



1. Project Data:		Date Posted : 06/10/2002	
PROJ ID: P008171		Appraisal	Actual
Project Name: Basic Education Quality Improvement Project	Project Costs (US\$M)	45.00	44.77
Country: Uruguay	Loan/Credit (US\$M)	31.50	31.25
Sector(s): Board: ED - Primary education (39%), General public administration sector (30%), Pre-primary education (21%), Tertiary education (6%), Other social services (4%)	Cofinancing (US\$M)		
L/C Number: L3729; LP194			
	Board Approval (FY)		94
Partners involved :	Closing Date	06/30/2001	06/30/2001

Prepared by :	Reviewed by :	Group Manager :	Group:
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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The Project aimed to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of the primary education system; expand the preschool coverage in poor areas and enhance the quality of preschool education to increase primary school preparedness and reduce repetition in the first two grades of primary school; and enhance sector productivity and strengthen overall sectoral management.

b. Components

The three major components were: (a) improving the efficiency, quality and equity of primary education through: (i) increasing the availability of textbooks, reading and instructional materials and teachers' libraries, (ii) financing the design and implementation of school-based quality improvement sub-projects; (iii) in-service teacher training; (iv) establishing a standardized student cognitive assessment system; and (v) repairing and maintaining primary school buildings; (b) expanding preschool education access and improving the quality through construction and rehabilitation of pre-schools, , provision of learning materials, teacher training, articulation between pre-school and first grade, and evaluating the effects of pre-school education; and (c) strengthening education institutions and increasing their efficiency through (i) creating a unit to manage the Student Cognitive Assessment System, another to monitor the purchase and distribution of textbooks and other instructional materials; (ii) development of a Management Information System; (iii) development of operational manuals and guidelines, and training of sector managers and analysts; (iv) provision of vehicles to 20 departmental inspectorates; and (v) conduct of a sector management study and implementing recommendations.

c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates

The project was financed by IBRD (70%), and the Government (30%, and disbursed 99.5% by the closing date, having achieved the majority of its targets. Although there were cost over-runs for the construction and rehabilitation of primary school classrooms and the institutional strengthening, these were financed by reallocations from activities where costs were lower than estimated.

3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:

Attainment of the project objectives was satisfactory. Results of the Student Cognitive Assessments of 6th grade students indicate that the percentage of students whose performance was deemed satisfactory increased from 35% in 1996 to 41% in 1999 in math and from 57% to 61% in language at the same time. Satisfactory performance in schools considered very disadvantaged increased in the same period from 37% to 47% in language and from 17% to 28% in math. With the expansion of preschool facilities, enrollment of disadvantaged four-year-old children more

than doubled. Although there were increases in enrollment at the pre-school and primary levels, the projected reductions in repetition rates and decreases in student - teacher ratios did not occur. Repetition rates for primary grades declined only from 12% to 10% between 1996 and 1999. A social promotion policy was proposed in 1999 but this was not applied universally. The practice of assigning the best qualified teachers to the most favorable economic areas continues to have a negative impact on teaching quality and equity. The Measurement Unit of Educational Achievement is expected to investigate these issues further.

4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:

Access to pre-school education increased significantly from 51% in 1994 to 93% by 2000. In poor areas, the increase was from 22% to 57% for four-year-olds, and from 52% to 85% for five-year-olds. Approximately 4.2 million textbooks were developed and distributed, exceeding the target by (68%). Grants (931, 16% in excess of the target) made through Education Improvement Projects (PMEs) had a positive impact on 250,000 students, 54% of whom were in high risk schools. The grants contributed to improved school planning and management capabilities, and promoted community participation. The establishment of the Student Cognitive Achievement Unit not only has ensured that data on student performance are available for teachers and policy makers, but also has served to promote a culture of evaluation in the school system. Several units created under the project- PMEs, the units on Textbooks, learning Materials and Libraries, and the Student Cognitive Achievement Unit have been institutionalized.

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

The MIS did not fully achieve its revised objective to automatize administrative tasks at the school level, primarily because staff were not trained adequately to use the system. While teacher training targets were exceeded in terms of numbers trained, the duration of training was too brief (4 hours), too many trainers were involved resulting in inconsistencies in content. The ad hoc approach did not result in the adoption of new teaching skills. An autonomous implementation unit expedited start-up operations, but its mechanisms differed from those of the Primary Education County and initially made cooperation difficult, creating distrust and delaying implementation.

6. Ratings :	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
Outcome :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Institutional Dev .:	Substantial	Substantial	
Sustainability :	Highly Likely	Likely	Need to put mechanisms in place for newly acquired skills to be utilized at classroom level.
Bank Performance :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Borrower Perf .:	Highly Satisfactory	Highly 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:

- Stakeholder involvement during the preparation and design phase promotes ownership, a key factor for effective implementation. This involvement should continue during the entire project cycle in order to avoid implementation delays and negative outcomes.
- Project Implementation Units which are not fully integrated into the system can lead to stakeholder distrust and lack of support for implementation activities.
- Ad hoc, short term, one-off teacher training is ineffective. In- service teacher training programs must be based on students learning needs', and continuous in order for teachers to acquire and implement the required knowledge and skills in the classroom.
- School improvement projects planned and managed at the school level serve not only to improve school quality but also to improve the capacity to plan and manage, and promote community involvement.
- The implementation of financial transfers to schools can be made less cumbersome if they are considered to be grants rather than sub-projects.
- Training and technical support are vital for the effective establishment and functioning of a management information system.

8. Assessment Recommended? Yes No

Why? Despite considerable efforts, educational achievements have been rather limited . No other education projects have been assessed in Uruguay .

9. Comments on Quality of ICR:

The ICR is comprehensive and well documented, providing useful insights on project implementation.