



<b>1. Project Data:</b>		<b>Date Posted :</b> 09/21/2004	
<b>PROJ ID:</b> P005501		<b>Appraisal</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Project Name:</b> Social Priorities Program (BAJ): Basic Education	<b>Project Costs (US\$M)</b>	97.70	76.60
<b>Country:</b> Morocco	<b>Loan/Credit (US\$M)</b>	54.00	44.40
<b>Sector(s):</b> Board: ED - Primary education (60%), Other social services (22%), Tertiary education (10%), Adult literacy/non-formal education (5%), Central government administration (3%)	<b>Cofinancing (US\$M)</b>	1.50	1.50
<b>L/C Number:</b> L4024			
	<b>Board Approval (FY)</b>		96
<b>Partners involved :</b> France	<b>Closing Date</b>	12/31/2003	12/31/2003
<b>Prepared by :</b>	<b>Reviewed by :</b>	<b>Group Manager :</b>	<b>Group:</b>
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<b>2. Project Objectives and Components</b>			
<b>a. Objectives</b>			
The objectives of the project (as expressed in para 3.03 of the SAR and para 12 of the President's report) were: (i) to contribute to the government's efforts to boost its educational system in both qualitative and quantitative terms and to make its performance correspond more closely to that in economically comparable countries; and (ii) to strengthen human capital by making education and literacy available to populations that have hitherto been deprived of them. (The first of these objectives is also cited in the loan agreement .) The project was targeted to 13 provinces (which increased to 14 following an administrative restructuring), accounting for the poorest half of the population.			
<b>b. Components</b>			
<b>A - Improving Access to and Retention in Basic Education (Budgeted : US\$43.2 million; Actual : US\$43.3 million)</b>			
This component would expand the supply of basic education by improving school accessibility and coverage . To improve accessibility, the Ministry of National Education (MNE) would establish schools in every rural community that had more than 200 inhabitants and was not already served by a school "reasonably close by." The decision about which schools were "reasonably close" would be entrusted to the provincial planning units . To the extent possible, the MNE would make the newly built schools multi-grade so that schools to rural communities would offer the full basic education course .			
<b>B - Reducing the Gender Gap (Budgeted : US\$14.1 million; Actual : US\$13.5 million)</b>			
This component would specifically target girls by reducing the cost of education to families, upgrading schools, ensuring that whenever possible newly built schools had access to drinkable water and latrines, and fostering community development in operating schools . Two important elements of this component included, on the one hand, the distribution of textbooks and school supplies for disadvantaged children, particularly girls, and, on the other hand, the renovation of school facilities to make it possible to increase girls' attendance.			
<b>C - Improving Education Quality (Budgeted : US\$17.6 million; Actual : US\$14.7 million)</b>			
This component would provide a standard set of instructional materials to each school, test and organize remedial courses for underachievers, set up an "innovation fund" to promote school-based projects, and provide housing for teachers in remote areas (which would complement efforts to devise an improved methodology for multigrade teaching). This component also included: (i) the building of some 180 housing units intended for teachers assigned to remote areas, and (ii) the training of school principals.			
<b>D - Improving Effectiveness of Literacy Programs (Budgeted : US\$2.9 million; Actual : US\$3.7 million)</b>			

This component would support a pilot program designed by Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs (MEAS) to test a new type of literacy campaign, which would strengthen people's motivation to become literate by seeking a field of application for the newly acquired knowledge from the outset.

**E - Capacity Building (Budgeted : US\$1.4 million; Actual : US\$1.0 million)**

The major elements of this component were as follows: (a) preparing a Public Expenditure Program (PEP) for the primary and secondary education sectors, and training the staff of the Office of Statistics, Forecasting, and Planning (DSPP) and of the Ministry of Education in techniques for developing this type of program; (b) carrying out a series of assessments of existing personnel management procedures and providing computerized tools for follow-up and assessment to provincial planning offices (local branches) and; (c) reshaping the methods for establishing lists of schools and regional requirements.

**F - Project Management (Budgeted : US\$0.6 million; Actual : US\$0.4 million)**

This component would support project management and monitoring activities.

**c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates**

The component cost data reported in Annex 2 of the ICR do not match those given in the main text (the latter corresponding to those in the SAR). Appreciation of the dirham and lower than expected unit costs led to savings allowing cancellation of US\$ 8 million. At project close US\$ 1.4 million remained undisbursed and these were also cancelled. (Note the difference between actual and planned loan disbursement is in fact US\$ 9.6 million).

The loan agreement was revised in September 1999 to: (1) restructure by: (a) allocating funds and delegate responsibilities to the provinces to carry out quality of education improvements; (b) eliminating renovation of Koranic schools and funding of mobile libraries; (c) creating a PMU to improve project execution; and (2) fund new activities: (a) distance learning program for teacher training; (b) financial support for informal schools created by civil society; (c) promotion of adult literacy through agreements with NGOs.

**3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:**

**(i) Improve the quantity and quality of education : Moderately satisfactory**

The quantity of schooling objective was exceeded. 2,449 buildings were constructed against the planned 1,370. The target for the number of multi-grade classes (6,358) was also substantially exceeded (10,222 created). The gross enrollment rate rose from 58 percent in 1995/96 to 92 percent in 2000/01, against a target of 86 percent. Whilst quantity was satisfactory, the quality objective appears not to have been met. Many of the outputs were delivered (for example, training reached 82 percent of teachers and 94 percent of principals. 840 housing units for teaching staff were built against a target of 180. However, the desired outcomes were not achieved. The target for improving the girls' retention rate (from 36 percent to 65 percent) fell substantially short, rising by only 6 percentage points, to 42 percent. No information was provided about trends in learning outcomes.

**(ii) Improve human capital and make education and literacy available to populations that have been deprived of them: Moderately satisfactory**

A doubling in the girls' enrolment rate, from 38 to 82.5 percent was a major achievement toward the objective of reducing gender disparities in enrollment. However, there is little evidence provided on literacy and access of the poor. With respect to literacy, the ICR notes that 234,373 persons inscribed in literacy classes between 1998-2001, but no information is provided to show a trend in inscription rates or, more important, an increase in literacy in the population. It is likely that those who benefitted most were populations that had been deprived, since (1) the project was focused in provinces accounting for the bottom half of the country's population (defined in relation to socioeconomic criteria), (2) expansion of education tends to benefit the less well off, as the children of the better off are already in school, and (3) the project targeted resources (textbooks and school supplies) to students from disadvantaged households and girls. No evidence is provided on increases in education outcomes by socioeconomic status in the project area or comparing the latter with the rest of the country. There were many baseline indicators for these provinces in the SAR, but very few are provided in the ICR at project closing to understand trends.

**4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:**

1. Substantial increase in school facilities in poorer regions and a dramatic increase in enrollment rates.
2. Reduction in the gender gap in primary enrollments.
3. Several activities were decentralized to the local level which accelerated the disbursement process, as did using a "proof of services" basis for disbursements for classroom renovation.

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

1. The civil works financed were far in excess of what was planned. The targets were presumably based on detailed

analysis of what was needed and sustainable if the government raised primary spending by 5% annually (SAR). The implications of this over-building in areas with admittedly low population density and few children of school age on operating expenditures and recurrent costs are not discussed in the ICR but are of concern .

2. The amount spent on quality inputs was reduced (equipment from \$16 million to \$13.7 million, training from \$7 million to \$3.6 million), while the civil works component exceeded its targets substantially, raising questions about the impact of the project on the quality of instruction .

3. The last two phases of the Public Expenditure Program (PEP) were not completed by project closing, although the public expenditure analysis is important for understanding the sustainability of project activities .

4. The project claims to have focused on both the demand and supply side . However, the predominant focus was on supply-side activities. Demand-side interventions were limited to providing textbooks and school supplies for selected students. It is not clear whether the elements of the component to reduce the gender gap were gender -specific.

6. Ratings :	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
<b>Outcome :</b>	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	OED rates a project's outcome as moderately satisfactory [a rating which does not exist under the ICR's 4-point rating scale] when it achieves most of its major relevant objectives but with significant shortcomings.
<b>Institutional Dev .:</b>	Modest	Modest	
<b>Sustainability :</b>	Likely	Likely	
<b>Bank Performance :</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Project rated U from 1997-99. Increased supervision following MTR in 1998, but in fact only one mission a year was implemented in subsequent years .
<b>Borrower Perf .:</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
<b>Quality of ICR :</b>		Unsatisfactory	

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

#### 7. Lessons of Broad Applicability:

1. Decentralization. The decentralization of certain activities to the provinces was an innovation for the MNE and was met with unqualified success: the building of the schools was entrusted to the governors, while other activities such as the training of teachers were entrusted to the provincial branch offices of the MNE .

2. Lump-sum disbursements. The use of lump-sum disbursements upon proof of services is a rather uncommon practice and yet, when it is well organized it makes it possible to speed up or to facilitate the implementation of the activities and the pace of the disbursements . Many countries are reluctant or do not have the capacity to pre-fund the activities planned by a project. Such a tool could be used in other projects, as long as the activities or service offered conforms, in advance, to the standards and benchmark criteria agreed upon and examined by the Bank .

3. Stability of the teams in charge of the project . Ideal project teams should stay intact from beginning to end of an operation so as to ensure institutional memory, facilitate contacts, and allow a climate of trust to grow . Yet, changes in project staff are inevitable and planning for management transition is crucial . The planning would guarantee consistency in the manner of changes to the team, as well as ensure continuity . For the BAJ Education project, the teams involved in implementation were not very stable on the part of both the Borrower and the Bank . While on the Bank's side, this phenomenon did not have damaging consequences, on the Borrower 's side, the situation sometimes led to blockages.

4. Synergy at the level of the project teams . The SPP/BAJ program was comprised of three projects . Together they did have an interactive effect and led to greater interaction, such as road construction apparently leading to greater girls' enrollment. But there does not appear to have been substantial interaction in the planning of activities by the three projects. The Bank teams tended to work in their own sector and thus on the separate BAJ projects . The Bank should continue to encourage teams to work together while providing them with the means to do so (create more integrated projects, create inter-sectoral units, etc.).

**8. Assessment Recommended?**  Yes  No

**Why?** To add to growing stock of evidence on quality implications (for good or ill) of rapid primary expansion and of strategies to reduce the gender gap in enrollment in primary education in remote areas .

#### 9. Comments on Quality of ICR:

ICR Quality is rated unsatisfactory overall due to the following significant shortcomings :

1. The ICR mis-identified the project's objectives from the SAR (highlighting instead what amounted to three educational strategies) and failed to provide adequate information on which basis the results of the adult literacy component could be assessed by OED. For example, there is no discussion of the original plan of the MEAS to test a new type of literacy campaign, its outcomes, or whether this was evaluated, as planned.
2. There is no discussion offered of the likely impact of substantially greater-than-planned expansion of access to education on: (a) educational quality; or (b) recurrent costs and financial sustainability.
3. The data in Annex 1 are inaccurate, with multiple typos and repetition, the same indicators listed as both outcomes and outputs, and statistics that don't correspond to what is in the text .
4. Annex 3, on the economic costs and benefits, is a repeat of the SAR, not based on what actually happened . For example, "cost comparison between the two options" is lifted from Annex 6 of the SAR (not 'at the time of writing of the Supervision report'). There is no re-analysis of actual costs nor any discussion of whether the government kept its promise to raise primary expenditure by 5% per year or what the recurrent cost impacts of the civil works (in great excess of what was planned) will be. The discussion of NPV/ERR, cost effectiveness, cost comparisons in section 4.3 is based on data from the SAR.
5. The component cost data in the text include both the base component cost and contingencies, while the actual expenditures reported in Annex 2 of the ICR are the base cost only, creating apparent inconsistencies that should have been explained.