

IEG

ICR Review

Independent Evaluation Group

1. Project Data:		Date Posted :	02/03/2006	
PROJ ID:	P001015		Appraisal	Actual
Project Name:	Basic Education Support Project	Project Costs (US\$M)	18.82	14.29
Country:	Guinea-Bissau	Loan/Credit (US\$M)	14.3	14.04
Sector(s):	Board: ED - Primary education (70%), Central government administration (20%), Tertiary education (10%)	Cofinancing (US\$M)	3.5	0.0
L/C Number:	C2960			
		Board Approval (FY)		97
Partners involved :	Sida	Closing Date	03/31/2002	06/30/2005
Evaluator:	Panel Reviewer :	Division Manager :	Division :	
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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The objectives were to support the Basic Education Support Program of Guinea -Bissau:

- (i) expand moderately the coverage of basic education by overcoming impediments to school access and student progression in the school system;
- (ii) improve the quality of school inputs and the classroom environment; and
- (iii) improve human and financial resource management in basic education .

b. Components (or Key Conditions in the case of Adjustment Loans):

1. Basic Education Access . (Planned: US\$ 7.97 million, 48% of base cost; Actual: US\$ 8.89 million, 62%). This component had the following sub-components: (i) construction and rehabilitation of classrooms and latrines and provision of school furniture; (ii) improve the Ministry of Education's planning capacity through creation of an Education Management Information System (EMIS); and (iii) promote girls' schooling and education, mainly through construction of separate latrines for girls .

2. Basic Education Quality . (Planned: US\$6.56 million, 39%; Actual: US\$ 2.36 million, 17%). This component had the following sub-components: (i) produce and distribute textbooks and teachers' guides; (ii) establish an innovative in-service teacher training system and sustainable mechanisms of teacher support; and (iii) support pilot initiatives and studies in priority education areas .

3. Education Management . (Planned: US\$ 2.18 million, 13%; Actual: US\$ 3.04 million, 21%). The main activities under this component were making viable a mechanism for the timely payment of teachers' salaries, installing an effective human and financial management system, assessing the MOE structure and organization, gathering the information for further developments in the sector, and supporting the PCU as a direct manager and instrument of technology transfer for the system .

c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

Project implementation was disrupted by civil war (1998) and a coup (2003), and a teacher strike (2003) which closed schools for much of the school year (all students repeated that year). The project closing date was extended twice in response to these disruptions .

The cofinancier (Sida) withdrew its funding after the war, making zero contribution to the project . Government

counterpart funding was also negligible (US\$0.25 million of a planned US\$0.76 million), so that virtually all project costs were met from the Bank financing. Final project expenditure was US\$4.4 million short of that originally planned. This shortfall fell entirely on the second component from which a number of activities were cut. Whilst expenditure on component three exceeded the planned amount, much of this was for teacher salaries and arrears.

To help end the strike it was decided to allocate project resources (totaling US\$1.5 million) to paying arrears in teacher salaries and for current salary payments.

3. Relevance of Objectives & Design :

The objectives and design were relevant and remain relevant. The design had modest objectives with respect to expansion, but the abolition of fees in 2000 (associated with HIPC completion point, not this project) resulted in far greater numbers attending school. The neglect of learning outcomes under the quality objective was a shortcoming in the relevance of design.

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy) :

1. Basic Education Access : High.

The gross enrollment rate (GER) rose from 53% to 97% (against a target of 63%). Repetition reduced from 35% to around 15% (against target of 26%). (311 classrooms, 90 latrines, 54 teachers' residences and 40 wells have been built and equipped, and a further 120 classrooms are to be completed. The total of 431 classrooms compares with target of 266. Approximately 600 classrooms have been furnished).

2. Basic Education Quality : Substantial.

Over 90% of schools have textbooks (85% of students were reached in each of two rounds of textbook distribution); other teaching materials also distributed. All teachers have received teacher training.

The government decided not to undertake the two pilot studies originally identified under this component - one on a borrow-and-return textbook experience and one on a rental service scheme for secondary students. The studies became irrelevant when the government made the policy decision to distribute free textbooks and teaching materials to the schools. The government also decided to cut back on the number of pilot projects implemented through NGOs.

3. Education Management : Negligible.

Other than activities with the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) most activities in support of this component were not carried out, or only partially carried out. Even when implemented, impact was low because of discontinuities on the side of government.

5. Efficiency :

The first two components realized their output targets within budget. Time delays were caused by external factors which delayed the effective starting of the project. During implementation a second model of school construction, using NGOs was developed, which built schools more quickly, with a higher completion rate, and at about half the unit cost of companies (but with lower quality according to MOE staff). Efficiency is rated as Satisfactory.

6. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization:

M&E was the responsibility of the MOE directorates responsible for implementation of the project components. Overall M&E was the responsibility of the Project Steering Committee and Project Management Committee. The government was to contribute its own evaluation of the project to the ICR, but no thought seems to have been given to a more in depth evaluation, and no data were collected to monitor learning outcomes.

Due to the various problems already described, the PCU took responsibility for implementation of most components. Its M&E system appears to have functioned well, and the ICR is able to report a wide range of indicators (but comments that M&E output was not used effectively in project management).

7. Other (Safeguards, Fiduciary, Unintended Impacts--Positive & Negative):

None.

8. Ratings :	ICR	ICR Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
Outcome :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Institutional Dev .:	Negligible	Negligible	see section 9 below
Sustainability :	Unlikely	Unlikely	see section 9 below
Bank Performance :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Borrower Perf .:	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	
Quality of ICR :		Satisfactory	

NOTES:

- When insufficient information is provided by the Bank for IEG to arrive at a clear rating, IEG will downgrade the relevant ratings as warranted beginning July 1, 2006.
- ICR rating values flagged with ' * ' don't comply with OP/BP 13.55, but are listed for completeness.

9. Lessons:

The project has generated a number of lessons that can be applied to future projects in countries with fragile states:

- NGO Partnership program. The decision to reach outside of the traditional public sector institutions to assist with the delivery of the project was an important adjustment to the originally conceived project design . The initiative has helped build capacity among the NGO sector, provided an important learning experience for the government in understanding the capacities of the various NGOs in the education sector and how they can be effectively used, and has built a broader network of development actors in the field of education who can be called upon again to assist where government capacity may be weak .
- Risk Assessment. It is very difficult for a sector project to be implemented and to achieve its outcomes in a post conflict country if there is no sustained commitment from the Government . In the case of Guinea-Bissau, the level of risk was obviously very high even once order and peace were restored in late 1999. The undertaking of a serious, detailed risk assessment by the country team would have probably help to steer the project in a more sustainable path and/ or to find other strategies to support a failing education sector .
- Preserving Investments in Institutional Capacity . As the project draws to a close, it is evident that much of the hands-on experience and formal capacity training that has been directed at the PCU over the years of the project will now be lost. This loss is particularly acute in a post-conflict country such as Guinea Bissau where the conflict has weakened public administration and a unit such as the PCU represents the sole organ that remained operational throughout the years of turbulence . A potential solution would be to build in a transition strategy for the PCU itself at project inception to evolve the organization into an NGO or Foundation at the end of the project . As this situation became evident Bank staff could have given thought to a transitional arrangement to cover the gap between its own projects in the sector .
- Sustainability Plan. In a post-conflict environment where the Ministry of Education cannot pay teacher salaries, alternative arrangements need to be considered for any investments requiring recurrent cost financing . For instance, the investments made in the teacher resources centers suffer from lack of funds for electricity, toner, paper, technical support, etc. Additionally the resources for teacher travel and inspector travel to the centers are lacking. A solution that the PCU had begun to investigate during the ICR mission was to partner with a Portuguese NGO focused on promotion of Portuguese language to assume responsibility for the management and maintenance of the centers
- Stronger Incentives Structure . While payment of salaries is always a strong incentive, the system lacks other basic non-monetary incentives to motivate its public servants . Training seminars could incorporate some type of certificate or recognition for those teachers who attended these sessions . Implementing a clearer career path which encourages professional development, may provide an additional incentive for teachers to attend training workshops and implement these lessons in the classroom . Particular incentives also need to be developed for maintenance for textbooks and classrooms .
- Restructuring of Project. In retrospect, the project should have been restructured after the conflict to more clearly delineate the revised scope of the project from one laying the foundation for a follow up project to one that simply helped to keep the system together in a post-conflict environment. This restructuring would have given the Bank and the task team a clearer mandate for assisting the government with issues such as payment of teacher arrears.

10. Assessment Recommended? Yes No

11. Comments on Quality of ICR:

The ICR gives a good account of the project and its circumstances .