

## Ex Post-Evaluation Brief

### Palestinian Territories: School Buildings in the West Bank (EGP IV)



<b>Programme/Client</b>	School Buildings in the West Bank (EGP IV) – 1999 65 096*	
<b>Programme executing agency</b>	Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE)	
<b>Year of sample/ex post evaluation report: 2012/2012</b>		
	<b>Appraisal (planned)</b>	<b>Ex post-evaluation (actual)</b>
<b>Investment costs (total)</b>	EUR 4.32 million	EUR 4.00 million
<b>Counterpart contribution (company)</b>	EUR 0.23 million	EUR 0.23 million
<b>Funding, of which budget funds (BMZ)</b>	EUR 4.09 million EUR 4.09 million	EUR 3.77 million** EUR 3.77 million

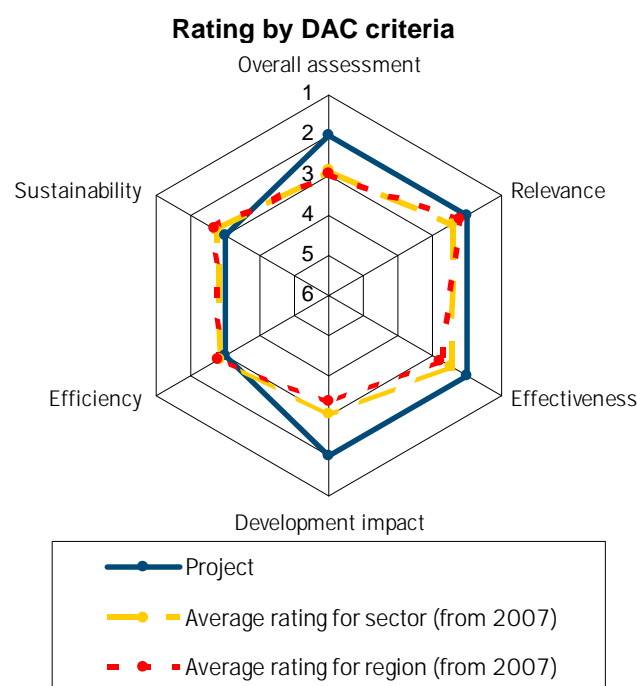
\* random sample; \*\* remaining 0.32 million for follow-on phase "EGP VII"

**Project description:** The program financed the extension and refurbishment of new and existing school buildings, as well as the procurement of school equipment. The programme was designed as an open program to be implemented in a labour-intensive way, in order to create temporary employment and income-generating opportunities. Programme activities comprised the rehabilitation and development of a total of nine primary and secondary schools, including 85 classrooms.

**Objective:** The overall objective was to help maintain and improve educational results, and temporarily reduce unemployment, in the West Bank. The programme objective was to improve school infrastructure (classrooms and administrative offices, toilets and washrooms, school equipment) in schools on the West Bank, ensure their appropriate use, and temporarily create employment and income-generating measures. The indicators used were the share of construction costs accounted for by labour costs (20%-30% of the total costs), and the use of the classrooms in question by an average of around 40 students per classroom. **Target group:** Primary school students as users of the schools in question. Also (as previously) the local population of the West Bank affected by high unemployment, most of them male, who through the project gained employment and income-generating opportunities, at least temporarily.

**Overall rating: 2**

**Of Note:** The combination of employment generation with school construction created lasting benefits. The construction of classrooms was relevant, because it gave Palestinian children access to education. It also reduced teaching in shifts, and the distance that students had to cover every day to get to school. The programme also helped replace unsuitable classrooms and rented premises. Overall the programme led the way for replacing standardised school construction with student-centred construction designed to create a conducive learning environment by also reducing costs per square metre and blending into the existing landscape. EGP IV was a pioneering programme that paved the way for changes in policy within the Ministry of Education, and set new standards for other donors.



## EVALUATION SUMMARY

### Overall rating: 2

**Relevance:** The programme was in line with the goals of the first five-year plan (2000-2005)<sup>1</sup> of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE), which was established in 1994. This development plan aimed to provide girls and boys in urban and rural areas, and from all income groups, with equal access to primary and secondary education. The programme was also in line with the more recent Education Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) of the MOEHE<sup>2</sup>, and was particularly relevant to creating access to education.<sup>3</sup> Other goals such as the quality of teaching, education planning and management, and aligning university and technical training with the needs of the labour market, were supported either by the programmes of other donors, or since 2009 through the basket funding of the education sector, to which German FC made a major contribution. Concerning the programme's one-sided focus on access to education, in retrospect we should qualify this by remarking that the aspiration level of the Palestinian territories and German development cooperation today focuses no longer just on school access, but also on the quality of teaching – with a special focus on greater support for the education of girls.

From today's perspective the programme remains relevant, because it helps accommodate the huge increase in the number of students caused by a high population growth rate of 3.1% (and the predominantly young population this is continuing to create). The approach taken by the programme is also highly relevant in that by choosing the West Bank, it aimed to reduce obstacles to school access faced by students and teachers as a result of the Israeli occupation (e.g. checkpoints, border crossings, etc.).

The programme approach was flexible, and provided a relatively simple framework that could be adapted to changing political circumstances.

In the context of the planned sector programme the assumed chain of results, according to which the infrastructure provided (output), which was built with the assistance of local labour, would lead to improved access (outcome), and thus to improved educational results (impact), was methodologically plausible. From today's perspective, the problem analysis on which this was based is also logically coherent. Sub-Rating: 2.

**Effectiveness:** The programme objective involved improving school infrastructure (classrooms, other rooms for teaching and administrative use, toilets and washrooms, and school equipment) at schools in the West Bank and ensuring their appropriate use, as well as temporarily creating employment and income-generating opportunities, while maximising

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) Education Five-Year Development Plan (2000-2005).

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education and Higher Education Palestine. Education Development Strategic Plan 2008-2012. Towards Quality Education for Development. July 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Goal 1: "To increase access of school-aged children and students of all education levels and improve the ability of the education system to retain them (Access)," EDSP 2008.

the proportion of wage labour (> 20%). Implicitly, these objectives also included reducing class sizes, shift teaching and distances to school.

In the majority of cases the target values for the respective outcome indicators were surpassed, as validated by the results of the evaluation. The achievement of the programme objectives defined at programme appraisal can be summarised as follows:

Indicator	Status at ex-post evaluation
Use of the classrooms in question by an average of approximately 40 students per classroom	<i>With reference to the aforementioned objective, the target value of 40 was surpassed, as the average number was 26 students per classroom. The 25 special rooms are being used by each class at the school between once and twice a week.</i>
20-30% of construction costs accounted for by labour costs	<i>The target value for this indicator was surpassed. According to a report of the firm of architects, labour costs accounted for an average of 35% total costs.</i>

The evaluation found that there were on average 33 students per classroom in urban areas and 21 students per classroom in rural areas. Both values are well below the target value of 40 students per classroom, and are even below both the international standard value of 35 students and the average of 28 students per classroom for the West Bank as a whole. Also for the West Bank as a whole, double shifts were reduced from 5% of classrooms in the school year 1997/98 to 0.25% of classrooms in the school year 2011/12, a result to which the EGP IV programme made a contribution. The fact that five of the KfW-financed schools were located in remote rural areas reflects the aspiration to reduce poverty, and is therefore to be welcomed. In line with that aspiration, classrooms were also created at locations where at least ten school-aged children were present in a village, even though as a result the number of students per classroom fell below the average. The evaluation did not find any gender bias. In addition, the discrepancy of on average 47% girls and 53% boys in the EGP IV-financed schools also reflects the very low educational discrepancy between girls and boys at the national level.

The firm of architects provided the mission with a detailed report, which included calculations for the labour-generating component. The mission believes that this report provides an accurate reflection of the direct and indirect labour generating measures. Sub-Rating: 2

**Efficiency:** Implementation of the programme was delayed by a total of 19 months, hence the implementation period was more than double that originally planned. This delay was due partially to external factors that were initially unforeseeable and subsequently could not be influenced. The second intifada drastically constrained the freedom of movement for people and goods, and the companies, labourers, suppliers and supervising government representatives involved in the construction faced extremely strict checkpoints and controls. While this delayed use of the classrooms, the extended construction period meant

that more short-term labourers could be employed which generated additional income for the local population.

The costs for EGP IV were low compared to other school programmes, and were more or less equivalent to the average costs paid by the MOEHE.

With regard to allocative efficiency the programme was efficient in that it financed five schools for students affected by poverty, some of which were located in poorly accessible rural regions. There was also a focus on schools for girls. In urban zones (four schools) the programme reduced double shifts, thus making a contribution toward the West Bank-wide reduction of double shifts from 5% to 0.25%.<sup>4</sup> Sub-Rating: 3

**Overarching developmental impact:** At appraisal, the programme objective was to contribute toward maintaining and improving educational results, and temporarily reducing unemployment in the West Bank. From today’s perspective, we also need to include improving the quality of teaching as a contribution toward stabilising and improving the learning achievements. The overall objective was therefore reworded, shifting the emphasis from the education supplied, to the educational results. The appraisal report does not contain any indicators at the level of the overall objective. Two indicators for this evaluation are therefore defined below:

Indicator	Status at ex-post evaluation
Improved achievement in core subjects	<i>According to the latest 2011 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), learning achievement by eighth-grade students improved significantly relative to 2007, and for mathematics relative to 2003.<sup>5</sup> The target for this indicator was therefore surpassed.</i>
Temporary reduction in unemployment by creating days of work, such that labour costs account for 25% of total costs <sup>6</sup>	<i>The programme created a total of 33,000 days of work for labourers in the West Bank. Given the lower than estimated construction costs of EUR 3.01 million, the 33,000 jobs meant that labour costs made up a 35% share of the construction costs. The target for this indicator was therefore surpassed.</i>

<sup>4</sup> Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education. 2012. Annual Narrative Progress Report. January-December 2011. Ramallah, West Bank.

<sup>5</sup> Ina V.S. Mullis, Michael O. Martin, Pierre Foy, and Alka Arora. 2012. TIMSS 2011. International Results in Mathematics. Boston, MA. Page 56, Exhibit 1.6: Trends in Mathematics Achievement and page 56, Exhibit 1.6: Trends in Science Achievement.

<sup>6</sup> The programme proposal specified an estimated 47,000 days of employment in the West Bank (with labour costs accounting for 25% of the construction costs of EUR 3.2 million). However, this figure underestimates the labour costs, which were based on the minimum wage for the West Bank. Building costs were lower than anticipated, and fewer jobs were created than had been estimated. As a result, the labour costs accounted for a higher proportion of the construction costs than originally estimated.

The EGP IV programme laid the foundations for changes in school design implemented by the Palestinian MOEHE. Whereas the MOEHE at the beginning of the programme in 2000 focused exclusively on a low-cost standard design, with support from FC it developed this into a child-centred design of school buildings (including brighter and more colourful rooms, stable and low-maintenance materials, and generous classrooms plus a school assembly hall). This new design created an environment of quality, self-respect, cleanliness and tidiness that is conducive to learning. Although the EGP IV phase did not promote any innovative school design, through its quality it did lay the foundation for further development that had a policy changing effect, and created a new standard for all schools financed by external donors.

In Palestine, education is seen as a means of state-building. Teachers, parents and school students perceive schooling as something that will help them change the political situation and improve conditions for the future generation, either by enabling them to emigrate and find work in other countries, or by enabling them to compete intellectually with Israel.

Although the programme created improved school access for 3,456 students (compared with an estimated 2,400 direct beneficiaries at final review), the results in terms of educational achievement cannot be demonstrated unequivocally. EGP IV supported the quality of education only indirectly by building specialised rooms such as computer and physics labs, and libraries. The reduction of class sizes and shift teaching also potentially made a contribution toward teaching quality. The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) study conducted in 2011, which tested mathematical and scientific achievement among eighth-grade students, demonstrated that the learning achievement of this group had improved significantly since 2007, and for mathematics since 2003. In mathematics, an average score of 404 points was achieved, which was an improvement of 37 points in relation to the TIMSS study conducted in 2007, and an improvement of 14 points compared to 2003. In science, in 2011 an average of 420 points were scored, which was 16 points more than in 2007, though 15 less than in 2003, marking a deterioration.<sup>7</sup>

Looking at the results of the programme from today's perspective, and against the background of the aspects added in later phases, we conclude that the capacities for delivering appropriate educational offerings in the territories were developed considerably. This educational promotion for EGP IV benefitted 3,456 students and some 135 teachers. Overall, however, over the last fourteen years in the West Bank and Gaza the programme ultimately benefitted 1.1 million students and around 30,000 teachers and school staff responsible for operating and maintaining schools. This is an important contribution to long-term economic and social development in the Palestinian territories.

So far, EGP in all the phases financed the construction and rehabilitation of a total of 81 schools and 818 classrooms. Construction contracts were all awarded locally; small and

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<sup>7</sup> Ina V.S. Mullis, Michael O. Martin, Pierre Foy, and Alka Arora. 2012. TIMSS 2011. International Results in Mathematics. Boston, MA. Page 56, Exhibit 1.6: Trends in Mathematics Achievement and page 56, Exhibit 1.6: Trends in Science Achievement.

medium-sized Palestinian companies profited from this. In total, the programme created some 5,000 temporary jobs. Sub-Rating: 2

**Sustainability:** The construction quality of the schools was generally high. Even 8 to 10 years after the MOEHE taking over operation and maintenance of the buildings, the schools were generally in good condition, even if they might benefit from more maintenance work here and there. Differences in the level of maintenance of the schools visited were largely due to the engagement of the school principal, the community and parents.

Schools receive their income from low school fees, proceeds from the cafeteria, donations from the community and allocations from the MOEHE for repairs. Nevertheless, schools themselves have no system for generating funds that would guarantee maintenance of the buildings independently of the engagement of the school principal, the parents' council or the community.

Schools perform small maintenance and repairs, such as replacing window panes, light bulbs, photocopiers etc. depending on the dedication of the school principal and the community and their interest in the children's education. Furthermore, the MOEHE has a five-year plan that provides for the replacement of 100 classrooms per year. However, the funding of this plan is also dependent on external financial support, as is the impending construction of new schools and upgrading of existing ones. The safety of the children is the most important criterion when replacing classrooms. Since the education budget is largely dependent on donor contributions, its sustainability is limited.

Earthquake resistance is an important issue because the Jordan Valley is part of the rift where the Arabian and African tectonic plates meet, and where – according to forecasts – a major earthquake is long overdue. The Palestinian territories have defined standards for the earthquake-resistant construction of schools, and construction plans are examined to verify that the envisaged structures are earthquake-resistant. However, the evaluation mission was not able to ascertain whether these standards were applied appropriately under the difficult conditions of construction during the second intifada. 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:

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| 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).