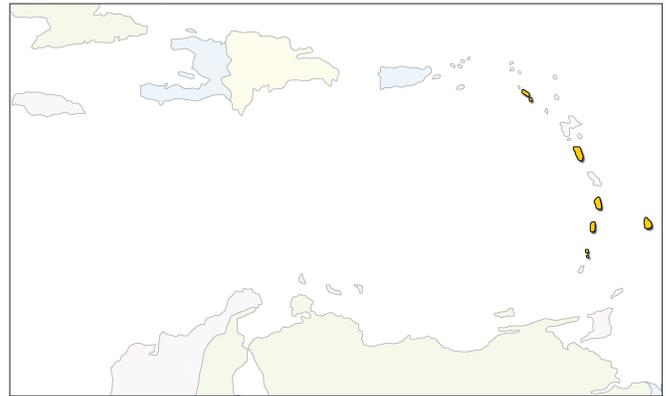


MEASURE Evaluation in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean

The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) includes the seven members of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Montserrat and St. Vincent, and the Grenadines and two associate members, Anguilla and British Virgin Islands. A distinctive characteristic of the Barbados and Eastern Caribbean region is found in its small, yet culturally and geographically distinct, populations. This region includes 609,000 inhabitants scattered throughout small islands with a total landmass of less than 2,500 square kilometers. Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean boast one of the world's highest average literacy rates, 94.3 percent, among their populations of mostly Afro-descendants, Europeans, Amerindians, and Syro-Lebanese.

Although the USAID mission resides in Barbados, most of its activities focus on the OECS countries. Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean have HIV prevalence rates that range from 0.08 to 1.4 percent. An important and sometimes daunting component of addressing the region's epidemic is taking into account each country's unique circumstances, while still recognizing the epidemic as a regional issue. The geography and small population sizes of these island countries can also present its own set of challenges.

"When we talk about technical assistance and collaboration in the Eastern Caribbean countries, we are talking about assistance on a very small scale, and in some cases to a single individual" said Stephanie Watson-Grant. According to Watson-Grant, a Country Portfolio Manager at MEASURE Evaluation, "Where that is the case, the challenge is to broaden an individual's M&E horizon, to shift from an exclusive focus on HIV to engage with an M&E [monitoring and evaluation]



ORGANIZATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES FLAG



DEMOGRAPHY

Number of Countries: 7

Estimated Population: 286,705

Population Growth Rate: 0.366%

Age Structure:

0–14 years: 18.9%

15–64 years: 71.3%

65 years and over: 9.8%

Death Rate: 8.39 deaths/1,000 population

HIV-RELATED DATA

Adult HIV Prevalence: 1.4%

People Living with HIV: 2,100

OTHER RELEVANT DATA

Infant Mortality Rate: 10 infant deaths/1,000 live births

Total Fertility Rate: 1.5 children born/woman

Maternal Mortality Ratio: 64 maternal deaths/100,000 live births



MEASURE Evaluation is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under terms of Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreement GHA-A-00-08-00003-00 and implemented by the Carolina Population Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partnership with Futures Group International, ICF Macro, John Snow, Inc., Management Sciences for Health and Tulane University. MEASURE Evaluation is the USAID Global Health Bureau's primary vehicle for supporting improvements in monitoring and evaluation in population, health and nutrition worldwide. The information provided in this fact sheet is not official U.S. government information and does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the U.S. government. FS-11-49 (06/24/11).

system covering the entire the health sector. In some countries in the past, the experience has been that when an individual leaves their post, key parts of M&E system often leave with them.”

M&E SYSTEM ASSESSMENTS AND TRANSITIONS

A vital element of broadening and strengthening a country’s monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system is identifying its weaknesses and applying strategies for improvement. In August 2010, MEASURE Evaluation teamed up with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Caribbean Office, the Caribbean Health Council, and the OECS for an HIV M&E assessment of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. M&E assessments of St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and Dominica were conducted earlier as part of the OECS Global Fund grant.

U.S. Government agencies, primarily USAID, CDC and regional partners, used the UNAIDS 12 Component M&E Assessment Tool to appraise these M&E systems. The 12 Component Assessment Tool is based on the premise that a strong M&E system includes 12 key components which work together to meet the information needs of various stakeholders. Examples of these key components include a national, multi-sectoral HIV M&E plan, routine HIV program monitoring, and data dissemination and use.

“The U.S. government in Barbados has divided up the responsibility for implementing recommendations from the 12 component assessment in the countries where these assessments were done,” Watson-Grant explained. “USAID has taken responsibility for three of the components, and MEASURE Evaluation is their

implementing partner for this activity.” In the past few years, Ministries of Health in Eastern Caribbean have agreed to absorb what had previously been stand-alone HIV M&E functions. This means that the HIV M&E functions will need to merge with general health M&E functions.

“In many cases,” noted Watson-Grant, “the people who have been tasked with these new health M&E functions do not think of themselves as M&E specialists.”

After the HIV M&E assessments, US Government technical assistance through MEASURE Evaluation will focus on helping Eastern Caribbean countries transition from these stand-alone HIV M&E systems to integrated health M&E systems.

“There are a lot of implications across the different Ministries of Health,” said Watson-Grant. “The people who are now designated with M&E functions may need to expand their function, assume a broader role, and go beyond the daily tasks of M&E to learn how to lead M&E processes and empower people in a sustainable manner—how to get a handle on what is most appropriate to implement in terms of an M&E system that best serves the needs of the country’s health system.”

The assessments and transitioning process have underscored the importance of expanding and institutionalizing M&E systems in Eastern Caribbean countries.

“It’s all about institutionalizing and broadening into an overall M&E system,” said Watson-Grant. “Even where the work is led by just one person, there should be a system and network around that one person.”