



<b>1. Project Data:</b>		<b>Date Posted :</b> 05/03/2004	
<b>PROJ ID:</b> P058770		<b>Appraisal</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Project Name :</b> Improving Learning In Primary Schools (LIL)	<b>Project Costs (US\$M)</b>	5.52	3.26
<b>Country:</b> Mali	<b>Loan/Credit (US\$M)</b>	3.81	2.31
<b>Sector(s):</b> Board: ED - Primary education (63%), Sub-national government administration (20%), Adult literacy/non-formal education (17%)	<b>Cofinancing (US\$M)</b>	1.35	0.73
<b>L/C Number:</b> C3318			
	<b>Board Approval (FY)</b>		00
<b>Partners involved :</b> Government of the Netherlands	<b>Closing Date</b>	06/30/2003	06/30/2003
<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 overall objective of the Project (a Learning and Innovation Loan) was to further develop and assess the merits of bilingual education in Mali in terms of its financial and educational sustainability .			
<b>b. Components</b>			
1. Learning to implement bilingual education in primary schools (\$2.38 million);			
2. Testing Family/School/Community Partnerships (\$0.63 million);			
3. Decentralizing the Education System (\$0.48)			
4. Strengthening implementation capacity for project management and implementation (\$0.32)			
<b>c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates</b>			
The project only disbursed 61 percent of the planned IDA credit amounts, with the percent disbursed for Component 1 and 4 being near 75%, Component 2 around 44%, and Component 3 zero. About 61% of planned government contributions were made and about 54% of planned Government of Netherlands funds disbursed . Low disbursement in Component 2 resulted from early resistance to school-level structural change ideas and related delays in implementation; zero disbursement in component 3 reflects the Government's lack of planning and readiness for decentralization, and the poor integration of this component with the goals and other features of the Project effectiveness was delayed 6 months, meaning a shorter implementation period than expected, but a decision was made not to extend the Project, since follow-up Project, a Sector Investment Program, was already launched by the time of the LIL's closing date.			
<b>3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:</b>			
The bilingual education model in Mali ( <i>pedagogie convergente</i> , or <i>PC</i> ) was successfully introduced into 2056 public and community school classrooms (not clear how many schools*), new learning materials were created in six native languages, and 5600 teachers were trained in bilingual education and active learning methods . Although financial and educational sustainability were never defined, results seem to justify further expansion of the system . For example, there is considerably less repetition and drop out in <i>pedagogie convergente</i> schools compared to traditional ones (repetition: 3.7% vs 18.1% and drop out: 1.6% compared to 5.7%, respectively), meaning significant reductions in cost per graduate (about 21%). Also, student examination results (not fully described - see below) seem to show <i>PC</i> 5th grade students performing somewhat better than traditional school students in the same regions in mathematics and at the same level in French, even though the schools where <i>pedagogie convergent</i> is implemented (mostly rural areas) are significantly less advantaged than traditional schools . Education sustainability might also be based on the existence of textbooks and community support : for the former the project pioneered participatory modes of textbook production and contributed to the creation of 80 new titles in six native languages (over 500,000 books); for the latter it organized information campaigns geared at improved community acceptance of native language instruction in 49 subregions (out of ?), and piloted the creation of school-community partnerships (through			

school management committees) in four regions (although proposed grants to start a revolving fund were not disbursed). The Project's plans to improve local accountability, decentralization and results -oriented management systems did not materialize.

\*The ICR indicate that also 2056 schools were reached, but this would imply only one classroom per school .

#### 4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:

1. Improved internal efficiency in schools implementing transitional bilingual education;
2. Revised curriculum incorporating the bilingual education approach and more active learning, accompanied by native language textbooks created in a participatory manner;
3. Student performance in Maths and French among PC students (preliminary findings) which is roughly equivalent or slightly higher than traditional school students even though their schools are generally less advantaged;
4. A corps of teachers who have received initial training in and are committed to transitional bilingual education;
5. Increased support for use of native languages primary schools among parents and communities, and a greater sense of partnership among stakeholders at the school level in pilot areas (although stronger evidence for these outcomes would have been desirable);
6. Strong potential for sustainability given the overlap of this Project with a new Sector Investment Program, which has built upon many of the Project's innovations and accomplishments .

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

1. Poor design of Component 3 (decentralization and results-based management), which was poorly integrated with Project objectives and other features;
2. Poorly designed (or poorly presented) evidence of the impact of transitional bilingual education and active learning strategies (*pedagogie convergent*) on student learning outcomes (missing crucial information about sample sizes and locations and significance levels);
3. Lack of data on the match between language background of teachers and that of students and the school community -- presumably a precondition for the successful implementation of a policy of mother -tongue instruction;
4. Lack of data on distribution of native language textbooks to schools implementing *pedagogie convergent*;
5. Delays and management inefficiencies leading to underspending by 40%.

6. Ratings :	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
<b>Outcome :</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
<b>Institutional Dev .:</b>	Substantial	Substantial	
<b>Sustainability :</b>	Likely	Likely	
<b>Bank Performance :</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
<b>Borrower Perf .:</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
<b>Quality of ICR :</b>		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:

1. Government ownership of the concept of transitional bilingual education and commitment to this cause, despite poor funding and some resistance in government and the community, is slowly transforming an education system in which most children had been doomed to failure due to their lack of French language ability;
2. Learning in one's native language reduces levels of student drop -out and repetition, and thus improves the internal efficiency of education; however, since unit costs are initially higher, governments must be able to act strategically, paying more in the short run for added savings and benefits a few years later;
3. In a multilingual environment where there are relatively few dominant native languages, large coverage can be gained by focusing on them (in Mali the use of 4 national languages covers about 80 percent of primary school students); this could be an example for other countries in the region;
4. The impact of transitional bilingual programs on learning gains should be documented with firm evidence in which well defined treatment and control groups are tested and results compared to baseline performance . A well funded and trained M&E unit should be set up to do this from the beginning (i.e., involved in the design process). Lacking such evidence in the short term, Government sponsors and advocates should bring other evidence to bear (including qualitative data and/or studies by universities or NGOs);
5. Teachers who have been trained and supported in implementing transitional bilingual education and active learning can become champions for this approach to basic education and catalysts for change among their colleagues; however, short one-off training sessions are not sufficient to allow a new educational approach to take root;
6. Learning and Innovations Loans can deepen a reform process and effectively lay the ground work for the technical features of larger sector investment programs .

8. **Assessment Recommended?** ☒ Yes ☐ No

**Why?** As part of a future cluster assessment including the still ongoing sector investment project .

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

Generally clear and comprehensive, but certain kinds of evidence could have been better presented (student learning comparisons, impact of media campaign, increased community involvement in pilot sites ).