

Ex Post-Evaluation Brief India: Boarding Schools, Rajasthan



Programme/Client	Boarding schools, Rajasthan – 1996 66 249*	
Programme executing agency	Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DSJE) and the Rajasthan Residential Educational Institutions Society (RREIS)	
Year of sample/ex post evaluation report: 2012/2012		
	Appraisal (planned)	Ex post-evaluation (actual)
Investment costs (total)	Initial commitment: EUR 11.6 million Additional financing: EUR 5.6 million	EUR 16.6 million
Counterpart contribution (company)	Initial commitment: EUR 2.4 million Additional financing: EUR 1.5 million	EUR 3.4 million
Funding, of which budget funds (BMZ)	Initial commitment: EUR 9.2 million Additional financing: EUR 4.1 million	EUR 13.2 million

* random sample

Project description: This FC project aimed to help improve primary and secondary school education for children - especially girls - from underprivileged castes (identified by government authorities as Scheduled Castes, or SC), native peoples (Scheduled Tribes, or ST) and other disadvantaged population groups (Other Backward Classes, OBC) in remote areas of Rajasthan. To achieve this objective, financing was provided to build ten boarding schools (six for girls and four for boys) for Years 6-12 and to equip them with furniture and educational supplies. The project agency was the Government of Rajasthan's *Department of Social Welfare*, or DoSW (which was renamed the *Department of Social Justice and Empowerment*, or DSJE) in 2004, working in collaboration with the *Rajasthan Residential Educational Institutions Society (RREIS)*.

Objectives: The aim was to improve the primary and secondary school education offer to particularly disadvantaged groups by building and equipping boarding schools - with two thirds of places reserved for girls - in remote areas of Rajasthan. This was expected to lead to an increase in successful educational participation among SCs, STs and OBCs, both at primary school (Years 6-8) and secondary school (Years 9-12). It was also intended to help reduce the educational disadvantage faced by girls.

Target group: Children and young people of compulsory school age from low-income families coming from SC, ST and *Other Backward Classes* backgrounds in Rajasthan, their group identities being determined in accordance with a definition laid down by the Department of Social Welfare. *First generation learner* applicants were to be given preference in the selection process, with due consideration for the greater difficulty these groups encounter in accessing secondary education. The ten boarding schools have a total capacity of 5,600 school places per year, of which 4,924 were occupied in the 2011/12 school year. It was intended that two-thirds of project beneficiaries would be girls.

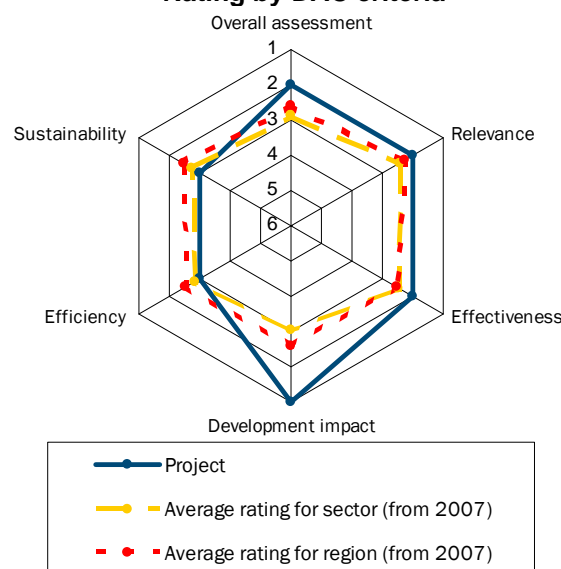
Overall rating: 2

As called for in the appraisal report, examination results in all the schools are considerably better than the average in Rajasthan, and so the indicator has been exceeded.

This is all the more remarkable given that in many of the schools there is a shortage of teachers, which in some cases leads to under-utilisation of capacity in terms of pupil numbers.

Of note: Because of the success of this FC project, the project agency is replicating this model and using its own funds to build ten new boarding schools for children from disadvantaged population groups in Rajasthan.

Rating by DAC criteria



EVALUATION SUMMARY

Overall rating: The overall rating for the project is “good” (Rating: 2). Individual aspects have been assessed as follows:

Relevance: The project pursued the developmentally important objective of improving access to primary and secondary school education (MDG 2) for the children of scheduled castes and native peoples (SC/ST). In terms of its objective framework, the project therefore conformed to the priorities of the Indian Government at the time of appraisal, which were to ensure free access to education for every child aged from 6 to 14 and, as part of that process, to allow children from disadvantaged population groups such as SCs and STs to receive special support. In its education policy the Rajasthan Government followed central government guidelines. At the time of project appraisal, it promoted access to primary education for SC/ST children through two semi-public projects which were supported by SIDA (of Sweden) - the Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) and the Lok Jumbish Project (LJP). This objective continues to enjoy high priority, as demonstrated, to take one example, by the second financing phase of the national educational programme “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan” (SSA), which aims to achieve “universalization of elementary education” by 2013 and has USD 6 billion of Indian Government support. The World Bank and other donors are cofinancing the programme with a further USD 1 billion. This programme also has a special focus on SC and ST children. Since the FC project aimed at providing access to the senior years of primary and secondary school education (ages 12-18) for these disadvantaged sections of the population, it complemented the government programme in Rajasthan in a meaningful fashion, and fitted well into regional and overarching programmes. However, education neither was nor is a priority area of German FC with India, and there was no follow-up phase to the project. As a result, the exchange of information and practical coordination with other donors active in the education area was rather weak, both at regional and national levels.

Overall, the core problem was correctly identified and an appropriate plan was put in place: supporting the children of disadvantaged population groups in remote areas of Rajasthan by providing them with access to boarding school. Rajasthan is one of India’s federal states. It has a high proportion of SC/STs in its population¹ and fares particularly poorly compared to other states in educational indices, so intervention here made good sense. The cause and effect chain of effects on which the project was based was, in principle, logically sound. From the current perspective, we would seek to achieve a higher level of educational participation by SC/ST groups in the same way.

The project agency is currently replicating this successful FC project by building ten new boarding schools for children from disadvantaged population groups and financing this out

¹ The SC population in Rajasthan amounts to 17.2%, slightly above the average for India of 16.2%. The proportion of STs in Rajasthan is 12.6%, considerably higher than the average for India of 8.2% (both figures from the 2001 Census).

of its own funds. This provides further evidence that the topic is still highly relevant and that the overall project plan made good sense. Project relevance has therefore been assessed as good. Sub-Rating: 2

Effectiveness: The project objective was “to raise the level of successful educational participation – especially among girls - by *SCs/STs* and *Other Backward Classes (OBCs)* in primary schools (Years 6-8) and secondary schools (Years 9-12) in Rajasthan”.

The following indicators were used to measure progress towards the project objective:

- Indicator PO 1: The *dropout rate* for Years 6-10 is no higher than 8%, and the drop-out rate for Years 11-12 is no higher than 10%.
- Indicator PO 2: *Capacity utilisation* in Year 6 (the start of boarding school) is at least 85% in each school in the first three years of operation, and 95% from the fourth year of operation on.
- Indicator PO 3a The proportion of girls in the beneficiary target group should be two thirds as a minimum.

Indicator PO 1: This indicator was exceeded, both for Years 6-10 and for Years 11-12. Between 2008/09 and 2011/12, the average dropout rate in Years 6-10 for all ten FC-financed schools was only 1.1%. The main reason for dropping out during this phase was the transfer to a school nearer the parental home because of homesickness. The average dropout rate in Years 11-12 for all ten schools over the period from 2008/09 to 2011/12 was 4.5%. Reportedly, the main cause of senior students leaving is the transfer to another school due to a lack of specialist subject teachers at the FC-financed school.

Indicator PO 2: Across the ten boarding schools, capacity utilisation (based on pupil numbers) in Year 6 over the last four years averaged around 90%. It is worth noting that capacity utilisation has fallen in the current 2011/12 school year to just under 83%, and so the trend is downwards. Excluding the 2011/2012 figure, average capacity utilisation was 93%, which almost meets the indicator. The project agency explained the current drop in utilisation as follows. Starting with the current school year, pupils must not only come from poorer SC, ST, or OBC families; they must also demonstrate that they are living below the poverty line, (i.e. be classed as “BPL”). It is said that the usual invitations to apply for school which appear in the local press do not adequately reach the target group of SCs, STs, OBCs and BPLs, because many of the parents of these children are illiterate.

Indicator PO 3a: To date, the proportion of girls among beneficiaries amounts to roughly 64%, a level which almost meets the indicator.

According to the project appraisal report, the target group comprised children and young people of compulsory school age from low-income families in Rajasthan classed as *SC*, *ST* or *Other Backward Classes (OBC)*. The project reached its target group, with a total of

26,900 pupils since 2006/07: all of the schools only admit children from families from the SC, ST and OBC groups.

The first indicator was clearly exceeded, and achievement against the second and third indicators fell only a little short of target. On the whole, the project reached its target group effectively. On this basis, effectiveness has been assessed overall as good. Sub-Rating: 2

Efficiency: Implementation, which had been scheduled in the appraisal report for the fourth quarter of 1997, did not begin until November 1998. These delays were caused firstly by disagreements over tendering and contract award procedures, and secondly by the preparations for, and the process of, the Indian parliamentary elections, which involved the ministries concerned and delayed contract signature. During project implementation further delays arose, caused by the insolvency of the implementation consultant and lengthy political negotiations over the provision of building land. As a result of these delays and unfavourable movements in the exchange rate, additional FC financing of EUR 4.1 million became necessary in 2002. Moreover, this was accompanied by a reduction in the number of schools from 12 to 10. Following project completion, remaining funds were deployed for purposes which included extending the educational age range of the boys' schools up to Year 12 and the provision of initial financing (gradually reducing over time) for the maintenance budget.

At EUR 13.3 million in all, the FC share of the funding amounted to 84% of the total costs of EUR 16.7 million. Construction costs for the boarding schools were roughly INR 200,000 (~ EUR 3,000) per pupil. Per-capita construction costs for a comparable boarding school built with government funding around the same time came to roughly INR 110,000 (~ EUR 1,700). If one takes into account that the buildings funded by FC are of a better quality - and the reduction in maintenance expenditure this brings - as well as the comprehensive range of facilities provided for the schools (laboratory apparatus, more spacious dormitories, a sick bay, a sports field, and initial financing for maintenance work), these costs are broadly appropriate.

All the boarding schools are operational and, dependent on capacity utilisation at the individual school, their premises are in almost continuous use. The buildings are generally in good condition, although on an individual basis they are being maintained to varying standards, with causes for complaint generally being of a minor nature (e.g. taps and toilet doors out of order, broken tiles, etc.).

In relation to allocative efficiency it is worth highlighting that the project extended the national programme of primary education for SCs/STs to include secondary education, and in the process it guaranteed access to the very poorest within the target group (BPLs). This not only contributed to equality of opportunity, it also created the conditions necessary to raise the proportion of the target group employed in academic professions. With regard to the difficulty of recruiting an adequate number of teachers, especially in the outlying re-

gions, the schools have managed by using alternative options (e.g. direct recruitment), and the key issue of additional financial incentives is now being addressed. This also illustrates the interest which the project agency clearly takes in these educational establishments.

Due to the delays and the rather high production costs, efficiency has been assessed as no higher than satisfactory. Sub-Rating: 3

Overarching developmental impact: The overall objective stated in the appraisal report was to make a contribution to improving primary and secondary education for particularly disadvantaged population groups in Rajasthan and help dismantle the educational disadvantage faced by girls from the groups receiving support. However, from the present perspective three of the indicators set to measure progress towards the project objective would now be seen as overall objective indicators. These are:

- Indicator OO 1: 70% of pupils pass the *examinations* set by the Government of Rajasthan at the end of Year 10.
- Indicator OO 2: 60% of pupils pass the *examinations* set by the Government of Rajasthan at the end of Year 12.
- Indicator OO 3: The proportion of girls who pass the *examinations* set by the Government of Rajasthan at the end of Years 10 and 12 is at least as high as in comparable schools.

These indicators were used during ex-post evaluation.

Indicator OO 1: The rate of examination passes at the end of Year 10 has continuously improved since the boarding schools opened, and the average for all ten schools over the last three years stands at 94%. As a comparison, the average for Rajasthan over the same period of time was 73.5%. Hence this indicator (70%) was exceeded. Bearing in mind that under the Indian system grades 1-3 denote passes, the majority of girls in the schools which were visited emerged with grades of “good” (2) or “very good” (1). Moreover, in the last three years not a single school has fallen below the required 70% level. The number of pupils taking examinations has averaged 74 (with 80 being the highest), which is also pleasingly high.

Indicator OO 2: The rate of examination passes at the end of Year 12 has averaged 98.7% over the last three years. This is even better than the results for Year 10, and far better than required by the indicator. The average for Rajasthan over the same time period was 87.9%. Here too the indicator (60%) was well exceeded.

An overarching objective of the project was, through promoting their successful participation in education, to raise the proportion of SC/ST school graduates working in the civil service and in teaching. Under a positive discrimination programme there are agreed quotas for SCs/STs in these areas, but at the time of project appraisal these places were not being

filled due to a lack of secondary school graduates. However, no indicator was formulated for this in the project proposal. To date we have no information on any increase in the proportion of SCs/STs in these professions. However, surveys of graduates from the boarding schools show that the overwhelming majority are studying at present, and that pupils in Years 11 and 12 also plan to enter further education. Through this FC project, the government programme to promote disadvantaged population groups (SSA) was extended to include Years 9-12. This has not only resulted in more first generation learners - two thirds of them girls - having access to secondary school education, it has also created the conditions that will enable girl pupils to enter better paid professions later on. Furthermore, the fact that there were only two boarding schools for the target group before the project started and the project agency is now planning to build a further ten boarding schools for disadvantaged population groups modelled on the concept of this FC project indicates that the project has indeed initiated structural change.

Indicator OO 3: The completion rate for Year 10 pupils in the six girls' boarding schools over the last three years has averaged 94.1%, compared with 93.3% in the boys' boarding schools. At the end of Year 12, the average completion rate for girls was 97.9% and that for boys 96.0%. Hence this indicator has also been met.

Since target values for the objective were exceeded by a significant margin, the project's overarching developmental impact has been assessed as very good. Sub-Rating: 1

Sustainability: At the start of the project, the project agency committed to providing 2.5% of the cost of building the schools every year for maintenance purposes. However, after initial financing (which had been provided on a gradually reducing basis out of FC funds) ran out in 2008/09 fiscal year, the Government of Rajasthan did not include any new funds for school maintenance in its budget. The project agency said that the reason for this was that not all the funds provided in previous years had been spent, and provided credible assurances that the government was ready to assume complete responsibility for financing as soon as the existing funds had been used up. In the main, the principals of the six schools visited also offered assurances that money was adequate, and explained that the lack of maintenance was mostly caused by the fact that the Public Works Department (PWD), which is generally responsible for maintaining government establishments, did not carry out repair work properly or on time. Other government establishments complain of similar experiences. Smaller repairs to the schools, which are the responsibility of the relevant Principal, are generally being carried out, albeit to varying degrees. In this regard the delegation has found that there is a strong correlation between well-maintained schools and engaged, competent Principals.

It was agreed at the start of the project that the well-respected "State Institute of Education Research and Training" (SIERT) would carry out evaluations at regular intervals in order to sustainably provide and continuously improve the use and quality of the schools. Two such studies have been completed in the FC-financed boarding schools to date, the last in

2008/09. The report's proposals were largely implemented, showing that the project agency is open to improvement suggestions and interested in continuous quality improvement.

One issue which could threaten the sustainability of the project is the lack of specialist subject teachers in the schools visited, a problem which is acute in some places. In 2011/12 the Department of Education should have provided the ten boarding schools with a total of 238 teachers, but only 131 of these posts have been filled. Although the schools have taken action to ensure that teaching continues by appointing 56 "contract teachers", they are still understaffed by 21%.

Sustainability has therefore been assessed as satisfactory. Sub-Rating: 3

Notes on the methods used to evaluate project success (project rating)

Projects (and programmes) are evaluated on a six-point scale, the criteria being relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and overarching developmental impact. The ratings are also used to arrive at a final assessment of a project's overall developmental efficacy. The scale is as follows:

1	Very good result that clearly exceeds expectations
2	Good result, fully in line with expectations and without any significant shortcomings
3	Satisfactory result – project falls short of expectations but the positive results dominate
4	Unsatisfactory result – significantly below expectations, with negative results dominating despite discernible positive results
5	Clearly inadequate result – despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate
6	The project has no impact or the situation has actually deteriorated

Ratings 1-3 denote a positive or successful assessment while ratings 4-6 denote a not positive or unsuccessful assessment

Sustainability is evaluated according to the following four-point scale:

Sustainability level 1 (very good sustainability) The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to continue undiminished or even increase.

Sustainability level 2 (good sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline only minimally but remain positive overall. (This is what can normally be expected).

Sustainability level 3 (satisfactory sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline significantly but remain positive overall. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability of a project is considered inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation but is very likely to evolve positively so that the project will ultimately achieve positive developmental efficacy.

Sustainability level 4 (inadequate sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project is inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation and is very unlikely to improve. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability that has been positively evaluated to date is very likely to deteriorate severely and no longer meet the level 3 criteria.

The overall rating on the six-point scale is compiled from a weighting of all five individual criteria as appropriate to the project in question. Ratings 1-3 of the overall rating denote a "successful" project while ratings 4-6 denote an "unsuccessful" project. It should be noted that a project can generally be considered developmentally "successful" only if the achievement of the project objective ("effectiveness"), the impact on the overall objective ("overarching developmental impact") and the sustainability are rated at least "satisfactory" (rating 3).