



Talking Points

Talking Points: Understanding the BNTF

DESCRIPTION

- The Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) is a grant-funded programme by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- Started over 30 years ago and now in its seventh cycle (BNTF 7)
- A key CDB instrument for addressing poverty reduction
- Provides access to basic infrastructure and services in disadvantaged communities
- Consistent with CDB strategic objectives of (a) promoting broad-based economic growth and inclusive social development and associated corporate priority to promote social protection measures; and (b) promoting good governance and associated corporate priority to promote social partnerships
- Aligned with the Caribbean-specific Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs)
- Consistent with the seventh cycle of the Special Development Fund (SDF 7) theme of strengthening poverty reduction and human development
- Has implemented over 2,000 projects directly impacting more than 2.8 million people

FOCUS

- The BNTF focuses on where needs are greatest
- Previous programme cycles have invested in rural and inner-city community infrastructure and related services in water and sanitation, access roads and drainage, human resource development and education (including day care centres), markets and health facilities
- A market-driven and outcome-based approach to training and livelihood enhancement for vulnerable youth and marginalised communities

APPROACH

- In the BNTF Programme, community participation is integral to the approach
- This facilitates investment ownership by the community and enhances social capital

APPRAISAL

- Portfolio approach to sub-project preparation and appraisal
- This achieves efficiency and effectiveness gains
- Sub-projects with similar outcomes are grouped for appraisal

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- BNTF 7 is likely to enhance access to quality education and HRD, and improve water and sanitation, and basic community access and drainage in low-income, vulnerable communities

TARGET

- There are ten participating countries (PCs) in the BNTF Programme: Belize, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Turks and Caicos Islands
- These countries are likely to achieve better access to basic public services through social and economic infrastructure improvements, and to develop skills that enhance employability, community management and engagement

Key Sectors and Special Considerations

POVERTY

- Over a period of 15 years, Country Poverty Assessments (CPAs) have shown that income poverty continues to be a major developmental challenge for these ten countries (despite decreasing poverty levels in some countries)
- These CPAs also show that more than 25% of the population lives below national poverty lines in eight of these countries Poverty is prevalent in at-risk groups: indigenous people, the elderly living alone, those affected by disability, school-aged youth (especially those in female-headed households), and households with large numbers of youth and elderly dependents

EDUCATION AND HRD

- The quality of education is improving, thanks to the on-going prioritisation of teaching efficiency, enhancing the learning environment and related initiatives

- Early Childhood Development (ECD) participation rates are low, particularly for the 0-2 age cohort (data shows less than 40% gross coverage for day care services, and 70% for pre-school provision)
- ECD is largely private sector-led, characterised by relatively high cost and variable quality; this severely affects children in economically depressed communities

WATER AND SANITATION

- Given the risks associated with lack of access to potable water supply and sanitation services, participating countries have (over the past two cycles of the programme) made significant demands on BNTF water and sanitation funding
- Approximately 23% of BNTF 7 funds are committed to this sector
- For many participating countries, climate change negatively impacts both the supply and demand of water resources, through an increase in the severity and incidence of extreme weather phenomena such as droughts and floods
- This further complicates the processes of development and management of water resources; the poor (especially women and children) invariably continue to be the most affected

BASIC COMMUNITY ACCESS AND DRAINAGE

- Key issues facing the road infrastructure sector are inadequate funding and attention to preventative, routine and periodic maintenance
- Also, lack of proper roadside drainage structures
- And the higher cost and vulnerability of road networks and infrastructure in both mountainous and low-lying areas (more prone to landslides/slippage, flooding and storm surge damage following extreme weather events)

VULNERABLE YOUTH

- All youth (especially at-risk young males) face critical challenges that typically result in under-participation in the education sector, significant academic gaps, high unemployment, a growing sense of disenchantment, marginalisation and social exclusion

- Vulnerable young females also face challenges of low skills, gender stereotyping in the labour market, and teenage pregnancy

GENDER

- Women account for 67% of the economically inactive population and are over-represented among the unemployed
- Across the region, women increasingly migrate from rural areas for "domestic worker" roles in private households with little protection or job security
- In rural communities, women typically work as unpaid family labourers, on small farming plots, in small firms/less profitable sectors of the economy, or in the informal sector
- The burden of care is increased for poor women, as living conditions and the welfare of poor families are challenged by inadequate provision of basic services (including potable water supply) and on-going erosion of social safety nets