

# GLOBAL BOOK ALLIANCE



# Supply Chain Analysis

Saint Lucia

December 2022



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Phone: 617-969-7100

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BBP	Book Bursary Programme
CAMDU	Curriculum and Materials Development Unit
CEE	Common Entrance Examination
CEO	chief education officer
CSO	civil society organization
DCEOI	deputy chief education officer for instruction
DECI	Digital Education Capacity-Strengthening Initiative
DEO	district education officer
ELP	Early Learners Programme
EMIS	education management information system
EQulP	Education Quality Improvement Project
ERM	essential reading material
GBA	Global Book Alliance
GBAIA	Global Book Alliance in Action
GDL	Global Digital Library
GDP	gross domestic product
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICT	information and communication technology
LC	literacy coordinator
MoE	Ministry of Education, Sustainable Development, Innovation, Science, Technology and Vocational Training
MPTLM	Minimum Profile of teaching and learning materials
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
PEARL	Program for Educational Advancement and Relevant Learning
SCA	supply chain analysis
SRM	supplemental reading material
TLM	teaching and learning material
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND HIGH-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

This book supply chain analysis (SCA) for Saint Lucia was conducted on behalf of the Global Book Alliance (GBA) by the USAID Global Book Alliance in Action (GBAIA) project. For the purposes of the analysis, the *book supply chain* is defined as a six-phase process:

1. Planning and forecasting
2. Title development
3. Publishing and printing
4. Procurement and purchasing
5. Distribution management
6. Active use

**FIGURE 1. THE SIX PHASES OF THE BOOK SUPPLY CHAIN**





## Executive Summary

The book supply chain analysis (SCA) focuses on the supply of essential reading materials (ERMs) that children in primary school grades 1–4 need to become proficient readers. The SCA was commissioned to inform the work of the Global Book Alliance (GBA) as well as that of the Ministry of Education, Sustainable Development, Innovation, Science, Technology, and Vocational Training; Saint Lucia; the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); and other key development partners in the country. The SCA gives an overview and analysis of the challenges and opportunities at each of the six phases of the book supply chain in Saint Lucia.

From May to June 2022, a team of Global Book Alliance in Action (GBAIA) researchers conducted the SCA primarily virtually due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic issues. After the desk research, the research team interviewed and gathered information from 14 Saint Lucia government officials, one special education official, one librarian, two civil society organizations (CSOs), three principals, six teachers, five bookstore owners, and two writers. They also conducted two focus groups with teachers, principals, and parents. A full list of interviewees is in Annex 1.

The team triangulated their findings using multiple sources and referring to published literature when available. They drew the conclusions found within this report from the interviews and focus group discussions and also corroborated their conclusions by at least three sources, preferably from different stakeholder groups.

Because there is currently no official supply chain for ERMs in Saint Lucia (the government plans for and procures only textbooks), GBAIA analyzed the supply chain for textbooks for children in primary grades 1 to 4, drawing evidence from the wider textbook supply system where implications were relevant. Overall, this SCA identified gaps in the supply chain for textbooks as well as opportunities for strengthening availability and quality of ERMs.

Although Saint Lucia is committed to providing education for all through the Education Act of 1999 and has an exceptional school enrollment rate of 100% in elementary school, the education system has had its challenges, especially for early-grade reading and provision of ERMs. The Ministry of Education, Sustainable Development, Innovation, Science, Technology, and Vocational Training (MoE) provides a list of textbooks and reading books for grades K–4 for all students in elementary and secondary levels. However, MoE staff, principals, and teachers say some students have neither textbooks nor ERMs, and in some instances, students do not receive support at home to use the supplementary reading books due to various challenges. Additionally, because of the economic stresses on families as well as a reduction in interest in reading, Saint Lucia does not have a “reading culture,” although there is no substantive research to provide the reasons for this drop-off in reading.

Focus groups reported that adults do not read books nor do children use the library on a regular basis. Contributing to this is the lack of local cultural reading material for children and the small number of local writers and illustrators. Because students are falling behind in reading, their success in other



subjects is hindered, which has resulted in concern for the drop-out rate for girls and boys. The total number of dropouts for 2017–2018 was 204 or 1.9%. The total number of boys who dropped out was 135 or 2.4%.<sup>1</sup> Boys make up 65% of the number of dropouts in grade 10 and 11.<sup>2</sup>

In a publication by Crabbe, Nyingi, and Abadzi on textbook development, the authors cite these general key elements that can affect textbook provision: high cost, weak governance or corruption, inadequate supply, distribution problems, no textbook policy framework, and poor planning.<sup>3</sup> On Saint Lucia, the researchers looked at these elements in the MoE’s textbook supply chain. The following stood out as areas of possible issues on Saint Lucia: inadequate supply, distribution problems, no policy framework, and poor planning.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the island’s economic, social, and educational support for the population. The impact has only deepened as the tourism industry suffers losses and energy prices soar. In the SCA focus groups, teachers, principals, and parents said that as a result of the pandemic, some children have fallen behind and may never catch up. Since the principals and teachers know the students, and this perception was corroborated in several focus groups, the researchers assumed it was reliable information. During the pandemic, children attended school online; however, some did not have connectivity, and some did not have devices. As a result, they fell behind on reading skills, which in turn hinders their success in all subjects.

## High-Level Recommendations

Following are GBA’s short-term and long-term high-level recommendations.

### Short-Term Recommendations

- That the MoE improve the culture of reading and instill a love of reading by further developing the “Reading Month” concept by expanding it to three times a year in order to support festivals, book fairs, library story times, and teacher and parent sessions.
- That the MoE, development partners, principals, and teachers work with local writers to include the local language books in the MoE suggested book list, once the new language policy is ratified.
- That the MoE ensure all students have textbooks and workbooks on time by reviewing the data collection system and expanding the Book Bursary Program parent request list.

### Long-Term Recommendations

- That the MoE develop a book policy that includes supply of textbooks and ERMs for all students, especially those who are disadvantaged and hard to reach.

1 <https://www.oecs.org/en/our-work/knowledge/library/education/oecs-education-statistical-digest/st-lucia>

2 Fevrier, Window into the Education System.

3 Crabbe, Nyingi, and Abadzi, *Textbook Development*.

- That the MoE develop a comprehensive five-year plan for acquiring ERMs for use in classroom instruction, classroom libraries, and community libraries, focusing on preprimary and primary grades and working with development partners, CSOs, and local writers to develop both print and digital content.
- That the government, with support from development partners, train teachers and parents on the use and importance of ERMs. This should include teacher preservice training, as well as messaging and support to disadvantaged parents on the ways they can support their children.
- That the MoE establish an agreed-upon Minimum Profile of teaching and learning materials (MPTLM) needed to deliver the specified curriculum learning objective (see Annex 2).

## BOOK TERMINOLOGY

Many different terms are used to describe educational books. For the purposes of this report, we use the following:

**Teaching and learning materials (TLMs):** TLMs include all the types of books that are typically provided to schools: textbooks (student books), teacher guides, readers, e-readers, reference books, etc.

**Teachers' guide:** A book that is in print or electronic form, or that consists of any combination of print and electronic materials, providing assistance and guidance to teachers on how to use the accompanying textbook.

**Textbook:** A comprehensive learning resource that is in print or electronic form, or that consists of any combination of print and electronic materials, collectively designed to fully support the syllabus of a given level and subject.

**Essential reading materials (ERMs):** ERMs have many different meanings, and what may be *essential* at one stage of learning will be less so at another. For the purposes of this report, we use the following terms and definitions, per the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) guidance. Note that the term does NOT include textbooks and teachers' guides.

**Decodable, leveled, and supplementary readers**—Collectively described as *essential readers*, these readers are required elements for reading acquisition, but each plays a different role.

**Decodable readers** are reading materials in which all words are consistent with the letters and corresponding phonemes that the reader has been taught. These readers are sequenced in the order in which letters are taught in the school curriculum and progressively increase in difficulty.

**Leveled readers** are a set of books organized by level of difficulty and based on the complexity of the words, sentences, content, and other factors.

**Supplementary readers** are used for reading practice. They may not be decodable or leveled, and they do not tie directly to the school curriculum.<sup>4</sup>

Note that although the term *supplementary readers* is used to describe all general children's books, we at GBA believe that this terminology is inaccurate, as these books are critical to a child learning to read, and should be planned for and procured for early-grade reading classes. Nonetheless, we continue to use the term in this report.

We also use the general term **book** when speaking of books in general.

4 Definitions are adapted from U.S. Agency for International Development, *2020 Compendium of Standard PIRS*.

# INTRODUCTION

This report takes as a starting point the research and evidence on the role of high-quality texts and materials in reading skills acquisition. This includes the necessity of ensuring that children have access to level- and language-appropriate materials, in sufficient quantity, and at the appropriate time in the school year, and that teachers and parents understand and support the use of these materials for literacy acquisition.

High-quality texts and a range of reading materials are key elements required to foster reading skills acquisition for all students.<sup>5</sup> In order to ensure that every student learns to read, not only are textbooks required, but every student must also have access to essential reading materials (ERMs) in local languages. Per United States Agency for International Development (USAID) guidance,<sup>6</sup> a copy of decodable text, whether packaged together in one textbook per learner or in a set of readers, should be provided to each learner in all grade 1 classrooms and should always be available to grade 2 learners. For higher grades, decodables are a required part of this package only if assessment data demonstrate that children’s reading levels are so low as to indicate a need for such materials. For leveled readers, when a complete set of leveled paragraphs and stories are bound together in one book, each learner should have a copy of the compilation. If materials are provided in sets of books, sets should be shared by not more than three students in a classroom. A set of leveled readers should include no less than one book per week of the school year. Supplementary readers can be provided at the classroom level. Sets should include no less than one supplementary book per week during the school year.

This *Supply Chain Analysis: Saint Lucia* report identifies strengths and weaknesses in each link of the book supply chain and provides recommendations to ensure that learners can access sufficient, appropriate, and high-quality reading materials to improve reading outcomes in Saint Lucia.

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5 Results for Development, *Global Book Fund Feasibility Study*.

6 <http://www.edu-links.org/index.php/resources/BeyondSupplyStrategiestoPromoteBookUseintheClassroomandatHome>

# CONTEXTUAL DRIVERS OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS CHALLENGE

## Introduction

Saint Lucia is an island nation in the West Indies in the Eastern Caribbean Sea on the boundary with the Atlantic Ocean. The Worldometer estimated the population of Saint Lucia to be about 185,340 in 2022, children and youth ages 0–24 years comprising 34% of the population.<sup>7</sup> The island is a commonwealth realm with a parliamentary system headed by a prime minister.<sup>8</sup> The nation has a decentralized approach to the administration of education, in which the central Ministry of Education is supported by eight administrative districts.

Saint Lucia is a member of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), an international organization dedicated to regional integration in the Eastern Caribbean. The vision of the organization for 2020–2024 is, “A better quality of life for the people of the OECS.”<sup>9</sup> The OECS developed an education sector strategy for member states in 2012. The main purpose of the OECS Education Sector Strategy (OESS) 2012–2021 is to guide the educational directions and priorities of member states of the OECS. The OESS is designed to ensure an approach to the development of and investment in education that will ensure measurable, sustainable outcomes for learners and education systems across the region.

## Educational System

Saint Lucia’s educational system is managed by the Ministry of Education, Sustainable Development, Science, Technology, and Vocational Training (MoE). Saint Lucia’s parliament passed the Education Act in 1997 guaranteeing education for all students from ages 5 through 16 years. The Universal Secondary School Act (2006–2007) assured every student a secondary school placement, during which they complete five years of basic studies in grades 7–11.<sup>10</sup> Students who meet matriculation requirements continue at the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, which offers two-year associate degrees in a variety of areas. The University of the West Indies (UWI) also has an open campus in Saint Lucia that provides for the first two years of a degree program, after which students complete their studies at the main campuses in either Jamaica or Barbados.<sup>11</sup> The students may also complete their degrees on the open campus either in person or online. The UWI also offers full three-year degrees.

7 Worldometer, “Saint Lucia Population.”

8 <https://parliament.govt.lc/>

9 Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, “About the OECS.”

10 Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, “About the OECS.”

11 All about Saint Lucia, “Saint Lucia Education System.”

The current Saint Lucia education system has 75 primary schools (7 are private) and 24 secondary schools (2 are private)<sup>12</sup> on the island. The pupil-to-teacher ratio was 14:1 in 2016. Over 95% of Saint Lucia’s children ages 3–5 attend one of the country’s more than 150 preschools or 33 day care centers. Primary education consists of a three-year infant program (grades K–2) followed by four years of primary instruction (grades 3–6). Some communities have separate infant and primary schools, while other communities have them united and refer to them as combined schools. Previously at the end of the sixth grade, students take the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) to determine placement for additional compulsory schooling. However, beginning in 2022, students will take the Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA) instead. Students choose which secondary school they wish to attend, and the CPEA scores will be used in school assignments, with preference given to those with higher scores. Students who do not continue to tertiary education have the option of starting a three-year vocational education program referred to as the Centre for Adolescent Renewal and Education (CARE). Students also have the option of enrolling in skills certificate programs at the National Skills Development Centre (NSDC), which focus on preparing students for future jobs and are comparable to vocational education in many countries.

The literacy rate of Saint Lucia is estimated at 90% for the population. However, the focus groups reported that many parents, particularly in the rural areas, have low literacy or are illiterate.<sup>13</sup> Although there are abundant preprimary education offerings, many of the focus group teachers said children entering kindergarten come without knowledge of letters or numbers, which puts the children at a disadvantage entering the formal school system.

According to the MoE, completion rates reflect the emphasis the government has put on improving the education system on Saint Lucia under the Early Learners Program (ELP), which was implemented on Saint Lucia from 1983 to 2020. The average value for Saint Lucia during that period was 101.6% with a minimum of 84.4% in 2015 and a maximum of 123.88% in 1990. The latest value from 2020 is 100.36%.<sup>14</sup> The lower secondary education completion rate was 92%. Boys (96%) had a better lower secondary education completion rate than girls (88%).<sup>15</sup> In 2012, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recorded the upper secondary completion rate for boys at 74%, while the rate was 87% for girls.<sup>16</sup>

There are relatively high completion rates in secondary school. However, some issues cited by focus group participants included passing students who struggle with reading and a high percentage of students repeating grades. USAID and the OECS reports highlight ongoing issues for boys who drop out of school after completing the lower secondary level. “Despite relatively high enrollment rates at both primary and secondary schools in the Caribbean, recent assessments show that only nine

12 <https://www.google.com/search?q=How+many+private+schools+in+St.+Lucia&oq=How+many+private+schools+in+St.+Lucia&aqs=chrome..69i57j11350j0j15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

13 <https://parliament.govt.lc/>

14 [https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Saint-Lucia/Primary\\_school\\_completion\\_rate/](https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Saint-Lucia/Primary_school_completion_rate/)

15 UNICEF, “Generation Unlimited.”

16 UNESCO, “Gender Disparities.”

percent of grade 2 students are reading at or above grade level in the OECS Member States. This low proficiency in reading directly impacts student performance in other subjects and affects longer term prospects for employment or advanced education. Low reading proficiency levels are one of the drivers behind the region's elevated school drop-out rates.<sup>17</sup>

To support the learning process, the MoE develops a textbook list for all grades in elementary and secondary levels each year based on the curriculum. The deputy chief education officer for instruction (DCEOI) works closely with the chief education officer (CEO) and the Curriculum and Materials Development Unit (CAMDU) to develop the book lists. These lists are sent to the Saint Lucia booksellers to purchase the textbooks from either Eastern Caribbean or UK publishers.

A key component of the MoE support for students is the Book Bursary Programme (BBP), which provides textbooks and workbooks at a reduced cost to parents and students who face financial difficulties. Parents who can afford to purchase books, buy them directly from booksellers.

During the past several years, the Government of Saint Lucia benefited from several major development partner projects for the primary school level and secondary level. The World Bank supported four components of the Saint Lucia Education Development Plan: (1) support for secondary education, equity for vulnerable students, develop curriculum for grades 7–9, and provision of instructional guides; (2) textbooks, and other resource materials; (3) teacher training; and (4) the establishment of the education management information system (EMIS). The overall program objective of the OECS Education Development Project was to build human capital in the OECS, which in turn contributed to the diversification of their economy and more sustainable growth. The project closed in 2008.<sup>18</sup>

In partnership with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Saint Lucia began implementation of the Education Quality Improvement Project (EQulP) in 2018. This initiative is geared toward (1) the comprehensive improvement of Saint Lucia's education sector; (2) improvement of the teaching and learning environment; (3) the provisions for special improvement in teacher quality and instructional effectiveness; (4) system leadership and operational effectiveness of school administrators; (5) provisions for special needs education, including devices, teacher training, and access to schools; and (6) technical assistance for the completion of a climate vulnerability assessment to make schools more climate resistant. The EQulP project, which began in October 2018, will continue into 2023.

Saint Lucia also partnered with USAID in supporting the OECS/USAID Early Learners Programme (ELP). The ELP focused on improving reading among early learners. The project scope was to contribute to the overall improvement in student learning at the end of the primary education cycle with the objective of improving the reading achievement levels at the early primary level (grades K–3). Implementation of the ELP was from March 2015 to 2020.<sup>19</sup>

17 United States Agency for International Development, "Eastern and Southern Caribbean."

18 The World Bank project 2013: <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P077712>

19 United States Agency for International Development and Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States, "OECS/USAID Early Learning."



In February 2019, the MoE, in collaboration with the OECS ELP, launched the Write to Read initiative as part of the development of literacy in the education system. The Write to Read program invited students in grades K–3, parents, teachers, and community members to create or co-create culturally relevant short fiction, nonfiction, and poetry books for children for use in the classroom. The objective of the program was to address the lack of locally written children’s books in schools. The goal was to produce a number of titles that could be used in classrooms. Saint Lucia produced 17 titles from the Write to Read program, an important contribution to the supply chain for early grade resources. Copies of these books were distributed to all schools and libraries to support reading achievement.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the World Bank also contributed to the education sector in Saint Lucia. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, overall funding for 2020–2022 for four countries, including Saint Lucia, was US\$3 million to harmonize education policies and procedures, support the academic recovery plan, complement online learning instruction, and distribute devices to the most vulnerable.<sup>20</sup>

## COVID-19 Pandemic

Although the island initially managed the COVID-19 pandemic well, with few cases and fewer deaths, the pandemic continues to cause major economic and educational problems. With the reduction in tourism, families have lost jobs, leading to increased poverty and crime. The COVID-19 global pandemic also caused major disruptions in learning for all students on the island. There was little infrastructure (i.e., electricity and Internet), especially in rural areas, to support remote learning for students out of school due to unstable energy supplies (the island is dependent on energy imports) and economic stress on families.<sup>21</sup>

Schools were shut down from March 2020 to April 2021. Before the pandemic, students were more exposed to reading material through the school libraries. During the pandemic, parents of students were required to pick up textbooks and assignments from the school and return completed assignments. According to focus groups, some teachers were reluctant to send books home with students, fearing they would not be returned.

The OECS offered devices to poorer students, but it’s not clear how many were used. Online instruction was offered to students, but some students did not have the necessary devices to access this instruction, and the academic gap may have widened as a result. Kindergarten to grade 3 students were introduced to *Jolly Phonics* online, although students in these grades may not have had as much access to devices or the Internet as other grades.

## Percentage of Overall Government Budget Dedicated to Education

With the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the island’s economy has been severely affected. Tourism is down significantly, and energy costs have risen (the island imports 90% of fuel used for energy

20 The Global Partnership for Education, “Saint Lucia.”

21 United States Agency for International Development, “Eastern and Southern Caribbean.”

on the island). According to interviews with the MoE staff, these shocks, along with hurricanes and storms, have negatively impacted the government budget, requiring budget cuts to the education sector. The current government total capital expenditure for 2022–2023 is estimated at EC\$382 million, a 71% increase over the previous year, which is due in part to commitments from development partners and international banks. For education, the commitment is 5.2% of the capital budget (EC\$19.8 million).<sup>22</sup>

## Curriculum

The DCEOI oversees the district education officers and works closely with the Counseling, Early Childhood and Special Education Units. CAMDU oversees the management and implementation of the curriculum for primary and secondary schools. Its officers manage the following subjects: language arts, math, social and natural sciences, modern foreign languages, information technology, music, physical education, and health and family life. The unit has been in operation for 45 years. Initially, it was involved in the production of reading materials for the primary level curricula. However, with the addition of courses, such as music, it was determined to be more cost effective to purchase common textbooks either regionally or internationally. Currently, almost all education materials are produced, published, and printed outside of Saint Lucia except for some materials written by Saint Lucia officers and teachers. For example, the prescribed social studies text was co-authored by Saint Lucian writers. Materials created by officers and teachers are published in the region and also placed on the MoE website.

CAMDU develops a textbook list for all grades. Grades K and 1 use the *Jolly Phonics* text, produced by a UK-based educational materials company. The Early Learners Programme (described below) includes leveled readers. Grades 2–4 use Primary Language Arts text and workbooks produced by Mcmillan Publishing. Open-source content written by teachers or staff is reviewed and revised on a regular basis. There is no set time to review the curricula. The last curriculum review was in 2006, but a review is currently underway.

CAMDU has a yearly budget, although there is no specific percentage set aside for ERMs. Any additional ERMs requiring finance must be submitted to the MoE, and the Cabinet of Ministers must approve the request.

The national library system is headed by an MoE library official. There is one main library and 16 smaller libraries throughout the island. The library service does not have a budget. To acquire books, the library relies on donations from local authors and writers from the Saint Lucian diaspora in the United States and the United Kingdom. School libraries are common throughout the system and operate separately from the main library. Hands Across the Sea, a regional nongovernmental organization (NGO) that supplies donated reading books to a number of islands including Saint Lucia, has donated thousands of books to school libraries and has provided training for teachers and students. However, these donations do not include local authors. Caribbean Reads has worked with USAID and the OECS on the Write to Read program, which has produced hundreds of books written by local adult authors and children.

<sup>22</sup> Caribbean News Global contributor, “Saint Lucia’s 2022/23 Budget.”

## Language of Instruction Policy

Cognitive and academic development of a student’s first language (L1) provides especially crucial support for second-language (L2) development. Many studies have shown that cognitive and academic development in L1 has a strong, positive effect on L2 development for academic purposes. L1 literacy is considered a crucial base for L2 literacy development. Many research studies have found that a wide variety of skills and learning strategies that are developed in L1 reading and writing can be transferred and applied to L2 reading and writing. The development of home language literacy skills by students entails no negative consequences for their overall academic or cognitive growth, and in some situations, there may be significant educational benefits for students in addition to the obvious personal benefits of bilingualism.<sup>23</sup>

To achieve the goal of language proficiency and literacy development, attention must be given, starting with the early grades, to the approaches that will help learners build on their conceptual development and extend their knowledge and abilities to achieve the language learning goals that are desirable. Cognitive academic language proficiency development continues throughout the years at school. In order to help learners achieve the level of proficiency for success with academic or school language, teachers must pay careful attention to the approaches used for language and literacy development.<sup>24</sup>

The official language of instruction used in the Saint Lucian curriculum is English, the official language of the island. The following is a quote from the draft of the Saint Lucia Language Policy, currently under review for adoption:

**“For Saint Lucia ...the languages of Kwéyòl and English have a different lexical base. The benefits to the learners of developing literacy in the home language are clear. In situations where the creole influenced vernacular / dialect has the same lexical base as the official, second language, English, nurturing the child’s first language contributes to confidence building and a strong cultural identity. The existence of a third language—English Lexicon Vernacular (SLEV)—and its acquisition as a first language by children also requires that approaches must be used to help learners acquire basic interpersonal communication skills in English and progress to learning literacy in that language also. It is difficult for students to master cognitive academic language in English when they do not have basic interpersonal communication skills in that language. Instruction therefore has to be tailored to address the needs of (i) French Creole (Kwéyòl) speakers; (ii) English speakers and (iii) SLEV speakers. In the case of the speakers of SLEV (as the first / home language), nurturing the child’s language through an awareness approach can contribute to confidence building and a strong cultural identity.”<sup>25</sup>**

The Write to Read program encouraged the use of various languages, and local writers are now encouraged to write in Creole. Materials in French Creole are to be included in the early grades in the future, and the island is waiting for the ratification of a language policy in which Creole language is given recognition.

23 Ministry of Education, Saint Lucia National Language Policy.

24 Ministry of Education, Saint Lucia National Language Policy.

25 Ministry of Education, Saint Lucia National Language Policy.

## National Publishing Landscape

Saint Lucia has 14 listed printers producing newspapers, magazines, stationery, brochures, and posters (see Printers and Publishers Annex 5), as well as a few local commercial publishers, including the Caribbean Publishing Company, the Star Publishing Company, and the Voice Publishing Company. The National Printing Corporation, which is responsible to the Saint Lucia Prime Minister for its policy direction, dates to the early 1900s and publishes the government’s weekly gazette journal. The Star Publishing Company produces several magazines as well as the *STAR* newspaper three times a week. There are several other news outlets, including Saint Lucia Times, the Saint Lucia News Online, the Voice Saint Lucia, Helen Television Systems, Slucia.com, and Dahar Broadcasting Systems.

The largest book publishers in Saint Lucia are international educational publishers who include Saint Lucia within the larger Caribbean market. They include Oxford University Press and Pearson Education Worldwide. Macmillan-Caribbean also publishes fiction, children’s, art, and photographic books, which are popular in the Saint Lucian market. There is no official trade body for book publishers in the country,<sup>26</sup> although there appear to be several printers and a few publishers. Focus group participants all said that bookstores are rapidly declining, resulting in far fewer options to purchase books for children. Five years ago, there were approximately 16 book stores, and now there are 8.

### The Scale of the Teaching and Learning Materials Challenge

There are several challenges in obtaining reading material for Saint Lucia. Currently there is no clear and comprehensive policy on textbook and teaching and learning materials (TLM) production. Printing, shipping, paper, and ink are imported, and as a result, local writers and illustrators find it difficult to sell enough books to make a profit unless they obtain a contract with a publisher.

Regarding the MoE procurement system, MoE staff, teachers, and principals identified several challenges:

- Slow data collection on student numbers per classroom causes delays in transferring data to bookstore owners who order the approved MoE books.
- The EMIS is weak: Data are transferred by both paper and by email.
- There is no budget to purchase ERMs, whether locally from booksellers or from publishers.
- Purchases of textbooks by the MoE Book Bursary Programme are either insufficient for the number of students who need textbooks, or the textbooks arrive too late for the school year.

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26 Nexus Commonwealth Network, “Finding Printing.”

# BOOK SUPPLY CHAIN ANALYSIS

## Supply Chain Overview: Six Strategic Phases

This Saint Lucia SCA examines the six strategic links in any book supply chain. An effective book supply chain requires accurate forecasting and planning, high-quality title development in languages and formats children can use and understand, access to those titles by publishers and printers, a functioning distribution system to deliver books, and appropriate knowledge and support to ensure use and to build a population of active readers. Each of these phases is summarized in the following sections with a discussion, findings, and recommendations.

## SCA PHASE I: PLANNING AND FORECASTING

Planning and forecasting is recurring or cyclical work conducted by governments and publishers to assess need and demand for books and to arrange for the financial and material resources to meet that demand. In order to plan and forecast successfully, ministries of education need timely information on enrollment and projected enrollment and realistic estimates of book wastage over time. Publishers must plan for, and be prepared to respond to, demand from ministries and schools, as well as from parents who may purchase books for their children’s reading practice. For an MoE, the collection, management, analysis, and use of data on book needs, demand, and provision are all integral components to education planning. For the publishers, it is market research. For both, accurate and timely data collection is of key importance for a functioning book supply chain.

In Saint Lucia, the Corporate Planning Unit (CPU) of the MoE is charged with collecting data and inputting it into the EMIS. The MoE statistician is responsible for coordinating with schools and other stakeholders to collect education data. The data set includes capture enrollment, the number of teachers employed, gender of the students, and assessments to identify student gains. Data collected on teachers include age, sex, and qualifications, as well as information on professional development and additional post-tertiary-level courses. Statisticians are responsible for collecting and compiling all data and transferring the numbers of required textbooks and supplementary reading books to the booksellers. The booksellers in turn sell the textbooks to parents through the BPP. According to the statistician, it is not clear if the data on student enrollment are used in the purchase of textbooks by the bookstores.

Textbook purchases are based on the data collected annually. District education officers (DEOs) serve as intermediaries, responsible for distributing questionnaires to principals and collecting the completed forms for submission to the statistician. Data are collected both in paper form and digitally. DEOs can sometimes be a bottleneck, according to focus group participants, due to being overworked and having too many other duties. Most principals prefer to submit the data on paper. The MoE’s Corporate Planning Unit is the repository for the data. No data are available on the MoE website, although they are available through the MoE’s *Annual Statistical Digest* and the *OECS Digest*.

Data collection begins with the teachers, who collect and transmit the data to the principal of the school. The principal sends the data to the DEO, who is required to send it on to the MoE. Focus groups reported that data are often collected or transmitted late, and the MoE statistician reports that delays happen all along the transmission points, but data are often stuck at the district level.

### GBA Findings: Planning and Forecasting/Strengths

- Data are collected annually on enrollment, providing the needed information to supply information to bookstores that purchase all textbooks and some additional reading books.

## GBA Findings: Planning and Forecasting/Weaknesses

- Although data questionnaires are sent early to schools, they are not completed in a timely manner, usually due to other duties and responsibilities.
- DEOs may not transfer data in a timely manner due to other work demands and insufficient staff. The statistician often has to go directly to the schools for delayed or missing information.
- Private schools often are late in sending required data.
- ERMs are included on the MoE book lists, but currently, they are not budgeted for purchase by schools due to the lack of budget. Provisions are not made to purchase ERMs for schools.

## GBA Recommendations: Planning and Forecasting

GBA recommends the following:

- That the MoE develop a five-year plan to use accurate data for acquiring ERMs for use in classrooms, focusing on preprimary and primary grades.
- That the Saint Lucia MoE review the use of the EMIS to determine how or if it is used to collect and transfer data in a timely manner.
- That the MoE continue to coordinate with development partners to secure grants over a five-year period for the supply of ERMs, including digital options.
- That student assessment results need to define criteria for identifying students' reading levels.
- That the MoE consider bulk procurement of textbooks, to achieve opportunities for economies of scale, with a similar model to the bulk procurement of medicines in the OECS.



## SCA PHASE II: TITLE DEVELOPMENT

Title development refers to the creation of texts and books intended to support acquisition of reading skills in languages children use and understand. The process of title development begins once an author has been selected (or in some cases, a complete manuscript has been chosen for publication) and continues until the final PDFs of the book are sent to the printer. It is a process that calls on the skills of pedagogical experts, writers, editors, graphic designers, illustrators, proofreaders, page layout specialists, and others. Title development for ERMs can be carried out by publishers, whether state or private and, as is often the case in developing countries, by development partners and NGOs that step in to provide these materials where they do not exist.

For the early grades, the country lacks a variety of reading materials. Most books available in bookstores are written for adults. There are very few early learning materials such as alphabet charts, letter blocks, posters, big books, or leveled books. Teachers may recommend books, but these may not necessarily be available for purchase for class libraries or by parents. Some teachers also write their own stories, but these are not officially shared among other classes or other schools unless approved by the MoE. Teacher-produced materials are often photocopied for use in the classroom, but the MoE is reluctant to use them widely in other schools without vetting them for quality.

There are a few local writers on the island that are members of a local writers group. Two of the writers who have written books for children were interviewed. They shared the views of the other members. The OECS commissioned one of the authors to write a three-part series of books for grades K–8 on problem-solving to address the issue of critical thinking, and it was published by Hodder Education, a British publishing company with offices in Jamaica. The series was marketed in several of the OECS countries. However, the books did not sell due to a lack of interest on the part of booksellers.

The second writer produced two books to support Creole language learning. The books are geared toward teaching Saint Lucian Creole to children in a fun and interactive way. The first book, for ages 3 to 6, teaches words associated with the alphabet. The second book, for ages 5 to 8, includes sentences, word puzzles, and word search. The author sourced local illustrators and a graphic designer and printed the books locally. As a result, the books are higher in cost (US\$9.20). The MoE was approached to add the books to the curriculum book list, but it declined, since the language policy is still in the process of being approved.

The DCEOI, principals, and teachers reported that the preprimary level schools are not provided with materials to teach letters and numbers to children, and there are few TLMs available on the island to support preprimary teachers. Because preprimary education is not compulsory, the preprimary schools are private and raise their own funding. The lack of appropriate teaching materials represents a challenge to ensure high-quality literacy instruction in the preprimary grades.

Another key issue identified by the MoE officers, teachers, principals, and writers is the lack of culturally relevant materials. There are very few children’s book writers on the island. As a result, few of the books that are available to children reflect their own culture and image. In addition, several focus groups pointed to the issue of a lack of materials for boys. Participants in the focus groups stated that most books provided by development partners or CSOs are targeted toward girls.

To fill the gaps, particularly in ERM, development partners and CSOs have provided books for children and school libraries. The Early Learners Programme (ELP), initiated by USAID and the OECS, launched the Write to Read project (cited above) that provided culturally relevant books for young readers.

According to the DCEOI, there was reading instruction but no reading program available on the island before the ELP. The reading results for grades 2–4 were low. The education system benefited from ELP by providing a new structure of pedagogy and materials. Beginning in 2017, the Curriculum Department ordered reading materials for teachers and classrooms that participated in the ELP program. A sample of the long list of materials includes *The Crumb Bunch* from Caribbean Reads; *Hol’ Me Tight: Traditional Ring Games and Other Games from Saint Lucia*; Lee and Low Books for grades K through 3; *A Caribbean Journey from A to Y* from Little Bell Caribbean; and several Scholastic books. The DCEOI said, “It helped to change the way teachers thought about teaching reading.” The MoE has recently modified the program to incorporate the island’s language arts educational approach. The key change has been the addition of literacy coaches to support teachers in the classroom.

Other CSOs that have donated learning materials have included the Lions Club of Gros Islet, the OneWorld Schoolhouse Foundation, and Hands Across the Sea. However, none of these donated books were vetted by the MoE for content or quality.

UNICEF, USAID, and the OECS announced in July 2022 that they are partnering on the Digital Education Capacity-Strengthening Initiative (DECI) to give Saint Lucia teachers, students, and parents access to 3,000 carefully curated courses. The new platform provides digital education training and free access to critical ERMs that reflect the needs of children in the OECS in grades K–3 in a manner that is culturally relevant, skills-focused, user friendly, and adaptable to children with special needs.

In most schools, classroom libraries are available in primary grades. *The Lady Bird* series is often available for early grade readers. The classroom teacher will source the materials based on the students’ interest. Materials are donated by parents or the diaspora living in the United States or the United Kingdom as well as by CSOs (see below). Although teachers no longer offer time in the day for students to read books from the library due to the addition of new subject areas and overburdened teachers, students are encouraged to take books home once a week. In some schools, children are encouraged to take a book and read at the lunch hour. Teachers are beginning to request books from Hands Across the Sea to fill their needs.

Community libraries, as noted above, have no reading materials for young children, although Hands Across the Sea has provided some culturally relevant books for schools. Teachers and principals said that every child is supposed to take home a book in their book bag every day. To encourage reading,

the MoE has designated the month of May as Reading Month. Planning for this month is done at the MoE and school levels. Jingles, school assemblies, Character Day, parades, and Dress Down are all activities that are usually featured during this month. This year the theme was “All Hands on Deck for Reading.”

**Table 1. Organizations supporting Saint Lucia.**

Organization	Activity/Materials
USAID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Supported the ELP program from 2015 to 2020 to improve the education systems in the OECS countries</li> <li>➤ Worked with Caribbean Reads to produce books for children</li> <li>➤ Currently implementing a digital program in collaboration with UNICEF and the OECS that empowers teachers to develop culturally relevant teaching and learning resources</li> </ul>
OECS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Supported the ELP program from 2015 to 2020 to improve the education systems and reading programs through the Write to Read program in Saint Lucia and the OECS countries</li> <li>➤ Working with USAID and UNICEF on digital learning support</li> </ul>
Hands Across the Sea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provides English language books purchased from Caribbean Reads, Scholastic, and Penguin to support school libraries</li> <li>➤ Trains teachers and students in book management</li> <li>➤ Works with the MoE on importing books for schools</li> </ul>
Caribbean Reads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Headed by a writer and publisher, based in the United States and St. Kitts</li> <li>➤ Worked with USAID in the Write to Read program to produce local culture books for children, producing 40 books in 40 days</li> </ul>
Caribbean Development Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Started in 2018, the Education Quality Improvement Project (EQulP) worked in the island education sector to improve the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Teaching and learning environment</li> <li>» Teacher training</li> <li>» System leadership and operational effectiveness for administrators</li> <li>» Special needs education</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ EQulP also conducted a climate vulnerability assessment to improve school climate resilience.</li> </ul>
Lions Club, Gros Islet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Donated 500 books to the Gros Islet schools</li> </ul>
OneWorld Schoolhouse Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Donated 57,750 books in December 2017 to Saint Lucia schools</li> </ul>

## Digital

The Global Digital Library (GDL) is a free online library developed with support from the Global Book Alliance (GBA), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), UNESCO, UNICEF, and USAID. Books published as part of the ELP have been digitized and included on the GDL. Neither the MoE nor teachers were aware of the GDL or of the books available in the library. (See Digital Materials section below for more details, page 22).

### GBA Findings: Title Development/Strengths

- Development partners have provided reading materials for schools and school libraries.
- There is some coordination among development partner activities, including new projects, to support digital learning materials.
- The OECS, USAID, and UNICEF are providing funding to support the development of digital content and teacher training.

### GBA Findings: Title Development/Weaknesses

- The government does not allocate funds to the development of ERMs.
- Development partners and the MoE do not work with CSOs to coordinate donations of books.

### GBA Recommendations: Title Development

GBA recommends the following:

- That the MoE establish a minimum number of high-quality supplementary reading materials (SRMs) for grades K–2, including decodable and leveled books, big books, and picture word charts. This process would include the following:
  - » Publish 10 supplementary reading titles for each grade (K–2), leveled for the grade, based on Saint Lucia culture, and correlated to the Language Arts Curriculum.
  - » Work with local writers and illustrators or with Caribbean Reads, a regional publisher in Trinidad or Jamaica, to produce local language and culturally relevant material.
  - » Provide early learning materials for preschools and teacher guides to prepare students for kindergarten.
- That development partners encourage the government to fund and procure ERMs by working closely with CSOs, and that they support local writers, including teachers and children, in the new DECI program and the ongoing ELP Write to Read program to strengthen the island’s capacity to locally produce content for children.

- That the MoE seek out grants from development partners to support local production of ERMs, especially content for boys and for children struggling with reading.
- That the MoE establish a copyright protocol for teachers and students, including quality review of these materials to ensure books are scalable.

## SCA PHASE III: PUBLISHING AND PRINTING

Publishing generally encompasses the contracting of authors as well as all the steps of title development (writing, editing, illustrating, graphic design, and page makeup). It also includes the ownership, licensing, and marketing of intellectual property. In the case of a private sector publisher, publishing is a for-profit business. Where state publishing exists, the MoE staff generally create the curriculum and accompanying textbooks.

Printing refers to the manufacturing process, whereby the final PDF is transformed into a printed, bound book by means of ink, paper, and a printing press and binding equipment. Sometimes private publishers have their own printing press, but more often they contract out the printing. In the case of a state publisher, books may be printed by a state printer or tendered out to a private printer.

On Saint Lucia, publishing and printing (see National Publishing Landscape; page 13; and Annex 4 Cost of Textbooks) is limited to production of some adult books, a few children’s books, newspapers, and printing for local companies. CAMDU has produced some primary-level material and printed it locally. Some local authors and historians have written on the current issues or the history of the island. These books and materials are usually published in the region and sold on Amazon. Caribbean Reads has published and sold some books to libraries. Carol Mitchell, an author and the director of Caribbean Reads, produced readers, but she is now moving more toward preprimary book writing. Mitchell has printed her children’s books in Trinidad, but importing to the other islands is expensive. Shipping costs range from \$150 to \$200 for a small box of books. In addition, imported books, paper, and ink are taxed at 41.75%, and the payment system is complicated, forcing authors to be creative in paying illustrators, for example.

### Textbook Publishing

#### Curriculum and Textbook Development

The MoE CAMDU staff are responsible for the development of all curricula for primary through secondary levels. The curriculum is influenced by the standards developed by the OECS. For Saint Lucia, the textbook list is developed by the CAMDU. This list is provided to bookstores who purchase from international or regional publishers based on the curriculum-approved book list. However, the MoE officers, principals, teachers, and regional writers pointed out that there are local educators who are experienced and could write textbooks, workbooks, and teacher guides for the MoE.

### Digital Materials

USAID and UNICEF have agreed to support several of the Eastern and Southern Caribbean islands to further develop their digital capacity to support the education sector. (See SCA Phase II: Title

Development.) UNICEF has partnered with NotesMaster on an information and communication technology (ICT) website, NotesMaster, to support teachers in Caribbean countries as well as globally to develop teaching plans for subjects in both the primary and secondary level. NotesMaster is a custom-built learning environment that allows students open access to knowledge and educational resources and to collaborate remotely while learning,

The OECS adopted the collaborative approach to build a knowledge-sharing community involving Ministries of Education throughout the OECS and wider Caribbean. Each member state chooses a set of subjects with the aim of increasing the repository of Open Educational Resources (OER) and giving teachers access to the many features available on the NotesMaster e-learning platform. This includes creating high-quality OER containing text, video, animations, images, tables, and sound clips as well as using screen readers for visually impaired students.

The MoE has also adopted the “Ecosystem of E-education.” With the new E-education policy, Internet bandwidth has been increased and a number of other programs introduced, including e-books. There is presently an MoE eBook pilot in schools, targeted at one grade 3 class in each of eight schools on the island. Two hundred students are part of the initiative and received tablets. The intention is to expand this pilot to cover all subject areas with simulations. In some schools, students are given access to the free Oxford Owl eBook website for children age 3–11, but teachers reported that few students use the site, which has few books that reflect Caribbean child identity.<sup>27</sup> Teachers are using YouTube and Facebook to find content for use in classrooms.

## Copyright

Any work originating in Saint Lucia, where the author of the work is a national of Saint Lucia or the work was first published in Saint Lucia, is given the same copyright protection in each of the other Berne Convention member countries. There appears to be confusion around copyright, with teachers unclear about who owns the rights to materials they create.

## Private Markets and International Sales

Bookstores and a few publishers remain on the island. Focus group participants say that there were far more bookstores in the past. But participants also have a mixed view on the book market. Some participants pointed out that there is a market for books, particularly for adults. Others report that the market is declining, especially for children’s books. There are very few books available that reflect local culture and a severe lack of broad content. Focus group participants point out that the population has turned to social media for reading content, and students use their tablets primarily to play games.

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27 Oxford Owl, “Finding eBook Library.”



## Production of Books for Learners with Disabilities

Some accommodations are made by the Ministry of Education for children with special needs. This is done by reprinting books either in larger print or Braille for the visually impaired. Once these students are reintegrated into the mainstream classroom, learning materials are altered to suit their needs. There are also instances where reading materials are made available on tablets for children with special needs who cannot otherwise access books. There is a special stand-alone education center for students with disabilities where parents can bring their children for special help. The center offers large-print books, but no materials in Braille or accommodations for children who are deaf or children with learning disabilities. The DCEOI reported that there are many children with disabilities who may not have been properly diagnosed and therefore are not getting the attention they need. Teachers also have not been trained in special education, particularly in subject areas.

## Printing and Binding

As noted above, there are several printing companies on the island. Although the printers declined to meet with the researchers, focus group participants reported that most printers produce commercial material, newspapers, and some books for adults. Since taxes on paper and ink are expensive, most writers prefer to print outside of Saint Lucia.

## GBA Findings: Publishing and Printing/Strengths

- There are a number of publishers, printers, and bookstores remaining on the island.
- Local writers and illustrators have experience with local printers.
- Digital e-books are available and are beginning to be used in schools.

## GBA Findings: Publishing and Printing/Weaknesses

- There are no government funds dedicated to ERMs.
- Government import tax regulations inhibit printing, publishing, and writing on the island.
- Copyright and open licensing requirements on donor-funded projects are not clearly defined to protect the authors and illustrators, which was the case in the Write to Read project.

## GBA Recommendations: Publishing and Printing

GBA recommends the following:

- That the MoE convene a book working group to collaborate with writers, printers, and publishers on the development of local, culturally relevant, broad-spectrum ERMs. The working group could provide guidance on grant-seeking with development partners, particularly with reference to new or ongoing donor-funded projects such as ELP, PEARL, and the new UNICEF/USAID digital project.

- That the MoE consider establishing a national book policy that encompasses all components of the supply chain, including reviewing the tax regulations on the import of paper, ink, and books.
- That local writers, illustrators, and graphic designers receive donor-funded training on book development, including writing and producing leveled and decodable books for primary level, books for boys, and a broad spectrum of topics that encourage all children.
- That donor-funded projects that engage in providing books to schools should involve private publishers in developing and publishing these materials, either locally or regionally.
- That the OECS and Saint Lucia include textbook development and book management training in the University of the West Indies and organize professional development for teachers on TLMs.
- That development partners continue to support capacity-building for digital materials with writers, teachers, and children, including provision of devices to all children regardless of financial ability and provision of the Internet to all areas of the island.

## SCA PHASE IV: PROCUREMENT AND PURCHASING

Procurement and purchasing are the acquisition of books and texts to support reading skills. In the education sector, the largest procurer of books is often the government, which will select vendors, establish payment terms, negotiate contracts for per-unit and print-run prices for reading materials, and pay vendors. Purchasing also may involve non-standard financing models, such as the use of advanced market commitments or purchasing consortia. Individual teachers, families, and students are also book consumers and may purchase books depending on their ability to pay for them.

On Saint Lucia, the MoE obtains textbooks and some reading material from international sources. Development partners and CSOs provide SRMs, both in paper and digital form. For multiple reasons, the reading culture on the island has significantly decreased over the years. The purchase of books by parents for themselves or their children has declined. As a result, publishers, printers, and booksellers also are declining, and there is no longer a variety of reading material.

Books used in grades K–6 are prescribed by the MoE CAMDU. The MoE’s primary grades curriculum, covering language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies, uses international publishers. For kindergarten, the language arts curriculum uses *Jolly Phonics*; grades 1–4 use the *Can Do! Primary Language Arts Student Book* (see Annex 2 MPTLM for description) textbook and workbook, a Macmillan Caribbean publication. The textbook for science was replaced by *Caribbean Primary Science*.

The curriculum is normally reviewed every five to six years. Decisions concerning the choice of textbooks are made by the curriculum specialists attached to the CAMDU in the June–July period. However, booksellers would prefer to get the lists by April to avoid delays from international publishers and printers. Selling books is seasonal and normally takes place between June and August. If the books arrive late, the books remain on the bookseller shelves at a loss to the sellers.

The book lists include standard mathematics and English texts, which are common across all schools. In all other subjects, texts vary depending on individual schools, especially at the secondary level. Schools may change the textbooks they choose for that year. Books normally have a lifespan of five to seven years, which has an impact on book sales. If a textbook is replaced by the school, the booksellers will take a loss on the copies they cannot sell. Booksellers identified some other issues:

- Orders placed later than April may not arrive in time for the school year.
- In some cases, the MoE has waited until the last moment to send the list to booksellers to order a textbook, meaning it will not arrive in time.
- Some schools do not adhere to the MoE book list.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the regular curriculum and textbook review was delayed until this year. The pandemic also affected the distribution of the Book Bursary Programme (BBP) over the past two years: Books were distributed, but some were delayed due to border closures. Book lists are sent to the bookstores to order and purchase on behalf of the MoE for the BBP, which is designed to support families who can't afford to purchase books on their own. The MoE budget for the BBP is US\$320,000 this year. The MoE budget has provided more than US\$100,000 over the past several years and supports approximately 400 students, with an estimated 10,000 books distributed this year. The bookstore also orders books for parents to purchase through the bookstore. In collaboration with teams of teachers and other officials, including the DCEOI, the books in the BBP have been based on anticipated numbers of beneficiaries, a guideline since 2002. Parliament members can recommend 25 vulnerable students from their constituencies for BBP benefits. Other students are recommended by their schools; the Crisis Centre; Human Services; the Ministry of Equity, Social Justice and Empowerment; Koudmen Sent Lisi; Saint Lucia Social Development Fund; and the Vieux Fort Children's Home. Currently over 10,000 books have been distributed by the BBP. However, there are many more requests to be on the BBP list, which the MoE cannot accommodate.

School texts vary in price for parents (see National Publishing Landscape on page 13). They normally pay about EC\$26 per book, but inflation has significantly affected the cost of books this year. The financial and socioeconomic status of the family will affect the resources available for books; parents may have to choose between purchasing textbooks and buying food for the family. For these students, the teacher may resort to photocopying texts for them. According to participants, this is a common practice by teachers.

The procurement unit officer, working with top MoE management, is responsible for sending the data for the orders for the BBP to the booksellers, who normally order the books for the BBP. When late changes are made to the book list, it may cause delays in ordering from the printer or ordering the wrong book. Late orders are common due to both the late arrival of the data from the schools and late decisions by the MoE on the prescribed textbooks. April is the best time for decisions on the selection of texts. If these decisions are late, books will not be put into the BBP for distribution to students, with a resulting loss to the MoE budget. For example, because of complaints from teachers, the primary level science textbook *Bright Ideas* was reviewed, and a switch was made to *Caribbean Primary Science*. However, this decision was not communicated to the student welfare officer, and the textbook was ordered but not used, resulting in a loss of US\$100,000 to the ministry. Delays and miscommunication are all along the supply chain. Teachers are overwhelmed with work and collect and transmit data late. District level officers are late in sending the information due to their workload. The MoE has to collate the information, which takes time. Booksellers don't have access to the MoE staff to push for early transfer. The EMIS is not used in all cases. All of these situations contribute to the delay and miscommunication.

Currently, the social welfare officer is waiting for the social studies textbook to be identified for the 2022–2023 academic year. In another case, the students needed the new edition of the social studies text, but the BBP received the old edition. Parents refused to rent or purchase this edition.

Books provided under the BBP are normally returned to the schools for use in the following year, but the focus groups reported that in some cases, children have written in the books or they have lost them. Or they report they have lost the book, but it has been sold. In some cases, parents who are financially stable are included on the BBP, which is even more problematic when they have been recommended by a government official.

The MoE includes a number of additional books (supplementary reading texts) for early grades on the book list. However, booksellers do not purchase these for the MoE. They may be ordered by schools if they have the means to purchase these books.

## GBA Findings: Procurement and Purchasing/Strengths

- There is a functioning system to identify textbooks for all subjects and to purchase textbooks from regional and international publishers.
- The procurement officer currently works with the booksellers to purchase books for the BBP.
- The BBP is providing significant support to financially challenged families.
- Local booksellers encourage writers to sell their books and display them in their stores.

## GBA Findings: Procurement and Purchasing/Weaknesses

- The MoE's tardiness in articulating a policy that involves key players affects the order and sale of books.
- The MoE's lack of identification of common texts for all subject areas and the late transfer of data and book information to booksellers cause delays in ordering and delivery of textbooks to students.
- The underfunding of the BBP leaves some underprivileged students without textbooks.
- Delayed orders affect the timing of the arrival of books, since shippers have a cut-off date for shipping.
- Individual schools choose different books from the book list, often causing confusion and delays for the booksellers.
- There is no book provision for students with special needs.
- Local writers have challenges in finding local publishers to sell their books locally.

## GBA Recommendations: Procurement and Purchasing

The GBA recommends the following:

- That the MoE develop a book purchasing policy that ensures timely orders (with an April deadline) and arrival of selected textbooks, as well as a smooth and well-funded BBP.

- That the MoE work with development partners to develop grant proposals to support the BBP for all students in need.
- That the MoE consider identification of common texts across all subject areas, in sync with the CPEA process, to reduce waste in the MoE textbook/BBP budget.
- That the MoE work with development partners, special education teachers, principals, and booksellers to purchase educational materials for special needs students, especially students who are blind or deaf or have learning disabilities.

## SCA PHASE V: DISTRIBUTION MANAGEMENT

Distribution management encompasses the organization, oversight, and activities involved in moving books from the point of origination to the point where learners access them, and it includes packaging, inventory, warehousing, and logistics.

Even when challenges related to title development and procurement have been addressed, books may not make it to the classrooms and the children they are intended to benefit. This can happen for a myriad of reasons, including challenging conditions of climate and geography, inadequate transportation infrastructure, unrealistic distribution budgets and timelines, corruption in the supply chain, and more.

### Book Distribution

In Saint Lucia, textbook distribution for the BBP is organized by the student welfare officer in coordination with the district education offices and school principals. Booksellers import the textbooks and deliver them to the MoE. The books are sent to the district office, and the school principals either pick up the books or arrange for transport to their individual schools. In some cases, principals have combined book delivery with the food delivery for the school feeding program. Parents are then required to pick up the books from a collection point designated by the school.

The student welfare officer checks with each school to see whether the books have been received. In some cases, the books may not show up initially, but there has not been significant loss of textbooks reported. Researchers found no system of delivery assessment or reporting.

Schools are dependent on the principals to ensure books are picked up and distributed to collection points. In the rural areas, books are delivered to the district education officers, who in turn are required to inform the principals. Parents are obliged to collect the books. However, while some parents make an effort to collect the books, many others fail to do so due to work obligations and transportation issues. This results in books being left unclaimed until the start of the school year.

Students on the BBP list are encouraged to take textbooks home. Students return books to the school at the end of the academic year. These books are received by teachers, counted, and stored in the subject classroom for distribution the next year. If parents purchase books from the bookseller, they often resell the books privately at the end of the school year.

The student welfare officer, school personnel, and booksellers all noted that delays in distribution happen frequently. The result is that students, who are on the BBP list, do not receive their books in time for the school year. These delays are attributed to the lack of timely delivery of data from schools, through the district offices, to the procurement unit.

## GBA Findings: Distribution Management/Strengths

- There is a paper and email system for data transfer to the district level and then on to the procurement unit.
- The BBP is critical for a significant portion of students to have access to textbooks.

## GBA Findings: Distribution Management/Weaknesses

- There is no support for principals to ensure that the BBP books are delivered to the schools.
- There is no logistics or monitoring system from the MoE to the school level, so the process relies on the student welfare officer to check on the arrival of books to each school.
- Schools put in their BBP requirements to the procurement unit, but there may be changes to the text required or requested, delaying delivery.
- There is no support from the MoE for delivery of ERMs to schools.

## GBA Recommendations: Distribution Management

GBA recommends the following:

- That the MoE establish a digital monitoring system for distribution and review the issues on late delivery.
- That the MoE and procurement officer review the delivery process with principals to determine the issues of delivery delay and to identify solutions.
- That the MoE work closely with the development partners in the new digital project to ensure all students have access to devices and that they are delivered on time.



## SCA PHASE VI: ACTIVE USE

Active use refers to the effective use of books by learners, their teachers, and children’s family members and caregivers. Children’s development of reading skills hinges on the effective use of books in classrooms and in homes and is directly affected by an adequate provision of essential and supplemental reading materials.

Factors that impact book use, both in and outside of school, are therefore essential considerations in analyzing the book chain. Evidence has shown that teachers and families often do not know of the importance of reading practice and how to support it effectively. Further, unstable book supplies and penalties for book damage can lead teachers to restrict access to books, and delays in distribution mean that teacher trainings occur without any of the materials teachers will use in the classroom.

### Active Use in Schools

School texts are normally available and are either rented from the school, provided free to poorer students through the BBP, or purchased by parents. Other reading materials are available in classroom libraries, which are now the norm in most primary schools. Teachers source those reading materials based on the students’ interests; they do not necessarily support the curriculum. These materials may be donated by CSOs such as Hands Across the Sea, the diaspora, parents, or government development partners. The ELP, supported by USAID and the OECS, provided leveled readers for grade K–3 classrooms.

To determine the impact of TLMs, data are collected on student performance on the examinations for several levels. The Minimum Standards Test (MST) for grades 2 and 4 focuses on English and mathematics and points to interventions to address weak areas of instruction. The Common Entrance Examination (CEE) is given to students entering secondary school. A third exam is the Certificate of Secondary Education Competence (CSEC). The MoE also collects qualitative data on how schools are performing and reviews classroom resources, and literacy coordinators (LCs) hired under the ELP evaluate classroom and learning environments. LCs focus on early-grade reading (EGR) to evaluate students’ fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary.

Saint Lucia no longer has an abundance of bookstores (see numbers of bookstores above). Teachers, parents, booksellers, and writers report that most economically disadvantaged parents do not purchase books for themselves or their children. As a result bookstores do not make enough profit to stay in business. Schools may recommend SRMs such as *Lady Bird*. The MoE recommends publications from Macmillan and Collins, and parents are expected to source them wherever they can. Storybooks are included on the book list for purchase by parents. However, books are expensive, and many parents cannot afford to purchase additional books beyond the required textbooks.

May is Reading Month for all primary schools on Saint Lucia (see Title Development, pages 17–21).

School libraries have some books, although most of the books available in the classroom libraries reflect western or other foreign-country cultures according to principals and teachers in the focus groups interviews. (See page 16 on community libraries.)

Training in reading and language arts normally depends on the needs identified by curriculum specialists, based on classroom observations. Professional development sessions are held for teachers in July, by the Professional Development Institute. Curriculum specialists provide guidance for teachers through production of white papers, unit plans for teachers, and information on subject-specific pedagogy. LCs were hired under the ELP to evaluate classroom and learning environments. Teachers were assigned to the CAMDU to ensure that children improve in language arts, especially reading. The LCs carried out professional development sessions and assisted with assessment by vetting the examinations submissions. According to the DCEOI, the LCs were effective, but there were too few of them. The DCEOI stated that “robust teacher training for teaching reading needs to be emphasized.” But the MoE mandated that there would be no new hires for the 2022–2023 school year, limiting the number of available LCs.

Teachers, principals, and MoE staff reported that some student reading levels are generally poor, especially children who are under-privileged. And while professional development is available to teachers from the MoE, district education offices, and at the school level, there is little guidance for teachers on how to assess and teach reading. The Eastern Caribbean Basic Literacy Assessment (ECBLA) is available to assess student reading skills, but some teachers have not been exposed to using this tool or to the methods to help improve their skills in teaching reading.

## Active Use in Communities

According to the MoE staff, teachers, principals, and parents, many low-income families do not have books at home. The average annual income for families is between \$9,816 and \$13,942. The average cost of books is dependent on the grade level and the number of required textbooks for each class. The SRM is expensive because books are not produced locally. Parents who have financial challenges must make a choice between purchasing books and supporting other parts of their budget. In addition, focus groups pointed out that in some cases parents do not engage in reading books nor do they value supporting their children in reading at home. (See Annex 4 on book costs).

Parents do not spend on ERMs due to financial challenges. Only a small number of parents, who are well-educated or are teachers themselves, have books for their children at home, and even fewer of these families take time to read with their children. Parents, who often work in the hotel industry or agriculture, work long hours and say they don’t have time to read to their children. Principals and teachers report that communication with parents has to improve. Schools do have yearly meetings with parents on student performance, and they reach out to parents via WhatsApp. And while some parents request assistance for their children, the parents of children who need help the most rarely respond. However, the consensus from focus groups and individual interviews is that overall children are behind in reading skills, and those who fall behind do not receive sufficient support to catch up.

ERMs are listed on the book list; however, the MoE does not provide ERMs to schools, so it is up to the schools and parents to purchase them. Primary schools do not have a budget for ERMs. Children who have their own ERMs bring them to school, but parents warn their children not to share because they want to avoid the books being damaged or lost.

## GBA Findings: Active Use/Strengths

- Teachers occasionally receive training in teaching reading through development partner and NGO projects.
- Children are encouraged to take books home from school.
- The MoE has designated May as Reading Month, an opportunity to significantly underscore the value of early grade reading.
- Some schools have designated lunch time reading periods.
- Teachers are eager to improve their knowledge.

## GBA Findings: Active Use/Weaknesses

- Children do not have books at home and are not read to at home.
- Teachers are insufficiently trained in EGR and in the use of books.
- There is no consistent time allowed in school schedules for reading.

## GBA Recommendations: Active Use

GBA recommends the following:

- That MoE work with development partners to consider a long-term plan to fund ERMs and stimulate demand for reading material and to raise awareness of the importance of reading and books by holding community focus groups to determine what activities the community would endorse, such as expanding the book fairs and festivals, literary awards, or writing competitions.
- That the MoE work with development partners to support the purchase of ERMs through grants.
- That the development partners support efforts to build and stock libraries, including classroom, community, and mobile libraries.
- That the MoE provide ERMs for classrooms, according to the USAID guidelines, at the primary level for children and expand or establish well-stocked classroom libraries.
- That the MoE expand Reading Month beyond May by adding one or two months for additional community activities:
  - » Hold festivals at schools to showcase materials and books for children, display local writers' books, and offer books at discounted prices from development partners.

- » Continue with the highly successful Write to Read program to encourage young writers.
  - » Provide sessions for parents on reading at home.
  - » Provide sessions for teachers on accessing e-books online.
  - » Hold other activities.
- That the MoE set up sessions between the CAMDU staff and local writers to sync local materials for children with the curriculum, focusing on grades K–4, and to provide training and guidelines for writers on children’s book writing to enhance vocabulary and oral skills in local language.
  - That development partners assist writers in providing digital versions of their children’s books and showcase local writers’ material on social media, especially new projects providing digital material.
  - That the MoE support efforts to change school policy to ensure reading time is integrated into the school day across the island and that more reading activities are brought into the classroom.
  - That the government, with support from development partners, train teachers and parents on the use and importance of ERMs. This training should include teacher preservice training, as well as messaging and support to parents on how they can support their children.

## CONCLUSION

Saint Lucia is on the verge of addressing some of the challenges children face in learning to read. Development partners—OECS, USAID, UNICEF, the World Bank and CSOs, as well as local publishers and writers—are all poised and ready to help significantly increase the availability of TLMs, including supplementary readers, both in print and digital form, if the government, through the MoE, moves forward on a plan to change the culture of reading on the island.

To accomplish this, the MoE will need to work closely with development partners to develop a long-term plan to address available ERMs, mirroring USAID’s guidelines for students in preprimary and primary levels; significantly improve the teachers’ professional development in teaching reading; address issues inhibiting local writers from publishing their books; and support parents in purchasing and using reading materials at home. Underpinning this, it will be necessary to address issues of economic challenges for parents, tax import duties, and Internet access for vulnerable students.

The government has significant partners that are eager to assist. This is an opportune time to develop a plan for the future of generations of children on Saint Lucia.

# ANNEX 1: FOCUS GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

All focus groups and interviews were conducted via Zoom.

Focus Group 1: MoE	Focus Group 2:	Focus Group 3:	Focus Group 4:	Focus Group 5:
Teacher assigned to CAMDU	Education Officer, Dist. 7	Teachers, Bouton Primary School (2)	Writers (2)	Bookstore manager, Nathaniel's Books
Curriculum specialist, language arts	Education Officer, Dist. 4	Teacher, Soufriere Infant School		Book store staff (2)
Head of CAMDU	Education Officer, Dist. 2	Principal, Primary School		Bookstore owner, Books & More
Director, library services	Education Officer, Dist. 8	Special education teacher, Les Etangs Combined School		Bookstore supervisor, Books & More
Registrar, examinations and assessment	Principal, Millet Primary School	Soufriere Primary School		Bookstore owner, Priority Book Store
	Principal, Belle Vue Combined Primary School	Community members (3)		
	Education Officer, Dist. 3	Teacher (1) and parent (1)		
	Planning officer, MoE			

Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5
Statistician, Corporate Planning, MoE	Deputy chief education officer, instruction (DCEOI), MoE	Student welfare officer, MoE	Hands Across the Sea (2): director and staff on Saint Lucia	Caribbean Reads, director

## ANNEX 2: MPTLM

The first step in a textbook strategy is to decide what the minimum profile of teaching and learning materials, or MPTLM, should be to deliver the curriculum, including accurate quantification and forecasting of teaching and learning materials (TLMs) in line with their projected lifespans.

### Definitions

- Components: TLMs by category—examples include the following:
  - » Textbook
  - » Teacher guide
  - » E-textbook
  - » Learning object
  - » DVD
  - » CD
  - » Internet
  - » Intranet
  - » Reading book
  - » Reference book
  - » Nonfiction book
- TLMs by source—examples include the following:
  - » Existing product available in international and national languages for immediate purchase
  - » Existing product available for use or purchase in another language
  - » Existing product that requires some change to make it suitable for use in the country
  - » Materials that need to be developed specifically for the national curriculum
- TLMs procurement strategy—examples include the following:
  - » Purchases
  - » Reprint rights
  - » Translation
  - » Adaptation
  - » Translation and adaptation
  - » Origination in-house
  - » Origination by competitive bid

## The Concept of the MPTLM

MoEs should establish an agreed-upon MPTLM by the grade level needed to deliver the specified curriculum learning objectives:

- The MPTLM is qualified with quantities (one per learner, five per class, one per teacher, etc.), assumed life expectancy, and assumed loss and damage rates.
- The MPTLM is specified by grade level and by subject.
- The MPTLM must be affordable to the government and parents, and it must be sustainable.

Establishing an MPTLM is a *step-by-step* process that can be conducted within an MoE with some external support and assistance:

1. Obtain curriculum and syllabus designers' specifications of their required materials for teachers, and learners.
2. Perform an analysis of cost implications of recommendations and comparison with available financial resources.
3. Pilot test and/or micro-test with evaluations focused on usability, impact on outcomes, time on task, etc.
4. Conduct classroom observations: What teachers and students do in class, what they enjoy.
5. Have discussions with teachers and learners.
6. Create a revised list of TLMs.
7. Perform a second cost analysis and budget comparison.
8. Explore cost reduction considerations (both cash flow and amortized cost).
9. Develop the final MPTLM.



## ANNEX 3: CAN DO! LANGUAGE ARTS COURSE

Can Do! is a comprehensive primary language arts course developed by the Curriculum and Materials Development Unit of the Saint Lucia Ministry of Education.

Student's Book Level K, 1, 2:

- Can Do! follows an integrated approach offering full coverage of the OECS curriculum.
- Each unit covers speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.
- A detailed scope and sequence chart provides clear instructions for the year's lessons.
- Regular review chapters help teachers evaluate each individual's progress.
- A variety of full-colour photographs, illustrations, graphs, charts, and diagrams interest young learners and aid understanding.
- Level K Student's Book includes reading units and review units with engaging activities, teacher notes at the bottom of each page, and a Word List and Index.
- Levels 1–2 Student's Books provide guided listening and speaking activities; reading texts including poems, stories, and letters; and grammar, spelling, and vocabulary exercises and tips.<sup>28</sup>

Write-in Workbooks are provided for each level.

- Level K covers phonics, writing, and language arts skills, supporting the Student's Book.
- Levels 1–2 provide teaching objectives for each page, practice exercises following the Student's Book units, and lively artwork.

28 <http://macmillancaribbeanebooks.com/can-do-primary-language-arts-student-s-book-k-pdf.html>

## ANNEX 4: COST OF TEXTBOOKS

### Cost of various textbooks – Saint Lucia

Textbook and Workbooks	Publisher	Price (ECD)
<b>Language Arts</b> Primary Language Arts "CAN DO" Student's Book	Macmillan	\$27.05 to \$28.65
<b>Language Arts Workbook</b> Primary Language Arts "CAN DO" Workbook	Macmillan	\$20.96
<b>Math</b> Caribbean Primary Mathematics Student's Book	Ginn/Pearson	\$37.91 to \$40.90
<b>Math Workbook</b> Caribbean Primary Mathematics Workbook	Ginn/Pearson	\$22.50 to \$24.32
<b>Science</b> Caribbean Primary Science	Hodder Education	\$35.92
<b>Language Arts</b> Note: No workbook for science across all grades.	N/A	N/A
<b>Social Studies</b> Caribbean Infant Social Studies: <i>Our Family, Home and School</i> : Grades 1–2	Hodder Education	\$35.50 & \$36.00 to \$39.00
Caribbean Primary Social Studies: <i>Our World Community</i> : Grades 3–6	Hodder Education	\$36.97
<b>Social Studies Workbook</b> Caribbean Primary Social Studies Workbook for CPEA	Hodder Education	\$20.56
Caribbean Skills Atlas: Skills Workbook (Grade 6 only)	Pearson Publishing Co.	\$31.93
Social Studies Atlas for the Caribbean (Grades 4–6)	Collins	\$27.27
<b>Music</b> Perfect Music Match (Grades 1–6)	Hodder Education	Not ordered
<b>Health and Family Life Education (HFLE)</b> (Note: No text and workbook for HFLE at the primary school level)	N/A	N/A

Note: Price range depends on grade level. Books at the higher grade levels are more expensive, while books at the lower grade level are slightly cheaper.

## ANNEX 5: PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS ON SAINT LUCIA

	Printers	Publishers
1	Voice Publishing Co. Ltd	Voice Publishing Co. Ltd
2	Star Publishing Co.	Star Publishing Co.
3	National Printing Corporation	National Printing Corporation
4	Document Center—J.E. Bergasse	
5	Mayers Printing	
6	Exel Marketing Services	
7	Creative Printing	
8	Speed Printing & Supplies	
9	Optimum Printers	

Note: The majority of printers specialize in printing only: signs, posters, banners, brochures, flyers, mugs, invitations, labels, tickets, etc.

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Global Book Alliance Secretariat  
c/o Center for Education  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Ronald Reagan Building  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20523

[secretariat@globalbookalliance.org](mailto:secretariat@globalbookalliance.org)

