and cleaning a trail to a water fall and protecting a forested area in the community. The Marriagua Literacy programme implemented skills development programmes aimed at upgrading employment skills of participants/learners. Similar projects addressing issues such as leisure and recreation, solid waste, governance and citizenship and sustainable livelihoods were implemented by various programmes.

c) Utilising popular medium and innovations for mobilizing learners

The programmes utilized a combination of traditional and modern media to attract and mobilize prospective learners. These include popular cultural strategies such as popular theatre and ‘community cultural wakes’ as well as radio, television and the printed media. These media were employed to sensitize participants on the challenges of illiteracy, poverty and underdevelopment as well as persuading them to attend these classes. Town house meetings/consultations were organized and supported by ‘ground zero’ style meetings (face to face/one to one meetings).

Radio, television and news papers were used to provide instructions and deliver content to learners. Previous to 1997, these media were traditionally used to advertise products and provide information to the masses. A survey carried out in 2007 to review the Literacy Campaign in St Vincent and the Grenadines indicated that the programme was a success. The project was funded by UNESCO. ACED is in the process of partnering with DIGICEL, a mobile phone service provider, to implement a new series of television learning programme.

d) Adult Education Crusade

ACE regained momentum in 2001 when the Unity Labour Party was elected to office in April of that year. A National Literacy Assessment was implemented in 2002, which estimated that 20% of the adult population of St Vincent and the Grenadines was illiterate.

To respond to this challenge, the government elevated the Adult Education Unit to the status of division and a new Education Sector Development Plan was developed specifying the role of ACE/AEL within the broader education sector. The Skills Training and the Craft Units were then located within ACED. This was a positive move on the part of government. Adult and Continuing Education was viewed within the context of CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). The government strategy was focused on building the capacity of skilled workers as a means of enhancing national productivity and certification.

The integrated participatory development model evolving out of the 80s and early 90s was re-engineered to make it more relevant and adoptive to the development needs of the country. However, the basic tenets of the model were maintained. The official

record show that 3015 persons regularly attended classes, however a count of the number of persons who were ‘in and out’ of classes or dropped out of programme for jobs or domestic reasons amounts to 6000 persons.

Learners of these Adult Literacy programmes also participated in the governance of these programmes by:

- Sitting on committees and other governance structures
- Determining and influencing the content of these programmes,
- Designing the curriculum and contributing to the process as co-facilitators
- Developing and implementing aided self-help projects which contributed to addressing poverty and sustainable development challenges
- Creation of sustainable livelihoods opportunities through enterprise and small business development.

A key component of the Crusade was the development and maintenance of groups of learners in respective programmes and at the national level - a national network of learners.

Some of the outcomes of the Crusade were:

- Emergence of learners as partners in the national ACE/ALE process.
- Decentralized networking of ACE/ALE programmes through the development of a network of Learning Resource Centres.
- Utilisation of technology and mass media as means of enhancing communication and networking among learners in the programmes, among communities, the nation and the world as a whole.
- Injection of financial and other resources which enabled the programme to grow and expand over the 18 months duration of the project.
- A resurgence of volunteerism through the churches, businesses and other development partners.
- Development of innovative strategies utilizing the electronic media to support content delivery, facilitation and material production.

4: Adult Literacy

4.1: Definition of literacy in St Vincent and the Grenadines

Literacy is defined in St Vincent and the Grenadines as:

‘A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life...a person is functional literate who can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community’. UNESCO (1978)

Another definition that is used interchangeably in St Vincent and the Grenadines is one that was coined by the National Centre for Education Statistics in the United States in 1992 and 2002, as well as the OECD/Statistics Canada, 2002 which states that literacy is:

‘The ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities, at home, at work and in community to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential’.

4;2: New Policies adopted and implemented after 1997

The government of St Vincent and the Grenadines has instituted policies and programmes to institutionalise and expand the ACE/AEL process by investing in Learning Resources Centres, development of effective practices, training of facilitators and instructors in innovative methodologies, development of new materials and utilizing the media for both promotion and delivery of content to learners. A critical component of the policy on life long learning is access to ACE/ALE by all. Its policy is based on three tenets:

- Education is a fundamental right and all citizens should be able to achieve a basic required minimum
- Education should not be limited by age, time, or place and should be a life long process which goes beyond the formal schooling and
- All forms of education whatever the content should be developed to meet the varying needs of the population.

This policy views Adult and Continuing Education in the context of Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) i.e. putting emphasis on building the capacity of skilled workers as a means of enhancing productivity and contributing to national developments. Emphasis is placed on employment creation and productivity. A network of Learning Resource Centres was created at community level to enable learners to access these services. The Literacy Crusade is part of government’s ‘Education revolution’ strategy. The policy is consistent with government’s development strategy utilising an integrated participatory development approach to address education and development challenges in St Vincent and the Grenadines. The focus is on involving a range of stakeholders including governmental ministries/divisions, private sector, civil society and the international community working in partnership to address these felt needs.

4.3: Examples of effective practice and innovation

a) Focus on young male- Stereotype

The programmes were experiencing difficulty attracting young men because of stigmas and stereotypes in the society/communities. The programmes implemented an innovative strategy to ensure both males and females accessed these programmes. ACED implemented radio and television programmes to advertise/promote the programmes at community level as well as delivering learning content. It implemented a series of popular theatre and cultural wakes in these villages to raise the awareness of young men and the wider community on the challenges associated with illiteracy. It also organized consultations/meetings with sports clubs, 'Youth on the block' and other areas where young men usually congregate. It is quite early to determine whether these innovations were successful. However ACE should be congratulated for implementing such developing innovations.

4.4: Policies and programme focus on gender

Gender development is a critical component of ACE programmes in St Vincent and the Grenadines. The division instituted a policy of equal participation and access of men and women in its programme. However, the ratio of women to men is two to one. Over the years it has promoted programmes to target women from disadvantaged communities and those in special circumstances. These women claimed that they were better able to assist their children with their school work, up-grade and/or acquire new skills, gained more sustainable livelihoods and utilize ICT to communicate with friends and pursue courses to enhance their education.

Although the programme has been successful, especially on the involvement of women, ACED is still finding it extremely difficult to mobilise men to attend these programmes. It has strengthened the skills component of the programmes and implemented the innovative strategies (listed above) to mobilize young men as a means of enhancing their participation.

A large percentage of the Vincentian work force mainly men are not certificated. Therefore they cannot take advantage of the employment opportunities presented through CSME. Through the SAF EU funded support project, modular types training would be offered to persons to attain certificates while they are working. The programme would increase accessibility for persons to gain qualification and certification. ACE officials are positive that this would increase male participation in the programme.

a) Government, SFA/EU initiatives

The government of St Vincent and the Grenadines is implementing a development programme in response to regional and international economic development trends. Although St Vincent and the Grenadines is credited with some of the best skilled workers in the region, a large percentage of these workers are not certified and cannot take advantage of the facilities available through the CSME. The government has introduced a new qualification called the Caribbean Certification of Secondary Level. This certificate entitles students to pursue core subjects along with one (1) subject in

TVET. This would enable them to proceed to either the vocational or academic stream of training.

The project is currently in the process of completing work on policy guidelines which would emphasise vocational qualification and education. The new qualification/certification would consist of a weighting of 50% training and 50% on professional skills development e.g. through internship and apprenticeship.

The other challenge facing the project is the lack of involvement and participation of the private sector. Presently, the programme is driven by government. Consequently, for such project to be successful, it would require at least 75% contribution from the private sector. The project is implementing traditional skills (carpentry, masonry, building construction etc) as well as hospitality type training to fill the gaps in the tourism and construction industries.

The project focuses on life long learning in the context of vocational training. The initiative requires a huge amount of networking and collaboration among all stakeholders to enable the participants/learner to acquire the necessary qualifications and competencies. The project also provides resources for training of technicians in Adult Education at certificate, diploma and degrees level to build the institutionally capacity of ACE. It has already trained 25 facilitators in Adult literacy and 25 instructors are upgrading their skills on how to work with Adults.

ACE is strategically placed and is working tirelessly to assist the project to achieve its proposed outcomes. ACE is also cognisant of the innovations in the formal and informal sectors and is taking advice on the way forward by strengthening the management and operations of the informal sector. Therefore, it is necessary to speed up the understanding of the model and devise appropriate strategies for offering services to learners.

c) Policies and programmes towards building of a Literacy Environment.

Although the resources provided to support ALE is limited in relation to that provided to the overall education sector, the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines is working diligently to ensure the building of a literate environment. Dr The Hon. Ralph E. Gonsalves, Prime Minister, in his 2005 Budgetary Address stated that:

The strategic objective of the government is to attain high levels of sustainable growth and development, while at the same time reducing the levels of poverty, raising social consciousness and increase the levels of employment...one of the most important vehicles for achieving this objective is sound Education (p.35)

He emphasised the point that the 'Education revolution' has as its central plan free universal access to primary and secondary education and to achieve this objective that government would continue to modernise existing school plants and construct new and replacement schools. To support its high enrolment rate (close to 100%) it is implementing measures to ensure high attainment and attendance rates. Government has

invested US\$56 million in loans and grants (CDB, EU and World Bank) to implement the Education Sector Development Programme.

At secondary and tertiary levels, the government has established an integrated community college programme bringing together the School for Nursing, Technical College, Teachers' College and the 'A' Level College under one umbrella organisation. These institutions have witnessed an increase in enrolment. This is as a result of the new policy adopted to increase access to all persons qualified for entry to the institutions. The Technical College and Multi-Purpose Centre are under going reforms through the STATVET project financed by the European Union (EU) to enhance learning environment and provide certification for persons pursuing technical skills and competencies. It is estimated that the drop out rate at the new Multi-Purpose Centre is 10% thus putting further pressures on ACE to meet such an expanding demand.

For those persons who are academically inclined, the government has provided scholarships to pursue studies in Republic of Cuba, Mexico, Republic of China and Taiwan and the European Union. Through the National Insurance Scheme, the government has facilitated the provision of over US\$2 million in loans to finance a National Student Loan programme. Over 20% of resources are allocated to assist students who are economically disadvantaged.

At the Early Childhood Education level, the government continues to support private pre-schools that are registered with the Ministry of Education and meet the standards set by the ministry. It is in the process of establishing pre-schools in primary schools to enable pre-school aged children from rural communities and disadvantaged sectors of the society to attend these programmes.

On the issues of computerisation and ICT, the government has embarked on a programme of computerization of schools and other public training spaces, specifically the Learning Resources Centres. At the Learning Resources Centres, the internet provides access and opportunities for learners to enhance their knowledge and competencies. Nationally, there was an increase in mobile phones between 2002 and 2004 e.g. in 2002 the customer base for mobile phones was 20,000 and 26,000 for fixed lines. However, at the end of September 2004 there were 61,000 mobile phones and 18,000 fixed lines users. ACED is currently working with DIGICEL, a mobile service provider, to develop strategies for enhancing the delivery of content to learners.

5: Expectation of CONFINTEA VI and future perspective of ALE in St Vincent and the Grenadines

5.1: Outcomes/Expectations from CONFINTERA V1

St Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the hosting of CONFINTERA V1 by UNESCO in Brazil in May 2009. It is within this context that the following expectations are put forward:

- Provision of opportunities for the country to share its experiences and best practices in ALE and learn from the best practice and innovations developed by other countries.
- Sharing of and mobilization of resource (human, material and financial) to support the development and expansion of ACE/ALE programmes in St Vincent and the Grenadines
- Opportunities to network and collaborate with academics, practitioners and institutions involved in the field of ACE/ALE and ensuring that the ideas generated are used to shape and influence the work in St Vincent and the Grenadines.
- Explore innovations in research practices, management of ACE/ALE programme, mobilisation of learners, information and communication technology (ICT), methodologies and other modes of delivering ACE/ALE to learners.
- Strategies for the development of best practices in monitoring and evaluation of ACE/ALE programmes in developing countries.
- Explore the opportunities for capacity development of ACE/ALE practitioners and management officials and how they can assist in strengthening the process.
- Develop strategies to implement innovations to enhance the institutional capacity of the ACE/ALE, eliminate gender disparities in ALE, improve quality, mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS, develop sustainable livelihoods and reduce incidence of poverty.
- Enhance the mechanism for ACE to utilise Distant Learning in an equitable and sustainable way to overcome barriers in Adult and Continuing Education in St Vincent and the Grenadines.

5.2: Issue, challenges and future perspective

St Vincent and the Grenadines, like other small island developing states, is extremely vulnerable to development and environmental challenges. Therefore, ACE/ALE is an appropriate strategy/mechanism for tackling these challenges. The division needs to be further strengthened if it is to take on its role as a major agent of change and a

strategy driver in support of the development of St Vincent and the Grenadines. It is imperative to look at these issues within the context of the future perspectives for developing policies and practices in ACE/ALE.

Over the years, St Vincent and the Grenadines has produced models of best practice in ACE/ALE. However, the level and quality of documentation of these models leave a lot to be desired. For example, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry had implemented a dynamic training development programmes to raise awareness of staff and the public on the challenges facing agriculture, fisheries and livestock industries. However, no records were kept on the number of persons attending these training programmes, their gender, the ages of participants and the quality of training provided.

The issue of poor documentation is not a problem that is endemic to the ACED but seems to be a problem throughout the system. The government therefore needs to develop a policy on documentation to address this deficiency in the system.

The government of St Vincent and the Grenadines is trying to eliminate gender disparities in Education. While young women are progressing evenly throughout the education system (formal and informal), there is a limited number of young men willing to access this programme. The ACED had implemented a series of cultural wakes, village consultations and other innovative strategies to mobilise young men to attend classes, however these strategies did not achieve their desired result.

Although secondary education is free, a large percentage of young men who are within this age group are not attending school. In fact, the drop out rate at the Multi-purpose centre level is 10%. This problem is attributed to the emerging drugs trade, escalation of crime, unemployment (unskilled), poverty and other social issues. These young men do not participate in productive activities but form themselves into gangs and are partaking in crimes and other social ills. The government has collaborated with civil society and other stakeholders to implement innovative programmes such 'Pan against Crime', 'Literacy Crusade' and 'the Wellness Revolution' aimed at empowering and engaging young men to participate in the national development programmes. Officials of ACE posited that although there had been marked increases in young male participation in ACE activities, these innovations do not realise the desired results as stated in the ESDPL. It is believed that the awarding of certification of skilled workers (CSME) would renew the interest of young men and motivate them to attend skills/TVET component of ACE programme. The organisers would have to ensure that there is a balance in the content/modules between skills development and literacy/numeracy components of the TVET courses.

By itself, the government cannot successfully develop/implement such programmes. There is a specific role for private sector and civil society in this new dispensation. It is recommended that private sector should take on 75% of the leadership of the programmes for them to be successful. The report is recommending that a holistic integrated development approach be instituted bringing together all stakeholders to address this challenge. Such strategy must be supported by the development of appropriate policy, HR and relevant expertise and an injection of resources/capital to take the programme forward.

Globally, the Caribbean Region is second only to sub-Saharan Africa in terms of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. This pandemic has the potential to wipe out the entire workforce of a country leaving it unstable, unsustainable and riddled with poverty. The government, through funding from World Bank and UN AIDS Fund, is collaborating with stakeholders to develop and implement strategies to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on the work-force. The ACE/ALE programmes possess the potential for the implementation of specific interventions on HIV/AIDS. It can support the identification and sharing of best practices in HIV/AIDS and conduct research work on the impact of HIV/AIDS in the Education Sector (formal and informal) and on the economy of the state as a whole.

In conclusion, the ACE/ALE programmes must focus its resources on the following:

- a) strategies for implementing Life long learning within the context of CSM
- b) development of responses to local, regional and global trends and their implications for St Vincent and the Grenadines
- c) building the institutional capacity to enable the ACE/ALE initiatives to sustain themselves and contribute to the national development processes/programmes.

The government should focus its attention on developing the institutional capacity of ACE to function effectively. This should consist of:

- a) developing appropriate legislative and administrative mechanisms
- b) development of the human resources
- c) appropriate TVET policy
- d) development of a National Training Association and other appropriate legislative and administrative frameworks
- e) collaboration and networking among stakeholders

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