**Place-Based Education**

 Place-Based Education (PBE) uses local context as the basis for curriculum. It is a relatively new field in education but one that draws on a rich theoretical tradition including experiential learning, community-oriented schooling, ecological education, critical education and service-learning. As theorized by Knapp (2005), Smith (2002) and Sobel (2004), Place-Based Education is best understood as the synthesis of five key elements:

1. Experiential learning opportunities
2. Interdisciplinary education
3. Real-world problem-solving
4. Local context as the foundation for curriculum development
5. School-community connections

 Place-Based Education recognizes that all aspects of human societies and the environments they inhabit are influenced by global forces but are experienced locally. PBE encourages educators to use phenomena in their local communities as the foundation for curriculum development in all academic disciplines. Connections are made to broader more geographically distant and abstract issues in reference to local realizations of those issues. For example; in a Place-Based Education curriculum in Barbuda, students could examine the question, 'How have hurricanes impacted Barbuda over time?' from multiple school subjects while using local phenomena as the basis of the curriculum. Students could visit Pre-Columbian archaeological sites and interview archaeologists about how Amerindians adapted to hurricanes in history class. They could collect oral histories of major storms in social studies class. They could examine the role of hurricanes in bringing new invasive species to the island in biology class. They could monitor coastal erosion in geography class. They could record traditional methods of protecting agriculture from storms, research other methods used elsewhere in the Caribbean and could construct their own experimental gardens in agricultural sciences class. They could use weather data collected at the Barbuda Archaeological Research Center (BARC) weather station in math class. Students could present the outcomes of their research to the Barbuda Council, to church groups and to the community at large. Students conduct real research, design and create useful products for their community, and become active participants in community decision-making. For educators, PBE has four primary strengths;

1. Direct connections between education and students' lived experiences
2. Students as producers as well as consumers of knowledge
3. Student ownership/student-driven curriculum
4. School-community connections

 Prior research has correlated PBE with increased student attendance, the development of strong leadership skills and improved scores on standardized tests in the United States, particularly for at-risk youth. Our Monitoring and Evaluation Team will contribute to this growing body of literature in an international context.

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