



<b>1. Project Data :</b>
<b>OEDID:</b> L3518
<b>Project ID:</b> P007716
<b>Project Name:</b> Initial Education Project
<b>Country:</b> Mexico
<b>Sector:</b> Other Education
<b>L/C Number:</b> L3518
<b>Partners involved :</b> UNDP, UNICEF
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<b>Group Manager :</b> Roger Slade
<b>Date Posted :</b> 04/10/1998

**2. Project Objectives, Financing, Costs and Components :**  
 This was the first free-standing preschool education project that the Bank financed in any country. It was an innovative approach to help about 1.2 million children (ages 0-4) in poor communities reach their full development potential and become ready for school. Its objective was to improve the quality and efficiency of preschool (initial) education being delivered through state funds and to increase participation of low-income families in the ten poorest Mexican states. The Bank financed: (a) human resources development to upgrade the performance level of staff, increase parental participation, train community educators; (b) educational materials development; and (c) institutional strengthening to enable federal and state implementing agencies to support community participation. It also financed vehicles, furniture, equipment, training activities, and technical assistance.

**3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives :**  
 The project substantially achieved service coverage and staff training objectives . Also, the project trained 492 zone coordinators and 2635 module supervisors, representing 83 percent of the target.

**4. Significant Achievements :**  
 By the time the loan was closed it had served 750,000 children in 23,000 predominantly small and rural communities. The service to children continues, because activities and salaries are financed under the restructured project on a declining basis . However, its quality is uncertain .

**5. Significant Shortcomings :**  
 The project had a slow start due to an agency responsibility transfer, complicated internal procedures, prolonged postponement of decisions, and persistent shortages of counterpart funds . Several preschool educator promoters had outdated skills, and their impact may be questionable . Furthermore, project impact on child development and parents' attitudinal changes towards child-rearing practices have not yet been evaluated. The project did not effectively use technical assistance for studies and cost effectiveness, and institutional capacity to conduct impact evaluations is limited .

<b>6. Ratings:</b>	<b>ICR</b>	<b>OED Review</b>	<b>Reason for Disagreement /Comments</b>
<b>Outcome:</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
<b>Institutional Dev .:</b>	Partial	Modest	
<b>Sustainability:</b>	Uncertain	Likely	

<b>Bank Performance :</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
<b>Borrower Perf .:</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
<b>Quality of ICR :</b>		Satisfactory	

**7. Lessons of Broad Applicability :**

All efforts must be made to obtain budgetary commitments for programs that some see as low priority. Community training programs need appropriate action-oriented methodology rather than lectures. Much still needs to be learned about the best way to provide preschool education. Evaluation studies and knowledge of the appropriate methodology are critical in the case of such extensive programs with high budgetary outlays and somewhat uncertain outcomes.

**8. Audit Recommended?**  Yes  No

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

No cofinancier's report is included.