



USAID | DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Subject: **EDUCATION ANNUAL PROGRAM STATEMENT (APS) FOR OUT OF SCHOOL AND AT RISK CHILDREN AND YOUTH (OOSARCY) PROGRAM**

Issuance Date: October 11, 2007

Closing date: April 30, 2008

Background

The Dominican Republic suffered a devastating economic crisis from 2003-2004. The results of which considerably increased the number of children leaving school to work in both in the formal and informal sectors in order to supplement family income. This crisis also increased the number of Dominican children living in the streets and practicing risky behaviors. The Dominican education system is overwhelmed by poor infrastructure, few hours of actual class time, frequent teacher absences and limited didactic materials, all of which (among a myriad of other problems) result in poor quality of instruction. Consequently, Dominican children today have fewer opportunities to develop into productive citizens and are subsequently at increased risk of economic and social abuse.

As reported in a recent World Bank Study, increased school desertion rates, lack of employability skills and increases in risky behavior are all factors that reduce the country's potential economic growth. When a young Dominican drops out of school between the ages 15-24 years, his/her future earning potential suffers. The more young Dominicans that do not complete school, the more Dominican competitiveness and productivity will suffer.

Fifty-nine percent of Dominican high-school age youth are currently not in school; one of the highest drop-out rates in Latin America. The middle school drop-out rate is 11%, and the Secretariat of Education measured the basic education (primary school) drop-out rate in 2004-2005 at 6.4%, almost an entire percentage point higher than in 2003-2004. Along with economic factors cited for these dismally drop-out rates; the poor quality of education is also responsible for students abandoning the Dominican education system. Poor Dominican youth are already at a disadvantage when they seek employment; this situation is exacerbated when they do not have sufficient education and or life/job skills.

The social and economic costs born by Dominican society associated with the youth dilemma need to be addressed and require a collaborative effort between many actors to find appropriate solutions.

With the Dominican Republic just entering into the CAFTA-DR Agreement, the country must become more competitive, and to that end, its human capital must become productive. For the country to succeed, it is necessary to reduce these precipitous drop-out rates and, at the same time, increase the quality of education. With these goals accomplished, the

Dominican productive sector can build on a base of skilled labor to better compete in a global market.

Pending availability of funds, USAID anticipates awarding multiple grants in response to this APS. Concept papers may be submitted at any time up to November 14, 2007, the panel will meet for review on November 15, 2007. First round of awards will be issued on January 1, 2008. If funds still available, a second round of concept papers will be reviewed on February 15, 2008 and all remaining awards will be issued by May 1, 2008. The Mission anticipates having funds available for follow-on grants or new grants in subsequent years. USAID/Dominican Republic may award grants short term projects lasting a few months or longer term projects spanning 2-3 years. Applicants must specify the length of time and requested funding level in the submitted concept paper. Organizations may submit additional requests for funding the same activities after year one.

Applications are accepted in two phases: 1) concept papers and 2) full applications. If a concept paper is unacceptable, USAID will notify the applicant in writing.

This APS is issued as a public notice to ensure that all interested parties have a fair opportunity to submit applications for funding. **Issuance of this Annual Program Statement does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. Government, nor does it commit USAID to pay for the costs incurred in the submission of an application.** Further, USAID reserves the right to reject any or all applications received.

I. Purpose:

The purpose of this Annual Program Statement (APS) is to disseminate information about and to publicize procedures for review, evaluation and award of grant applications received by the United States Agency for International Development in the Dominican Republic (USAID/Dominican Republic) for its Out-of-School and At-Risk Children and Youth program that seeks to inspire, encourage and motivate At-Risk Dominican Children and Youth to develop the necessary aptitudes and life skills that will contribute to their future success both professionally and personally.

Partners in this effort could include Non-Profit Organizations, Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), private businesses (not allowed to charge fees), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Civil Society Organizations and other non-government organizations. Successful applications will provide sufficient counterpart resources to meet the program goals, demonstrate innovative ideas, and foster cooperation by building consortiums with other like-minded organizations, companies and individuals. Applications with greater cost sharing/resource leverage ratio will be more competitive.

II. Authority:

The Annual Program Statement is authorized in accordance with the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, (FAA) Sections 621 and 635(b.); and ADS 303.3.5.4.

III. Areas for Interest:

USAID will select those grant applications that advance in a creative fashion, its economic opportunities strategic objective, education portfolio. USAID/Dominican Republic in consultation with the Dominican Government is providing assistance to promote economic growth through education initiatives. USAID is prepared to provide funding to civil society organizations with complementary, innovative and achievable program ideas that add value and are geared towards achieving concrete, measurable results. Such funding must contribute to the results envisioned by USAID/Dominican Republic in the education sector.

The Government of the Dominican Republic has recognized that the education sector needs special attention, to this end the Secretariat of Education is developing a new ten-year plan to address the many shortcomings of the public school system. USAID supports the GODR in its efforts through many different interventions including an effective teacher training program for math and language in the primary levels (1st through 4th) and by supporting the private sector's involvement in improving the quality of education through targeted school sponsorships that provide resources to struggling schools for a variety of quality of education interventions.

This APS seeks to support activities that provide out-of-school and at-risk children and youth with the skills and abilities they need to reintegrate, if necessary, into the formal education system, compete in the local economy, make better choices in their personal lives and become productive members of society.

Funding will support local and national efforts that are innovative, replicable, sustainable and with the highest potential to impact Out Of School and At Risk Children and Youth (OOSARCY).

Activities eligible for funding under this APS should be designed specifically to address the needs of **Out-of-School and At-Risk Children and Youth in the Dominican Republic.**

Activities should support the following:

- Provide children and youth in the Dominican Republic with opportunities to learn the life skills they need to develop as productive adults. Activities should take a holistic approach that encompasses social, academic, psychological, and career-related needs. In this sense, the activities should provide oversight by knowledgeable/responsible adults (teachers, community leaders) who care about youth/children and can provide time and attention to them. Applicants should also include components that integrate families into activities.
- Ensure community participation (including families) and seek broad ownership so that efforts can be expanded and sustained once USAID/Dominican Republic resources are exhausted. Targeted participants should be provided with alternative programs for learning, should be treated with respect, and should have high potential for development.

- Provide children and youth with alternative education that integrates reading, writing, and mathematics with basic skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, team building, and effective communication.
- Provide opportunities for at-risk children and youth who are out of or on the fringes of the formal education system to reintegrate into the system.

At the end of this activity program participants are expected have acquired skills that make them better able to complete higher education goals and/or enter the Dominican workforce. Targeted children and youth also will have achieved an increased sense of personal responsibility, stronger moral character, a higher self-esteem, and a greater sense of purpose in life.

IV. Eligibility:

All Applicants may be non-profit or for-profit; profit organizations who don't charge a fee may apply. Any costs must be direct charges and justified.

Dominican non-governmental organizations must operate legally under Dominican law. Foreign organizations must take all necessary measures to ensure that they operate under the relevant Dominican laws and have the required clearance to operate in the Dominican Republic from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For the Out of School and At Risk Children and Youth program, only organizations operating legally under Dominican law will be eligible for funding. Independent think-tanks, research institutions and public policy institutes are also encouraged to apply.

V. Instructions to Applicants:

1. Concept Paper and Summary Budget:

This APS encourages creating partnerships among organizations willing to work together and leverage funds from the private sector, other NGOs, the Government of the Dominican Republic (GODR) or other bilateral or multilateral donors; however, stand alone applications also will be accepted.

Applicants should be able to demonstrate a respect for human rights, gender sensitivity, decent work conditions, environmental protection, and community involvement in their operational practices.

USAID/Dominican Republic is committed to improving the way it implements the U.S. Government's foreign assistance mandate through broader collaboration with others. This request for expressions of interest/concept papers from partner organizations is different from a Request of Application. Before submitting a full application, prospective partners must seek USAID/Dominican Republic approval of a concept paper and must obtain USAID/Dominican Republic concurrence to move forward to the full application stage.

Only upon receipt of positive USAID/ Dominican Republic feedback is the applicant to put together a full application for USAID/ Dominican Republic consideration. For the first review concept papers should be submitted USAID/ Dominican Republic by November 15,

2007 for best chances of funding in 2008. A second review is scheduled in February 15, 2008.

Concept paper may be submitted in English or Spanish. Applicants seeking funds to support USAID/ Dominican Republic's program should submit their concept papers to the following address:

United States Agency for International Development
Leopoldo Navarro # 12, Gazcue
Santo Domingo, Republica Dominicana

Or via e-mail to: mtaveras@usaid.gov

Questions regarding USAID/ Dominican Republic's APS process should be forwarded to:

Marina Taveras
Education Specialist

USAID/ Dominican Republic
Phone: (809) 731-7022
Fax: (809) 221-0444
Email: mtaveras@usaid.gov

Submission of a concept paper and/or application in response to this APS, does not constitute an award commitment on behalf of the U.S. Government, nor does it commit the U.S. Government to reimburse any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, the U.S. Government reserves the right not to fund any and/or all applications received.

Concept Paper

For applicants to be considered for funding, the submission of an initial concept paper is required.

The format of this concept paper will not exceed five pages and will include a narrative that outlines the following issues:

- 1) Objectives/Basis/Strategy - Include an explanation of the problem to be addressed, the expected goals to be achieved, and a short description of the strategy to be used to achieve the proposed goals;
- 2) Beneficiary Population and Geographic Range of the Program - Define the characteristics and details of the target population (# of children and youth), and geographic area in the Dominican Republic in which the proposed program will be conducted;
- 3) Development Plan and Activity Description - Include a description of the activities that will be undertaken to achieve the proposed objective, how this activity supports USAID's program including a schedule;

4) Expected Impact - Outline expected results and the mechanisms proposed to measure progress, achievement and sustainability; and

5) Technical/Administrative Capabilities in Proposed Work Area - Describe your organization's technical and administrative experience and capabilities, including a description of work undertaken in specific areas in the Dominican Republic.

Concept papers may be submitted in English or Spanish; however, if once a concept paper is selected to proceed to the full application stage, the full application must be submitted in English. Concept paper may be submitted electronically via E-mail or three hard copies and an accompanying CD.

Budget

Provide a one-page budget that clearly identifies the major costs line items, such as, personnel, travel, training, commodities, etc. Include a budget narrative to describe costs in further detail.

Reference Material

Applicants may provide brochures and/or other previously prepared material that describes your organization, operating history, membership and management structure.

REVIEW/EVALUATION PROCESS:

USAID/Dominican Republic has established an APS committee to review and evaluate all concept papers received from applicants.

Evaluation Criteria

The concept papers will be competitively evaluated against the following criteria in descending order of importance:

1. Technical quality and innovation of the concept paper: clear objectives and goals, and impact potential in proposed areas of performance;
2. Cost effectiveness and cost share contribution of the organization;
3. Relative experience and track record of the applicants in the proposed area of work (education); and
4. Technical and administrative capacity to manage proposed program.

Upon completion of the evaluation process, all applicants will be notified in writing by the APS Chairperson with regard to the potential merit of their concept paper. An Applicant, who submits an Application/Concept Paper deemed to have merit, may be requested to expand its Concept Paper into a more complete application in accordance with USAID regulations, provided that funding is available and USAID wishes to move forward with the process.

2. Full Application:

Invited full technical applications in response to this solicitation should address how the applicant intends to carry out the program and clearly describe the work to be undertaken and the responsibilities of all parties. This section should provide a complete overview of the program design and implementation, and be a stand-alone representation of the proposed program. The application should also provide a detailed description of how the progress and achievements of the program will be monitored, measured and assessed. The technical approach should also include gender considerations with a focus on the participation and benefits to each gender group.

Full technical applications shall not exceed 15 pages, excluding attachments, such as curriculum vitae for proposed staff, documentation on previous contracts or assistance awards, and the cost application. Applications that exceed that limit will not be reviewed. Excessively elaborate presentations should be avoided. Applications must be submitted in English (Spanish written applications will not be considered for evaluation).

Full applications submitted should be in the following format:

- 1) Table of Contents listing all page numbers and attachments;
- 2) Project Abstract not to exceed a one page description;
- 3) Body of application describing the programs' strategic fit, technical approach and the organization's qualifications and past experience;
- 4) Proposed outcomes and impact indicators; not to exceed two pages;
- 5) Monitoring and Evaluation Plan; not to exceed two pages;
- 6) Detailed budget; not to exceed three pages;
- 7) Attachments (annexes) should be lettered e.g. Attachment A, and can include the resumes of key personnel, letters of support, letters from public entities, and other supporting documents.

The applications should take into account the technical evaluation criteria as outlined below under Section VI. B.

VI. Evaluation of Full Applications:

USAID/Dominican Republic applies the following evaluation process and criteria to all applications:

A. Evaluation Process: Full applications received in response to this Annual Program Statement will be judged using the evaluation criteria stipulated in section VI B.

If USAID finds the application acceptable, we will initiate negotiations for either a grant or a cooperative agreement, whichever USAID decides is appropriate. Additional information may be required at this stage. Likewise, USAID/Dominican Republic will inform unsuccessful applicants in writing, explaining briefly why the application was not selected for funding.

Until a grant document is received and signed by an Agreement Officer, no program expenditures will be paid by USAID/Dominican Republic.

B. Evaluation Criteria: Applications received in response to this Annual Program Statement will be evaluated against the following selection criteria:

Technical Criteria

- 1) Technical Approach: Viability of the proposed technical approach, i.e., the proposed technical approach can reasonably be expected to produce the intended outcomes. **For non-Dominican organizations, partnerships with Dominican organizations are required.** In addition, the application should indicate how the proposed activities will be tracked, measured and reported. 30 Points
- 2) Sustainability: The likelihood that the programs being supported will continue beyond and without USAID funding should be addressed in detail. 25 Points
- 3) Organizational Effectiveness: The ability of the organization to positively affect education. The application should demonstrate the organization's effectiveness in terms of internal structure, technical capacity, and key personnel, in meeting its education goals. In addition, the organization must demonstrate adequate financial management capability. 15 Points
- 4) Strategic Fit: The likelihood that the program for which funding is sought will make a significant contribution towards achieving the strategic objective and areas for action identified in Section III above. 10 Points
- 5) Gender: Applications should include a statement outlining gender issues and how the applicant proposes to address the issues. The technical approach in the application should also include gender considerations with a focus on the participation and benefits to each gender group. 10 Points
- 6) Past Performance: All applicants will be subject to a past performance review. Applicants must submit a list of all contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements involving similar or related programs over the past three years prior to receiving an award. Reference information shall include the location, current telephone numbers, points of contact, and award numbers if available. A brief description of work performed is also required. This information should be attached to the Final Application package. 10 points

TOTAL POINTS (100)

Cost Criteria

Award selection will be made on a best value basis, where all non-cost factors will be approximately equal to cost. However the Government reserves the right to award to other than the lowest cost proposal. Any award resulting from this APS will be made to

the offeror that proposes the greatest value to the Government from the technical and cost standpoint.

VII. Administration of Awards:

The awards will be administered in accordance with all applicable USG regulations. These documents are available at <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/303.pdf>

Awards will include language prohibiting transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism and any other required certificates. They also will require the inclusion of this prohibition in all subcontracts and subawards.

For all organizations, the financial management capability may be assessed through a pre-award survey.

Areas to take into consideration:

- 1) addressing identified financial weaknesses;
- 2) developing monitoring and evaluation systems;
- 3) improving organizational effectiveness;
- 4) improving strategic planning and networking capacity.

VIII. Point of Contact

Please direct all queries and submissions to:

Claudia Molina
Acquisition and Assistance Specialist
Regional Contracting Office

Local Address:

USAID/Dominican Republic
Leopoldo Navarro # 12
Gazcue
Santo Domingo 10205
Dominican Republic

Fax: 1-809-221-0704

Email Address: cmolina@usaid.gov

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted.

Disclaimer:

While there are numerous firms that offer to provide assistance in preparing concept papers and applications, USAID does not endorse any of these. Further, any costs incurred for such services would not be reimbursable by USAID, in the event a Grant was issued.