



1. Project Data:		Date Posted : 03/06/2002	
PROJ ID : P009560		Appraisal	Actual
Project Name : Non-formal Education Project	Project Costs (US\$M)	50.19	37.71
Country : Bangladesh	Loan/Credit (US\$M)	10.5	7.9
Sector(s) : Board: ED - Adult literacy/non-formal education (91%), Central government administration (5%), Sub-national government administration (4%)	Cofinancing (US\$M)		
L/C Number : C2822			
	Board Approval (FY)		96
Partners involved : Asian Development Bank, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	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			
<p>The Nonformal Education Project assisted the government's efforts to achieve Education for All by improving and expanding nonformal education (NFE) to reach illiterate young adults, particularly females. Specifically, the project was to strengthen NFE by: (a) assisting in the institutionalization of the Integrated Nonformal Education Program into a Directorate of NFE staffed by qualified personnel able to function in related tasks such as planning, training, monitoring, and evaluation; and (b) expanding and improving NFE programs to reach an estimated 2.5 million learners of the targeted age group through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and the local district administration. The larger goal is to make 34 million learners literate through a series of projects.</p>			
b. Components			
<p>These were: (a) institutional development and (b) expansion and improvement of nonformal education: literacy classes and quality improvement (research, evaluation of training programs, curricula and materials, teacher training).</p>			
c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates			
<p>The project was supported by multiple donors. The lead donor was the Asian Development Bank. IDA cofinanced US\$10.5 million equivalent. The Swiss Development Cooperation contributed US\$3.8 million. The project disbursed most of its collective funds and closed on schedule.</p>			
3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:			
<p>Overall the project objectives were achieved. A total of 2.9 million learners in 32 districts (57% female) participated in literacy programs, and it is estimated that 90% of participants completed the courses and passed a test with an average score of 69.5%. The target of 2.5 million learners was surpassed. About 50% of the graduates are estimated to have acquired sustained literacy skills. (A 50% rate is commonly encountered in literacy programs.)</p>			
4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:			
<p>A directorate of Nonformal Education was established, as planned, and staff received useful training. The too rapid expansion of different NFE programs strained the capacity of the Directorate; there were initial delays, internal conflicts, and staff turnover was high. The pace of implementation picked up, however, and numerical targets of learners were exceeded. The directorate is now capable of planning and managing large and complex literacy programs. Overall, the government showed commitment, ownership, and good performance during project preparation and implementation. Several individuals showed much personal dedication. The actual literacy work was carried out by 264 NGOs that met financial and instructional criteria. The institutional capacity of these NGOs also increased as a result of the project. Contract staff trained trainers and monitored outcomes.</p>			
5. Significant Shortcomings (including non-compliance with safeguard policies):			

The National Council for Primary and Mass Education, that was to determine policies and coordinate activities with the Ministry of Primary Education, met only once in the five years of project implementation; the various governmental and nongovernmental agencies (NGOs) did not participate in policy formulation as expected at appraisal, and a lower-level council might have been more effective. Weak procurement capacity led to some inordinate delays. The detailed monitoring envisaged did not take place, partly because the logistics proved too complex and staff-intensive; thus information about effects on learners (particularly women) was rather limited. Though NGOs gave achievement tests which showed overall satisfactory performance, the sustainability of literacy skills is unknown. Envisaged studies started late and were not completed during the project period. The project was also affected by the disastrous floods of 1998, which disrupted program delivery for about 6 months.

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

- Government commitment, vision, and a clear strategy increase the probability of carrying out complex and difficult projects.
- A robust assessment of institutional capacity and a clear understanding of additional resources required increase the probability that a complex project will be carried out within the expected time frame.
- Large, multi-member oversight councils may not be effective in meeting regularly and actually formulating policy.
- Systematic monitoring and formative evaluation of non-formal education programs are essential. Where a project specifically targets female education, appropriate performance indicators should be incorporated to monitor progress towards this objective, e.g., training and hiring female teachers, and designing relevant curriculum.

8. Assessment Recommended? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Why? The performance of literacy projects has not been assessed before. Important lessons may be found for dissemination in this difficult sub-sector.

9. Comments on Quality of ICR:

The ICR is clear and comprehensive, but could have expanded lessons for this important subsector of education.