

Ex post evaluation – Yemen

>>>

Sector: Education facilities and training (CRS code: 11120)
Project: Social Fund for Development V–VIII (2008 65 899 (V)*, 2009 65038 (VI)*, 2009 67 414 (VII)*, 2011 65 471 (VIII), Yemen)
Implementing agency: Social Fund for Development (Yemen)



Ex post evaluation report: 2019

EUR million	SFD V (Plan)	SFD V (Act.)	SFD VI (Plan)	SFD VI (Act.)	SFD VII (Plan.)	SFD VII (Act.)	SFD VIII (Plan.)	SFD VIII (Act.)
Investment costs (total)	19.25	19.78	8.80	8.80	5.50	5.44	7.00	7.18
Counterpart contribution	1.75	1.75	0.80	0.80	0.50	0.38	0.00	0.00
Other**	-	0.53	-	-	-	0.06	-	0.18
Funding	17.50	17.50	8.00	8.00	5.00	5.00	7.00	7.00
of which BMZ budget	17.50	17.50	8.00	8.00	5.00	5.00	7.00	7.00

*) Random sample 2018

**) Revenue from interest income, reimbursements and other revenue (more detailed information is not available)

Summary: The four FC measures SFD V–VIII were a continuation of the support provided by the Social Fund for Development (SFD), the Yemeni project-executing agency, which began in 2003. Starting in SFD V, FC funds were to be used exclusively for the education sector, focusing on the rehabilitation and expansion of schools, and advanced training of specialists in the education sector. The SFD’s main mission is to implement measures within the scope of state economic and social policy to rehabilitate and expand the social and economic infrastructure, primarily in poor areas. In view of the ongoing armed conflict, the SFD’s main task is to make a contribution to maintaining central basic services.

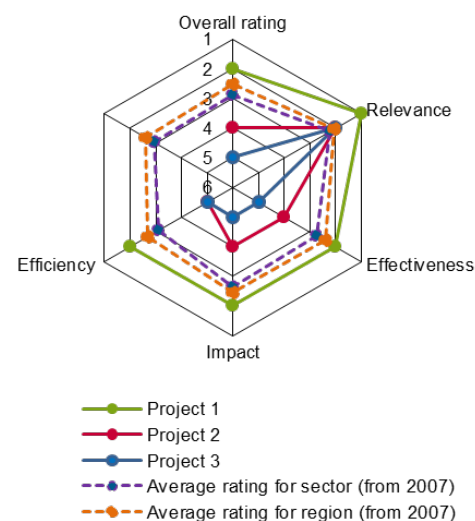
Objectives: The overall development goal of the FC measures (impact) of SFD V–VIII was to contribute to improving learning success by improving and maintaining teaching and learning conditions in basic and secondary education and thus also to improving living conditions in a fragile environment (stabilisation objective). The module objectives (outcome) aimed to improve access to basic and secondary education by constructing and rehabilitating new buildings and improving the quality of education.

Target group: The projects’ primary target group consisted of pre-school, primary and secondary school pupils in all parts of the country, of whom 40% belonged to the poorest third of Yemeni households. Secondary target groups were teachers, school administration staff and the Ministry of Education.

Overall rating: 3 (all measures)

Rationale: In line with national and international strategies, the measures contributed to ensuring access to education in the project regions in the context of a tightening humanitarian and political crisis. Further, this stabilised the living conditions of the children and young people who benefited from the project. Due to the partnership with the Social Fund for Development (SFD), an autonomous government institution, the measures were continued and efficiently implemented even in challenging security conditions. Conflict-related restrictions exist with respect to the sustainable operation of the schools.

Highlights: While many international actors had to suspend their programmes in the wake of the internationalisation of the civil war in 2015, the projects managed to contribute to maintaining education in Yemen through cooperation with the SFD over the period of implementation from 2008 to 2017. Together with the SFD, FC continues to implement projects in the education and water sectors as well as to promote employment.



Rating according to DAC criteria

Overall rating: 3 (all phases)

Phases V–VIII of the SFD were evaluated together because the projects were designed as open programmes and the promoted measures cannot be broken down into phases. The phases are therefore considered to be an overall project – but where possible, they are assessed separately based on the DAC criteria.

Ratings:

Relevance	2
Effectiveness	3
Efficiency	2 (Phase V and VI), 3 (Phase VII and VIII)
Impact	3
Sustainability	3

General conditions and classification of the project

The implementation period of the measures assessed here (2008–2017) coincides with a period of political, economic and security-related crises. Following the resignation of long-serving President Saleh in the wake of the Arab Spring in 2011 and the appointment of President Hadi as his successor, a transition period marked by political power struggles began. This culminated with the conquest of the capital Sana'a by an alliance of actors from the north in 2014 and the entry into war of a Saudi Arabia-led military coalition in March 2015. Even before the outbreak of the war, Yemen was the poorest country in the Arab world and the most vulnerable to food shortages. Since 2015, the country's economy and banking sector have almost completely collapsed, which has led to a liquidity crisis, inflation and devaluation of the rial. A naval blockade exacerbated the supply situation in the country, which is 90% dependent on imported food and fuel. In 2017, the United Nations described the situation in Yemen as the most devastating humanitarian crisis in the world: According to their assessment, 22 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, 8.4 million people were critically threatened with malnutrition, 1.8 million children were acutely malnourished and 400,000 children under the age of 5 were acutely at risk of starvation. Area bombings targeted the destruction of the country's economic infrastructure and repeatedly hit school buses and schools.

In this environment, FC continued the support started in 2003 by the Social Fund for Development (SFD), an autonomous government institution founded in 1997, although the measures assessed here focused on education.¹ At the initiative of the World Bank, the SFD was founded in 1997 as a semi-autonomous institution to support government social policy. In contrast to the government's social transfer programmes which are intended to provide short-term support for those in need, SFD focused on the long-term development of local capacities and resources. It pursues the approach of community development, which strengthens the participation and individual responsibility of local communities. Project regions and beneficiaries are selected on the basis of poverty criteria.

The ex post evaluation is based on a document study and discussions with the SFD and actors of German FC and TC with extensive on-site experience.

Relevance

The projects were part of the General Education Improvement Programme which has been running in Yemen since 2002 as a DC effort. It identifies the quantitative and qualitative inadequacy of the Yemeni education system as a core problem, which is reflected in poor educational infrastructure for the rapidly growing young population, insufficient educational quality with poor learning outcomes and low demand for education, especially in rural areas and for girls, who have to help in the household. From today's per-

¹ Phases I–IV were subject to an ex post evaluation in 2016 and received a rating of 2.

spective, the impact chain in which the provision of appropriate basic and secondary education for children and young people, especially girls, contributes to the quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement of the school infrastructure is still plausible. Other measures in the DC programme, which focus on improving the quality of education, e.g. through teacher training, curriculum development and the introduction of school development plans, are supplemented by the SFD. The project also contributes to solving the core problem from today's perspective. Despite the crisis situation, access to education, although not equal for the sexes, remains a high priority for large sections of the population. This is evidenced by the contributions that parents and communities are willing to make to support teachers and carry out important repairs.

The General Education Improvement Programme is based entirely on the relevant strategies of the Ministry of Education, in particular the Basic Education Development Strategy valid from 2002–2015 as well as the National General Secondary Education Strategy valid from 2006–2015. Accordingly, the programme and module objective indicators were taken from the relevant national strategies, thus ensuring a high degree of alignment with national priorities and strategies. The government's high level of ownership was also evident in the full contribution it made in Phases V and VI. There is also convergence with the priorities listed in the Education Cluster Strategy 2016–2017 for maintaining the education system.

As a donor-financed social fund, the SFD is an example of how many bilateral and multilateral donors can be successfully harmonised in line with the Paris Declaration (2005) and the Accra Action Plan (2008). It was supported at the time of the evaluation by the World Bank, the EU, Germany, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands and Italy. All donors are guided by the SFD's programme objectives.

The relevance is rated as high due to the high importance of education for the country's development, the coherent project concept, the high level of partner ownership and the successful donor harmonisation within the scope of the SFD.

Relevance rating: 2 (all phases)

Effectiveness

The module objective (outcome) aimed to improve access to basic and secondary education by constructing and rehabilitating new buildings and improving the quality of education. The achievement of the objectives defined at the project appraisal can be summarised as follows:

Indicator	Target value	Actual value at ex post evaluation
(1) At least 40% of the SFD's expenditure benefits the poorest 30% of the population (SFD V–VII).	40%	The indicator cannot be measured because it is impossible to conduct empirical impact studies in the current situation in Yemen. According to the information provided by the SFD, they apply poverty criteria when selecting project locations and beneficiaries.
(2) Increase of 7% in school enrolment rates for boys and girls in SFD project areas (SFD V–VII), 2009–2015.	+ 7%	Achieved. Nationwide: +17.1% (boys, years 1–9, 2006–2016, 98.9% gross enrolment rate) +16.8% (girls, years 1–9, 2006–2016, 80.3% gross enrolment rate) Gross enrolment rate of boys in secondary education (10–12): 45.1% (2012) Gross enrolment rate of girls in secondary education (10–12): 32.1% (2012) These figures are taken from the Ministry of Education's official education survey

		2015/2016 and may be too optimistic. According to UN figures, ² around 7.5 million children did not go to school in the 2017/2018 school year, which is equivalent to a school attendance rate of 74%.
(3) At least 50% of the pupils who benefited are girls (SFD VII).	50%	Almost achieved. There is no disaggregated data available for the project schools. According to the SFD, the percentage of girls who benefited overall from SFD education measures in 2014–2017 was 45%.

The project’s main indicator is the development of the school enrolment rate of boys and girls in the project regions. This indicator, to which the project contributes only partially, cannot be measured in the current situation in Yemen. In light of the security situation, an empirical survey on the changes in school enrolment rates in the project regions is not possible. In addition, school attendance is influenced by many factors (e.g. displacement, uncertainty, famine) that the project cannot influence, especially during the crisis. The initial, target and actual values for gross enrolment rates at national level are taken from the Ministry of Education’s estimates. These do not currently appear to take into account the impact of the crisis on school attendance. The evaluation of indicator 1 (poverty-oriented project selection) and indicator 3 (percentage of girls benefiting) is based on SFD data that cannot currently be empirically verified. As an open programme, the FC measures had no specifications for the services to be provided. Therefore it is not possible to perform a target-actual comparison at service level.

The measures managed to produce an impressive track record under the most difficult conditions. According to the SFD, 1,277 new classrooms were built and another 1,960 classrooms rehabilitated during the project period (2008–2017). Another 4,450 individual construction measures such as school toilets, schoolyards, water tanks, laboratories and school libraries were carried out, and schools were also equipped with furniture as well as teaching and learning materials. A total of as many as 400 schools benefited from the measures, which represents 2–3% of the country’s public schools. As part of decentralising the education administration, administrative buildings were also constructed for 17 district school administrations. Around 1,000 educational specialists and a larger number of people from the school administration received advanced professional training. The project thus made a contribution to improving and maintaining the teaching and learning conditions in the context of the crisis consistent with the project objective. According to SFD calculations, the measures reached around 210,000 pupils, which is only slightly lower than the original target of 240,000 beneficiaries.

Constructing, renovating and equipping schools reflected the priorities of a large part of the population. In most of the schools supported, the number of pupils increased after the project measures, and many are overcrowded with up to 100 pupils per class despite the expansion work. However, random project visits by employees of the KfW office in Yemen showed that specialised rooms such as laboratories and school libraries are often not used as intended if the relevant equipment was not supplied. School toilets are used exclusively by teachers, which has a negative impact on girls’ school attendance. Further, it is unclear to what extent the school infrastructure was expanded in consultation with the education ministries and their personnel and financial capacities for the long-term operation of the schools. The biggest challenge currently preventing schools from being used effectively is the non-payment of teachers’ salaries.

The main factor behind the success of the measures was the cooperation with the Social Fund for Development (SFD). Due to its strong local presence, neutrality and flexible structures, the SFD was able to implement measures on-site even during the crisis years. The central challenge was the political, economic and military crisis in Yemen, which steadily worsened during the project term and which the UN classified as the world’s biggest humanitarian catastrophe in 2017–2018.

² UN OCHA, Yemen Humanitarian Needs Review 2018.

The project target achievement is rated as satisfactory. Even if it is not possible to measure the project objective indicators with the desirable reliability, it can be assumed that the measures have made a successful contribution to ensuring access to education in crisis conditions.

Effectiveness rating: 3 (all phases)

Efficiency

The project cooperated with the SFD, one of the few institutions that was able to implement development-oriented measures on-site even under difficult political and security conditions during the project period. The assessment of the SFD's efficiency must therefore take account of the fact that the measures would probably have been suspended without this partner, which would also have resulted in efficiency losses due to the complex preparation of FC measures.

Detailed data to assess the SFD's production efficiency is not available. The investment costs for each individual measure amounted to EUR 90,746 on average, with various measures in the areas of construction, renovation, equipment and advanced training. The value of the individual measures fluctuates between the individual modules, whereby the amount of EUR 211,000 per individual measure implemented for the school extension in the SFD VII module was significantly higher than in module VIII, where smaller renovation measures were carried out at schools with an average value of EUR 32,000.³ The average investment cost was EUR 201 per beneficiary, which is close to the EPE 2016 figures. Previous evaluations⁴ show the SFD to be highly cost efficient due to its decentralised administrative structures, well-trained staff, transparent contract award processes and on-time payments. In the crisis years since 2015, there have been significant cost increases for the SFD, among other things due to the precarious security situation, increased import costs, fragility of the banking sector and the devaluation of the rial. In addition, many donors suspended their payments to the SFD in 2015–2017, but the SFD still had to maintain a core structure. This could explain the marked increase in SFD's administrative costs, which rose from 0.1% of investment costs (SFD V) to 9% (SFD VI), then to 11% (SFD VII) and finally to 14% (SFD VIII).⁵

In addition to the administrative costs, the SFD records costs for consultants and training as well as vehicles and equipment, which accounted for a further 3.1% and 6.8% of the budget respectively. The remaining investment budget thus amounted to 85.3% of total costs.

Despite individual restrictions on use, the production efficiency is rated as satisfactory given the successful maintenance of the educational infrastructure in the project areas. Implementation was conflict-sensitive, as it was widely dispersed regionally and not concentrated. The allocation efficiency is rated as only just satisfactory. The average investment costs, which is assessed differently by all the donors in Yemen,⁶ is rated as acceptable considering the high level of support required for the large number of classrooms constructed (some in very remote regions) and the difficulties owing to the fragile situation in the country. However, these costs still stand in contrast to poor educational outcomes.

The efficiency of the SFD V and SFD VI modules is rated as good and of SFD VII and SFD VIII modules as satisfactory.

Efficiency rating: 2 (phases V and VI) and 3 (phases VII and VIII)

³ The varying amount of the costs for each individual measure is determined by the respective concept for the modules. The SFD VII module envisages the construction of new schools in urban areas, resulting in a relatively small number of cost-intensive individual measures. The SFD VIII module, on the other hand, targets maintenance and repair work on schools damaged by crises, which requires a larger number of small-scale measures. The SFD spent the funds for both modules as intended.

⁴ e.g. Recovery and Development Consortium, DFID Yemen Social Fund for Development Impact Evaluation. London, 2010.

⁵ The SFD's share of the administrative costs averaged 5.5% of the investment costs for construction measures and equipment for the four modules and was thus below the threshold of 10% set by KfW. The 0.1% share of the SFD V module appears unrealistically low. There is no detailed breakdown of costs.

⁶ Investment costs per classroom: UNICEF – USD 5,000; JBIC – USD 26,000; World Bank – USD 16,000; MoE – around USD 15,000; Social Fund for Development – around USD 11,000; CRES I and II (BMZ no. 1997 652 31, 2000 653 83) – EUR 8,700 (Abyan), EUR 10,000 (Ibb).

Impact

The overall development goal (impact) was to improve learning success by improving and maintaining teaching and learning conditions in basic and secondary education and thus also to improving living conditions in a fragile environment (stabilisation objective).

The long-term educational success of the current generation of pupils in Yemen is determined by many factors that go beyond the scope of the project. These include the further development of the military conflicts, the political future of the country, the further development of the economic, supply and hunger crisis, the development of household incomes, the occurrence of epidemics as well as the future influence of radical religious groups and their attitude towards Western education. Military conflicts, non-payment of teachers' salaries, a shortage of teaching materials, the collapse of administrative structures in some parts of the country and the precarious economic situation of families are already having a direct impact on school attendance and children's learning success. The declines in basic and secondary education are not the responsibility of the project and were not foreseeable at the start of the project.

It can still be assumed, however, that the measures will have a positive impact overall on the children and young people benefiting from them. The impacts of the measures on learning success can only be defined over a longer period. As of the ex post evaluation, we can only refer to the results on the overall sectoral level up to 2011, as data is not currently being collected using the same method. However, it is reasonable to assume that the outbreak of the conflict not only led to a deterioration in the data situation, but also in the general conditions for successful learning. In TIMSS⁷ 2011, despite improvements in the previous years, Yemen came in last place again, this time out of 52 countries' learning success in Year 4. The nation also scores last in terms of the performance of pupils in Year 6, which proved to be better. The poor performance can primarily be attributed to many pupils being incapable of reading the test questions quickly enough, if at all. In Year 2, 42% of children could not read a single word correctly, nor could 27% in Year 3 ("Early Grade Reading Assessment" USAID 2012).

It is education, and especially girls' basic education, which can help in this context to overcome the rapid population growth in Yemen, along with the associated pressure on resources, social infrastructure and services. A woman without any school qualifications in Yemen has 5.8 children on average; a woman who went to primary school 4.7. Due to the high number of early marriages and the traditional duty to have a child after one year of marriage, reproduction begins at a very early age. School attendance not only raises girls' level of education (provided that modern curricula are taught) – they also marry later because they, for example, go to school for longer.

In light of Yemen's fragile situation, support for education, the stability of the daily school routine and the cognitive abilities imparted to the pupils contribute to reducing the potential for conflict and towards social cohesion.⁸ Schools can be a place where children can work on war-related trauma and find a sense of normality. Children and young people who do not attend school run a high risk of forced recruitment by armed groups, child labour and early and forced marriage. Maintaining the educational system during the current crisis works to prevent the emergence of a "lost generation" and thus has a long-term stabilising effect.

Therefore it appears plausible to assume that the FC project has played a role – albeit to a limited extent – to the stabilisation of the country's situation through its contribution to maintaining the education system, though not to the prevention of the armed conflict.

Cooperation with the SFD, a proven implementing organisation in the education sector that is also available to other donors, has a developmental impact through replicability of the approach.

Impact rating: 3 (all phases)

⁷ The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is conducted every four years and compares the performance levels of pupils in mathematics and science internationally.

⁸ Seitz, K. (2004): Bildung und Konflikt. Die Rolle von Bildung bei der Entstehung, Prävention und Bewältigung gesellschaftlicher Krisen – Konsequenzen für die Entwicklungszusammenarbeit. Stuttgart.

Sustainability

At present, it cannot be assumed that all parts of the subsidised school infrastructure will be used in a sustainable and appropriate manner. Since 2015, at least 38 project schools have been temporarily used to house internally displaced people and a further 36 schools have been damaged by air strikes or hostilities. Around 20% of the subsidised schools were thus affected by wartime restrictions on use. However, some of the schools mentioned have since been rehabilitated with funds from other donors. Even more serious is non-payment of salaries for teachers since 2016, which affect around 70% of all schools in the country. Government funds for the operation and maintenance of schools are only available to a limited extent in the current crisis. This can only be partly offset by the parents' intensive commitment to maintaining school operations. In a post-conflict context, in-depth coordination between the SFD and the Ministry of Education will be necessary in order to reconcile the expansion of the school infrastructure with the existing capacities to operate the schools.

The sustainable operation of the installed infrastructure is currently not ensured. The biggest problem lies in the non-payment of salaries since 2016 for around three-quarters of all teachers, which lead to high levels of classroom absenteeism. Neither the education ministries currently existing in parallel in the north and south of the country nor the local administrations are able to pay for the operation and maintenance of the schools in view of the political turmoil and acute economic crisis. Parents' representatives are striving to fund the most important measures, but this is not enough in quantitative terms and is not sustainable.

The SFD has displayed a high degree of resilience in recent years. Its sustainability depends on the continued support of international partners, but its neutrality and proven capacity is likely to last. Since 2017, a number of major donors, including the World Bank, have launched new programmes with the SFD.⁹

All in all, sustainability is rated as only just satisfactory.

Sustainability rating: 3 (all phases)

⁹ Al-Ahmadi, Afrah Alawi/de Silva, Samantha, Delivering Social Protection in the Midst of Conflict and Crisis: The Case of Yemen. Washington, DC: World Bank.

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

Rating levels 1-3 denote a positive assessment or successful project while rating levels 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. Rating levels 1-3 of the overall rating denote a "successful" project while rating levels 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" (level 3).