



ORGANISATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES COMMISSION

OECS/USAID Early Learners Programme

Programme Assistant

The OECS Commission is seeking to recruit a suitably qualified professional to fill the position of **Programme Assistant** to the Early Learners Programme (ELP).

1. PROGRAMME PURPOSE

The overall purpose of this project is to improve the reading achievement levels of all learners during the early primary grades. Over the longer term, it is expected that this will contribute to overall improvement in student learning at the end of the primary education cycle. The OECS Early Learners Programme will be implemented among Kindergarten to Grade 3 students and their teachers in the six independent OECS Member States¹. Specifically, the project seeks to:

- a) Develop teachers' capability to assess and to teach reading to children at the early grades of primary school.
- b) Improve teacher competence in the use of diagnostic tools for the early assessment of children at risk of low achievement in reading at the primary level.
- c) Introduce appropriate language of instruction to teach reading at the early grades.
- d) Secure adequate instructional and practice time to reading in and out of school.
- e) Develop and adopt/adapt as appropriate, teaching resources and learning materials for reading.
- f) Design, develop and adopt appropriate intervention strategies for at-risk children
- g) Design and implement a programme of assessment which provides better guidance for addressing student needs.
- h) Make innovative use of ICT in the management and delivery of literacy improvement programmes across the OECS. This would include the use of Web-based teacher professional development resources.

2. BACKGROUND

At their 22nd Meeting held in May 2012, the Council of Ministers of Education of the OECS endorsed a new OECS Education Sector Strategy (OESS) which will guide education development in the OECS over the next decade. To date, the Commission through the

¹OECS Independent Member States are: Antigua and Barbuda; Commonwealth of Dominica; Grenada; the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Education Development Management Unit (EDMU) and its Member States has begun implementation of the OESS.

The OESS is intended to harness and focus commitment in a concentrated regional effort to achieve set learner outcomes across OESS education systems. It outlines a shift towards addressing emerging trends among OESS States which were established in an analysis of the state of education. Seven Strategic Imperatives for improving education were identified as priorities which are reflective of national priorities. Each imperative contributes to strengthening different aspects of the education system. Additionally, the plan entails several development issues which are identified as cross-cutting themes which are addressed through the strategic imperatives, one of which relates to improving the levels of literacy, numeracy and technology among all learners.

Poor performance in English Language and in Mathematics continues to be an area of major challenge for educators and policy makers in the OESS region. At the early grades approximately 50% of students score below the national average in Mathematics and about 40% are under-performing in English Language. This situation is further compounded as there is an achievement gap between male and female performance throughout the primary school years.

The OESS recognises that there is a critical role for improving children's abilities in reading, writing and mathematics if the region is to realise the vision – *Every Learner Succeeds*. Thus, as the region commences the implementation of the new education strategy, priority will be given to instituting measures to address these critical areas. During the period of implementation, the OESS Secretariat will pursue several avenues to address what is clearly an undesirable situation in the education system. This proposed project is the first initiative under the new strategy to address aspects of policy and practice that are essential to improve student learning at early primary.

3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Programme Assistant will work under the direction of the Project Coordinator of the ELP and collaborate closely with the ELP Reading Specialist along with other members of the Project Management Team, Education Development Management Unit (EDMU), the OESS Commission, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Education of the participating Member States.

General responsibilities will include providing technical advice and support for the planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and activities of the ELP.

Specific responsibilities will include:

- a) Assist with managing the Grant Resource Initiative by supporting project design activities, monitoring implementation, documentation and reporting;
- b) Assist with maintaining an up-to-date database of Grant Resource, project implementation and other ELP activities;
- c) Assist with managing the Write to Read initiative by supporting the process of book development, disseminating information and supporting the selection and awards;
- d) Assist with sharing of knowledge and lessons learnt from exemplary practices in Member States;
- e) Assist with preparing reports and other relevant documents to support implementation of ELP initiatives;
- f) Undertake any related assignments as requested by the: Project Coordinator, Head, EDMU; and Director, Social and Sustainable Development Division.

The Programme Assistant may be required to travel to Member States and to other countries in the conduct of his/her duties and to work extended hours, as required by exigencies of the work of the Unit and of the Commission.

4. TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

Minimum Education and Training:

- a) A first degree in Education with specialization in Curriculum, Literacy, Research or other relevant area.
- b) Certification in Teacher Education and/or Project Management would be an asset.

Work Experience:

- a) A minimum of 5 years working experience in a relevant education-related field, including some experience in education development programmes.

Role-specific competencies:

The holder of the post should possess the following competencies:

- a) *Analysis and Reporting*: Capacity to examine and breakdown information into smaller parts in order to understand and present findings and/or relevant content.
- b) *Research*: Capability to obtain and interpret data and information
- c) *Consultation, facilitation and collaboration*: Capacity to work cooperatively, fairly and openly with team members and other stakeholders to promote open discussions, seek input and share information

- d) *Project Management*: Ability to plan, organize, secure and manage resources to bring about the completion of a project on time and within budget.

Preferred skills:

- a) Experience and skills in the Microsoft Suite of programmes, (including Microsoft Project, MS Excel, Word) and database programs

5. TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

The position is available for up to six (6) months with the possibility of an extension.

6. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applications are to be submitted for the attention of: **The Human Resources Unit, Post of Program Officer, OECS Commission, Morne Fortuné, P.O. Box 179, Castries, Saint Lucia** and should reach by **24th November 2017**.

Applications should include Curriculum Vitae stating nationality as well as the contact information of the present or most recent employer and that of two referees. Copies of relevant certificates should be submitted with applications.

Applications can also be sent via e-mail to jobs@oecs.org

Only applications under consideration will be acknowledged.