



1. Project Data:		Date Posted : 08/21/2000	
PROJ ID: P006427		Appraisal	Actual
Project Name : Second North East Basic Education Project	Project Costs (US\$M)	369	348
Country: Brazil	Loan/Credit (US\$M)	212	212
Sector(s): Primary Education	Cofinancing (US\$M)		
L/C Number: L3604			
	Board Approval (FY)		94
Partners involved :	Closing Date	12/31/1998	12/31/1999
Prepared by :	Reviewed by :	Group Manager :	Group:
2. Project Objectives and Components			
a. Objectives			
<p>This is one of two projects implemented simultaneously to promote basic education in Northeast Brazil . Ln. 3604 covered the states of Ceara, Maranhao, Pernambuco, and Sergipe . (Ln. 3663 covered the states of Alagoas, Bahia, Paraiba, Piaui, and Rio Grande de Norte.) The two projects had almost identical outcomes and problems .</p> <p>The project's objectives were to increase student learning, reduce repetition and dropout, and increase graduation rates in four states (Ceara, Maranhao, Pernambuco, Sergipe) through improvements in the quality of state and municipal primary education and in the efficiency of education management . At the state level, the project would: (a) streamline state education bureaucracies and help them achieve more efficient use of human resources and a more efficient allocation of spending; (b) increase state and municipal materials; (c) improve state and municipal teachers' skills and classroom effectiveness and the leadership skills of school directors; (d) finance a time slice of the states' school rehabilitation and construction programs, conditional upon states' progress in implementing agreed management reforms; and (e) support promising state and municipal education initiatives through matching grants from a small innovations fund . The project also had a component at the federal level to strengthen the Ministry of Education's capacity for key oversight and support functions, such as national standardized student testing; planning, policy and norm-setting; and financial transfers to equalize education spending across states . Finally, the project supported reform of the centralized national textbook and school lunch distribution systems, in order to assure the timely and adequate availability of learning materials in Brazilian primary schools .</p>			
b. Components			
<p>The project financed (a) educational management technical assistance, training, and materials, (b) educational materials, (c) teacher training, (d) time-slice financing to rehabilitate schools, (e) an innovations fund . Studies were also conducted.</p>			
c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates			
<p>The project closed after a one-year extension, and all proceeds were utilized .</p>			
3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:			
<p>Objectives were only partly achieved, and to an uncertain extent, given the incomplete information of the ICR . As written in the staff appraisal report, they were very broad, too many, and not realistically achievable . Lack of indicators made it hard to assess the extent to which they were achieved . Near mid-term, the project was restructured, making various components clearer (such as textbook publication) and easier to implement . The loan was amended, but objectives did not change . The level of work carried out in the recent years shows that a smaller set of objectives with realistic targets could have been satisfactorily fulfilled .</p>			
4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:			
<p>The project succeeded in establishing an achievement testing system that enabled comparisons among students of different grades. Repetition and dropout decreased to some extent during the project period, though the Northeastern states continue to lag behind the rest of the country in learning outcomes . Completion rates also increased during the project period, faster in the Northeast than in the rest of Brazil . More than 62 million textbooks were distributed across the project states; textbooks were evaluated, and teachers were trained in their use . School facilities were successfully improved, although schools in certain municipalities did not benefit to the extent</p>			

expected. A national program to support state management was satisfactorily implemented. Eleven studies on the causes of school failure in the Northeast were carried out, though the use of results is uncertain. The effective components of this project led to the implementation of more successful follow-on projects.

5. Significant Shortcomings (including non-compliance with safeguard policies):

The design was quite unsatisfactory at entry, and the project had initial slow disbursements and several procurement-related problems. The management capacity of the implementing agency proved clearly insufficient for such a complex project. Government commitment was low until about 1997, when a new government paid attention to its implementation. Nevertheless, Bank supervision during the last half of the project was intensive, and outcomes substantially improved.

6. Ratings:	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
Outcome:	Satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Project objectives were only partly achieved; linking global improvements to the project is difficult.
Institutional Dev.:		Modest	
Sustainability:	Likely	Likely	Sustainability for components completed is likely
Bank Performance:	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Despite excellent recent supervision, design and early implementation were flawed and impeded the implementation of a realistic set of objectives.
Borrower Perf.:	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of ICR:		Satisfactory	

NOTE: ICR rating values flagged with '*' don't comply with OP/BP 13.55, but are listed for completeness.

7. Lessons of Broad Applicability:

- Broad objectives with few indicators, particularly in time frames that are not defined, set high implementation expectations but may lead to much more limited results.
- Implementation mechanisms must be developed during project preparation and be ready before effectiveness.
- Bottom-up policies are needed to improve schools in poor areas; projects should work through lower administrative units, such as municipalities.

8. Assessment Recommended? ☐ Yes ☒ No

9. Comments on Quality of ICR:

The overall quality of the ICR is rated as satisfactory --considering this is a core ICR-- but only marginally so. The insufficient evidence available to the Region on outcomes makes it difficult for the reader to be fully convinced of the positive assessment of outcome against objectives. Admittedly, the ICR's deficiency can be partly attributed to the over-ambitious objectives, the excessively complex original project design, and weaknesses in management, monitoring and evaluation, all factors which the ICR describes. However, the unconvincingness is exacerbated because progress on student achievement indicators may not be fully attributable to the project (as the ICR acknowledges) and the related table of proficiency scores is not self-explanatory (the Region subsequently provided clarifications). Since education system changes are linked, convincingness might have been improved if the ICR had drawn together its findings on all component objectives to show how achievements and shortcomings affected overall sector development outcomes (for instance, by explaining the apparent discrepancy between positive student outcomes and the unsatisfactory management and outcomes of teacher training for the subnational level projects).