



1. Project Data:		Date Posted : 04/18/2001	
PROJ ID: P008218		Appraisal	Actual
Project Name: Ve Basic Educ	Project Costs (US\$M)	178.9	80
Country: Venezuela	Loan/Credit (US\$M)	89.4	45.73
Sector(s): Primary Education	Cofinancing (US\$M)	0	0
L/C Number: L3656			
	Board Approval (FY)		94
Partners involved :	Closing Date	06/30/1999	04/30/2000

Prepared by :	Reviewed by :	Group Manager :	Group:

2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The project was intended to help raise the level of student achievement, reduce the incidence of repetition and dropout, and increase graduation rates of basic education through improvements in the quality of education and administrative efficiency. Because education is moving toward being decentralized, another important objective of the project is to help states develop their own capacity for managing the system efficiently . Toward these ends the project attempted to: (a) increase student access to textbooks and other instructional materials; (b) improve teachers' skills and effectiveness in teaching; (c) improve the education management capacity of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and of the State Education Secretariats (SES); and (d) develop MOE's capacity to coordinate and formulate policies, monitor student learning and school quality, and identify bottlenecks and problems at the state and local levels in a timely manner.

b. Components

These were: (a) instructional materials development; (b) teacher training; (c) institutional development; and (d) studies of school effectiveness and educational finance and the identification and design of activities to improve the quality of education.

c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates

The Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) financed at the same time an independent loan of about \$ 250 million for basic education, and implementation capacity to carry out two loans of UA\$ 425 million over four years was clearly inadequate. Therefore, the government canceled a significant proportion of the World Bank loan during implementation in the teacher training and institutional development components .

3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:

Objectives were partly achieved. Textbooks and instructional materials were developed but production targets were not reached. About 113,000 teachers were trained in topics related to the new basic education curriculum . A total of 33 preinvestment studies of secondary education were completed, although the degree to which their data were utilized was unclear. However, the management capacity in the Ministry of Education did not improve to the extent expected, and states did not become better able to allocate resources according to well -defined policy objectives. Levels of dropout and repetition remain high .

4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:

After a slow start during the first three years, substantial progress was achieved in procurement and distribution of textbooks to students and classroom libraries and in inservice teacher training to implement new curriculum . An interactive radio math program was highly satisfactory, with original targets exceeded and with achievement tests demonstrating progress. A traveling lending library for rural areas and a national learning assessment system were also implemented successfully. A management information system was successfully installed . Nevertheless, school improvement grants were not implemented to the degree envisaged .

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

The deterioration of the Venezuelan economy in the 1990s had a negative impact on the financing of the educational system and affected its performance. Government support and local ownership were low during most of the project life, and its various innovations were not championed by school -level personnel. The policy environment for decentralization was frustrated by political change and an unwillingness to devolve authority and ownership to the

state educational directorates. Thus, decisionmaking was not decentralized to the states as originally envisaged. Project management and staff changed frequently both in the government and in the Bank, and thus implementation was delayed. Natural disasters caused severe damage to several areas and cancellation of various activities, including textbook acquisition. Changes in government authorities constrained implementation. The simultaneously financed IDB project saw very little implementation.

6. Ratings:	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
Outcome:	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Objectives were only partly achieved
Institutional Dev.:	Modest	Modest	
Sustainability:	Likely	Likely	
Bank Performance:	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Bank overfinanced the project and failed to take political risks into account
Borrower Perf.:	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	The project was heavily influenced by political factors.
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:

- Program size must be matched to government absorptive capacity and coordinated to harmonize with other efforts, such as a CDF country approach that may avoid competition among donors.
- Design should provide assessment and inputs for capacity building to enhance borrower implementation.
- The introduction of educational innovations may fail if a clear understanding is not developed between teachers, and political leaders on the value of donor financing and upon autonomous assessment of local weaknesses, and needs.
- Project implementers should avoid situations imposed by consultants which may exclude government and stakeholder input; local ownership must be ensured before engaging consultants.

8. Assessment Recommended? Yes No

9. Comments on Quality of ICR:

The ICR focuses on the important issue and offers a clear story. However, little is said about the relations between the World Bank and IDB, which shared a project implementation unit.