

Ex post evaluation – Ivory Coast

>>>

Sector: Primary education (CRS Code 11220)
Project: Primary and secondary schools in Bas Sassandra I – BMZ Number: 1998 66 252*
Programme executing agency: Ministère de l'Education (MEN), Bureau d'Exécution des Projets (BEP)



Ex post evaluation report: 2014

		Project (Planned)	Project (Actual)
Investment costs (total)	EUR million	15.24	18.03
Own contribution**	EUR million	3.99	1.67
of which BMZ budget funds	EUR million	11.25	***16.36

*) Projects in the 2013 random sample
 **) Government and target group
 ***) Incl. reprogrammed funds of EUR 5.11 million

Description: The project comprised the construction and furnishing of 480 classrooms in 119 primary schools as well as four secondary schools in the rural region of Bas Sassandra in the western part of the Ivory Coast. The project was closely related to a national education sector programme conducted by the World Bank. The total costs of EUR 18.03 million were financed using FC funds totalling EUR 16.36 million, Ivorian budget funds of EUR 0.86 million and a contribution by the target group amounting to EUR 0.81 million. The target group made its contribution by building homes for the teachers.

Objectives: The ultimate objective of the project was to increase the level of education in the region of Bas Sassandra, particularly with regard to women and girls.

The programme objectives were to improve access to primary and secondary school education for children of school age in the region of Bas Sassandra as well as to improve learning conditions.

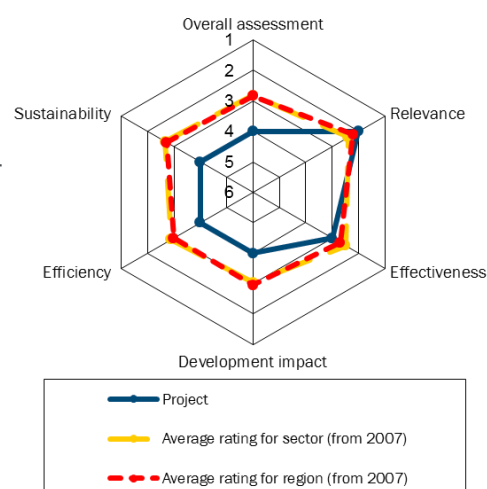
The achievement of the targets at the various levels is measured based on the development of the enrolment rate, the completion rate, the repeat and drop-out rates and the number of pupils per class.

Target group: Children and young people aged 6 to 20 in the programme region.

Overall rating: 4

Rationale: High relevance in terms of development policy and a significant contribution made towards improving access to educational services in the programme region, but shortcomings with regard to operating schools and unacceptable education results.

Highlights: A robust, low-maintenance design can significantly slow the process of school buildings falling into disrepair under problematic circumstances, but cannot guarantee the quality of school education will be acceptable. Stagnation in the sector as well as interference caused by the civil war (2002-2011) adversely influenced the success of what was originally a coherent FC project.



Rating according to DAC criteria

Overall rating: 4

The project is highly relevant in terms of development policy and – starting from a very low level – has contributed significantly to improving access to educational services in the programme region. Given the flawed operation of schools, the unacceptable educational results and the lack of a concept for sector financing, the overall impact of the project is rated as “not satisfactory”.

Relevance

The results chain target of achieving an improvement in the level of education by enhancing infrastructure was plausible at the time of the programme planning. A clear division of labour was planned between the donors as part of the educational sector programme (PA-SEF: *Projet d'appui au secteur éducation/ formation*), whose specific measures were designed to complement each other. The assumption that complementary sector reforms would be implemented with the massive support of the World Bank was crucial here.

The measures of the FC project were highly relevant from a developmental perspective since the enrolment figures in 1998 were exceptionally low (47 %) as of the programme appraisal, and education for girls was not prioritised at all. The marked growth potential for enrolment figures after improving access to public schools was correctly recognised at the programme appraisal. The emphasis on girl's education adequately reflects the targets of the Millennium Development Goals. The relevance of the measures survived the civil war (2002-2011). The project was consistent with the priorities of German development cooperation at the programme appraisal, and the need to increase enrolment rates is still relevant.

Looking back, the measures in the area of secondary education (namely cost-intensive laboratories for science classes) were physically too demanding. Moreover, operations were not thought through properly, particularly against the backdrop of a complete lack of a financing concept for the educational sector.

Relevance rating: 2

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is rated as just satisfactory. Under very difficult operating circumstances (given the difficult locations from a topographical perspective, armed conflicts, lack of government involvement), access to education in the programme area was improved, school routes were shortened and the reservations surrounding girls' education were partly dispelled. Compared to this, the intended improvement in learning conditions is lagging well behind.

Gross school enrolment rates were specified as an ultimate objective indicator at the programme appraisal, but from today's perspective they are more suited as a programme objective indicator (“outcome level”). The enrolment rates initially declined due to the civil war, but increased again after the war ended. That said there are many indications that the population is growing faster than the supply of education services, so enrolment rates are falling behind. The availability and reliability of information is impaired by conflict-induced movements in the population, the scale of which is not fully known. There is no doubt that the project improved access to basic and secondary education significantly.

Primary and secondary schools are mainly operated as all-day schools. Classrooms are used consistently and intensively. The maximum of 40 pupils per classroom was determined at the project appraisal as a proxy indicator for learning conditions, because adequate educational success is normally not possible in overcrowded classrooms. The proportion of pupils per classroom is significantly above the customary sectoral norm (40-45 pupils) and the respective indicator. A systematic comparison of enrolment numbers over several years is not possible due to a lack of relevant data. Yet regional directorates report that thousands of children of primary-school age still have to be turned away. The enrolment of girls has increased significantly, but fluctuates depending on the location. Equality has almost been achieved at primary level, though the proportion of girls is falling sharply at the secondary level.

Repeat and drop-out rates were specified as project objective indicators at the project appraisal. From today's perspective these rates are more related to the overall objective (impact) and are therefore included in the evaluation of the overarching developmental impacts and the efficiency analysis (see below). This is due to the fact that the project has no impact on the quality of teaching.

Effectiveness rating: 3

Efficiency

The efficiency of the construction measures (production efficiency) in terms of primary schools is considered to be just satisfactory. Despite fundamentally acceptable building standards (stable and low-maintenance design, use of premium-quality materials), the unit costs of the FC project far exceeded those planned during the project appraisal. Apart from the generally high price levels in the Ivory Coast, this was primarily caused by difficulties in monitoring the construction measures during the war, which led to quality defects during the implementation that in turn had to be corrected at great expense afterwards (reconstruction of ceiling girders in some of the schools). In secondary schools the excessive demand for the construction of specialised and administrative rooms resulted in high costs.

These relatively high costs are paired with extremely poor educational results (allocation efficiency). Many children are enrolled and use the resources, but due to the extremely high repeat and drop-out rates only few complete primary school (see following section about the developmental impacts of the project). This selection process is even more intensive at secondary school level, where teenage pregnancies among the female students increase but there is no safe boarding accommodation provided for them in the specialised schools. Sectoral reform measures that could improve the quality of education are planned, but will only be effective in the medium term at best.

Efficiency rating: 4

Impact

As the programme was designed three years before the Ivorian Civil War (2002-2011), the objectives were purely focused on sector issues and did not include aspects of crisis prevention or conflict resolution.

The contribution to achieving the overall objective (impact) is unsatisfactory on the whole. The proportion of those repeating years and dropping out is distinctly higher than the 26% intended at the project appraisal (which was already quite high). In many of the primary schools visited in the course of the evaluation, less than half of the pupils passed their final exams.

On a positive note, physical access to primary schools in rural areas in the programme region was improved in both qualitative and quantitative terms in a very difficult period (civil war), where at the planning stage no education services were provided or no suitable premises existed.

The improvements achieved regarding access, however, are not reflected in an increase in the level of education (overall objective) because essential parts of the sector programme were not implemented after the World Bank pulled out of the project (as a result of which all complementary measures ended). The quality of education has not yet been improved at school level. New reform projects at national level (curriculum reforms, transition to a competence-based approach with newly defined educational objectives) are not yet effective in schools. The Ministry of Education's planning competencies have suffered from political disputes during the last decade. Efforts of the new government towards systemising school development planning and depolarisation are visible, but still at an early stage.

All schools in the random sample do essentially have teachers, but their level of training and commitment varies. It is rather inconvenient in terms of achieving the overall objective that the occupational interests of many teachers outweigh their ethical consciousness. Teacher strikes lead to the cancellation of classes for several weeks, while bad educational results are blamed on the parents. In several large secondary schools the lack of administrative experience, leadership skills and facility management is unfortunately noticeable. The many negative observations are only compensated for with a few positive examples of individual commitment by teachers.

Impact rating: 4

Sustainability

Despite the relatively good general condition of school buildings at present, sustainability is still uncertain in the majority of the visited schools due to the lack of funds for maintenance and awareness for carrying out substantial repairs promptly. This will impair access to and the usability of the schools in the near future. Furthermore, the quality and motivation of teachers could not be improved at the same speed as the number of pupils and classrooms, which resulted in deterioration in the quality and sustainability of teaching.

In terms of infrastructure sustainability, draining rainwater on school premises, eliminating cracks and holes in the floors and terraces as well as replacing damaged wooden doors are neglected in particular. Some schools are at high risk of erosion due to undermined foundations caused by inflowing rainwater. Sanitary facilities were supposed to have an effect on the sustainable improvement of hygiene, but this was not achieved due to the deficient water supply. From today's perspective it is hard to understand why this aspect was left out during the programme planning.

Parents are well involved in the operation of the schools with the "Comités de Gestion (COGES)", and smaller repairs, e.g. on school furniture or blackboards, are also performed. As in other developing countries though, voluntary committees are unable to cope with larger repairs that become necessary from time to time (such as repairing the roof, painting the whole building). The need to prevent erosion and insect damage is mostly not recognised. Additionally, the willingness of parents to pay for books, notebooks, school kitchens and extra allowances is also stretched to the limit even in an area like Bas Sas-sandra which is relatively dynamic economically, especially since politicians emphasise that primary education should be free. The approach initiated in the 1990s, where the absence of sector financing was supposed to be compensated for through self-help by the beneficiaries (or rather by their parents) has not proven successful from today's perspective.

The problem of limited sustainability is even clearer in secondary schools compared to primary schools. Secondary schools admittedly operate with a budget for running costs, but the sizes of such budgets do not match the needs of the institutions. For instance, there are no caretakers arranged for secondary schools with several thousand pupils. Therefore water and electricity no longer work reliably, while dangers – sometimes severe – are created by exposed wires, chipped tiles, insect infestations and sprawling trees, etc. Parts of the secondary schools such as the sanitary facilities and specialist rooms are no longer in working order. These limitations are expected to increase over the next few years.

Sustainability rating: 4

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:

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

Ratings level 1-3 denote a positive assessment or successful project while ratings level 4-6 denote a negative 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).