

Bangladesh: Comprehensive Primary Education - Rajshahi Division (Phases I and II)

Final Follow-up Report (Phase I), Final Evaluation Report (Phases I and II)

OECD sector	Educational facilities and further training / 11120	
BMZ project ID	Phase I: 1995 66 472 Phase II: 2000 66 035	
Project-executing agency	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME)	
Consultant	Bauingenieur Rupprecht	
Year of ex-post evaluation	2005	
	Project appraisal (planned)	Ex-post evaluation (actual)
Start of implementation	Phase I: 1996 Phase II: Q 3 2001	Phase I: Q 3 1996 Phase II: Q 3 2001
Period of implementation	Phase I: 48 months Phase II: 18 months	Phase I: 64 months Phase II: 36 months
Investment costs	Phase I: EUR 22.0 million Phase II: EUR 3.37 million	Phase I: EUR 21.0 million Phase II: EUR 3.85 million
Counterpart contribution	Phase I: - Phase II: EUR 0.15 million	Phase I: - Phase II: EUR 0.17 million
Financing, of which Financial Cooperation (FC) funds	Phase I: EUR 22.0 million Phase II: EUR 3.22 million	Phase I: EUR 21.0 million Phase II: EUR 3.68 million
Other institutions/donors involved	-	-
Performance rating	2	
• Significance / relevance	2	
• Effectiveness	2	
• Efficiency	2	

Brief Description, Overall Objective and Project Objectives with Indicators

The FC/TC cooperative project “Comprehensive Primary Education - Rajshahi Division” (Phases I and II) contributes to improving the basic education in three districts in the Rajshahi Division (overall objective). The objectives of the project – in phase 1 – were to improve the efficiency of primary education and to increase the offers in the field of basic education as well as – in phase II – to increase the quantity and improve the quality of formal primary education in the project region. The FC financing of the project comprised construction measures (new buildings, reconstruction and repair of primary schools, construction of additional classrooms) and school furniture as well as (in phase I) the construction of teacher training centres and teaching and learning materials. Under the TC component advisory measures were conducted with regard to improving the quality of teaching (concepts for teacher training and advanced training and their realisation, introduction of teaching and learning materials), school management and community participation. The project-executing agency is the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME).

No indicators were defined to measure the achievement of the overall objective. Originally, at the time of the project appraisal for phase I, the indicators defined for the achievement of the project objective covered the improvement of repeat and pass rates, as well as dropout and enrolment rates. On the basis of the "baseline survey" conducted by the GTZ the indicators were modified at the end of 2000 and applied to phase II accordingly (always in relation to the project regions):

- (1) The gross enrolment rate for children aged 6 to 10 years is at least 90%.
- (2) The dropout rate is, at most, 66%.

At this point the following critical comments have to be made:

- The reasons for the modification of the indicator are understandable; however, the modification was only made at the end of phase I and was to apply immediately at the time of conclusion of phase I.
- The first indicator is rather an indicator for the achievement of the overall objective, since besides the FC financed schools there are 3 to 4 times as many other schools in the project region.
- The indicators did not differentiate according to gender, which is customary in the education sector.
- While the overall objective of the cooperative project was agreed with the GTZ, there is no reference at the level of the project objective to the qualitative indicators chosen by TC (i.e. quality is no longer a criterion). On the other hand, however, the project objective determined for the second TC phase does no longer include the quantitative improvement of the supply with schools (FC).
- The high initial level of 66% (dropout rate) is probably due to a representative survey which had been conducted. For the years 1998 and 1999 official statistics already show a dropout rate of only 35%.

Thus, the assessment of the achievement of the overall objective should be primarily based on the development of the gross enrolment rate. The assessment of the achievement of the project objective is based on the adequate utilisation of the financed schools/ classrooms and the development of the qualitative results in the project region.

Project Design / Major Deviations from the original Project Planning and their main Causes

The project "Comprehensive Primary Education Project" (CPEP) I and II, which are evaluated here, were part of the country-wide "Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP)", which pursues the aim of achieving a higher quality of primary education, increasing primary school enrolment rates (and at the same time promoting gender equality for girls in primary education), and establishing an efficient primary school system. Besides FC and TC, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the British and Norwegian development cooperation agencies (DfID and NORAD) participated in the financing of PEDP. The follow-up programme PEDP II started in 2003 with similar objectives (more donors, no German participation) and integrated the different donors' projects more strongly.

In the framework of PEDP the activities of the individual donors were divided in order to cover the different regions. The FC project concentrated on the infrastructure of primary schools in the Bogra, Dinajpur and Kurigram regions in the north-west of the country (Rajshahi Division). Following is a survey of the measures financed by Financial Cooperation:

Project Measures		Plan Phase I	Actual Phase I	Plan Phase II	Actual Phase II
1	New construction of community schools	50	18	-	-
2	Reconstruction of schools	200	367	56	101
3	Rehabilitation of schools	120	224	-	-
4	School extension/provision of additional classrooms	320	400	30	52
5	Upazila Resource Centres (URC) for advanced teacher training	33	33	-	-
6	Sanitary facilities and wells* for (1) to (5)	650	508	108	131
7	School furniture (1)-(4)	690	1009	86	153
8	Furniture and equipment for 33 URCS	33	33	-	-
9	Furniture for further schools in the project region	-	538	-	38
10	Equipment for Upazila Education Offices	33	33	-	-
12	Ground surveys (LGED)	283	415	56	101
13	Laboratory tests to detect arsenic contamination	-	-	86	1067

* Sanitary facilities and wells were added in buildings where no such facilities existed before.

No major changes to the original project conception were made in either of the two phases. The laboratory tests mentioned under item 13 are due to the fact that the groundwater at many sites in the project region is contaminated with arsenic. All wells constructed during phases I and II were examined and the result is that all schools now have arsenic-free wells.

The TC component comprised the following activities:

- Development of concepts, models, modules and manuals for teacher training and advanced training.
- Implementation of training measures for trainers, advanced teacher trainers and teachers.
- Development of prototypes for teaching and learning materials.
- Development and spread of concepts and materials for training and school management committees (SMC) and for the promotion of community participation.
- Integration of the project management in the country-wide sub-sector Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP).

Overall, the quantitative objectives for the FC measures were exceeded considerably by 48% for the schools (1,195 as compared with 809) and by 39% for the classrooms (3,606 as compared with 2,590). Thus, the primary education teaching in the project region can mostly be held regardless of bad weather and in appropriate rooms. This contributes to improving the overall learning conditions. The construction of the teacher training centres (Upazila Resource Centre - URC) was an important precondition for the implementation of concepts and courses by TC. The FC and TC activities complemented each other purposefully.

Key Results of the Impact Analysis and Performance Rating

The local educational administrations are responsible for the operation of the 1,195 project schools, which usually have three or five classrooms and one teachers' room. In over 80% of the schools classes are held in two shifts. When visiting some primary schools on the occasion of the ex-post evaluation the following observations were made:

- The high rate of utilisation of the classrooms and the overall acceptable quality of teaching were confirmed. Though the non-attendance rate of pupils has dropped it still attains approximately 20%.
- The teachers (male and female) gave the impression of being highly motivated, especially some younger female teachers, who have not yet graduated but work as interns on a full-time basis. Still, teachers were complaining about the high pressure due to the double-shift teaching. (Qualified) teachers are the central bottleneck with regard to providing high-quality and sufficient teaching.
- The teaching and learning materials provided under the project (e.g. globes, abacuses, compasses, wall maps) were available at all sites and were largely used.
- After 4 to 5 years of operation the schools covered under phase I are in an acceptable condition, while the schools covered under phase II are even in a very good condition. School management committees (SMC) are responsible for the maintenance of the schools. The committees are composed of parents, teachers and community representatives. However, the funds required for maintenance and repairs are not always applied for, or made available, in sufficient amounts.
- Approximately 15% of primary school pupils in the project region are malnourished. In some schools with one-shift classes children did not receive a meal during the lunch break. Thus, including the time spent for the way to school, children did not receive anything to eat for about 8 to 9 hours. The schools in Kurigram are part of a pilot project (World Food Programme) and are provided with bananas and biscuits enriched with vitamins.

29 directors were recruited for the 33 FC financed teacher training centres (URC). Unfortunately, some of the URCs had to be closed in 2004 because the financing of the sector programme (PEDP II) was delayed and it was not possible at short notice to reallocate funds from the state budget. Under the TC measure the teacher training was supported with new concepts and modules and teacher trainers were qualified (17 master trainers and 280 trainers). Altogether, 17,000 primary school teachers received advanced training under the TC measure. Experience has shown that approx. 80% of trainers stay in their jobs and 70% to 90% do a good job. A state inspection carried out in 2004 showed that about two thirds of teachers meet at least good quality criteria.

The assessment of the achievement of the project objective is based on the adequate utilisation of the financed schools/ classrooms and the development of the qualitative results in the project region. The number of classrooms built was almost 40% higher than the figure originally planned, and according to information provided by the project-executing agency and the consultant all classrooms are in fact utilised. According to this information the pupil-classroom ratio at the project schools improved from 91 to 59, but this was also partly due to the declining number of school-age children. Given an attendance of about 80%, the average size of classes is still acceptable. According to TC information the situation in the three following districts improved in terms of learning performance in comparison with the entire Rajshahi Division, which has altogether 16 districts. Bogra improved from rank 12 to rank 3, Kurigram from 15 to 10 and Dinajpur from 10 to 7. The dropout rate of 66% assumed at the project appraisal has not been supported by official statistics. According to TC information, the rate improved in Bogra from 29% to 19% and in Kurigram from 63% to 36% (between 1997 and 2003 in both districts). Overall, we assume that the project objective has been sufficiently achieved, i.e. the utilisation of the schools and classrooms built or rehabilitated has improved and the quality of teaching was raised substantially.

The assessment of the achievement of the overall objective is based on the development of the gross enrolment rate, which improved, on a national average basis, from 95.6% (girls: 94.3%) in 1997 to 97.4% (girls: 98.1%) in 2002. In the project districts the values are 94.5% (95.1 %) for Bogra, 101.9% (100.1%) for Kurigram and 101% (99.9%) for Dinajpur. Therefore, given these results for the project districts, the country-wide upward trend and the improved girls' enrollment rate, the overall objective has been achieved.

Under the two project phases the overall school situation of approximately 100,00 pupils aged 6 to 10 was improved and, in addition, roughly 80,000 pupils were given the opportunity to attend school (number estimated at project appraisal: 100,000 in total). Besides the quantitative improvement, especially the higher teaching quality (including teaching materials) and the lower dropout rates have to be emphasized. The primary benefit of the project is that due to the improved school situation children's cognitive abilities were strengthened and their awareness was raised so that they have better chances in the (formal and informal) labour market and their self-determination potential is increased. In addition, the awareness of girls for better hygiene and nutrition in the family was raised and they become more open to family planning. Even though pupils' school performance can in general still be improved further, the improvement in the school performance achieved in the project districts due to the TC support was still above average. The training courses and materials to support the school management committees (SMC) are used on a broad scale. Another 300 teacher training centres, which were modelled on the URCs, have already been set up in the country. These aspects have already been included in the conception for PEDP II.

The financial burden on the target group is acceptable: Schoolbooks continue to be made available free of charge and school uniforms are not compulsory, thus, parents' monthly financial contribution amounts to approx. EUR 1 per child. The measures were performed in rural areas. According to World Bank information approx. 53% of pupils live in poor households. Thus, the projects make a direct contribution to poverty reduction. The traditional disadvantages of girls in school enrolment have been reduced in the last few years on a national scale. The dense network of schools in the project region and the provision of appropriate sanitary facilities also contributed to this. Overall, the gender-specific impacts of the project were positive.

Drinking water wells and latrines improve the hygiene situation. Due to the full and complete inspection of all school wells for arsenic contamination it was possible to avoid that any contaminated wells were used. The participation of parents, teachers and community representatives in the school management committees (SMC) created an important prerequisite for a sustainable school operation (maintenance of the schools, control of teachers, cultural activities).

On the basis of the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency and significance/relevance we assess the project's developmental effectiveness as follows:

- The number of classrooms and school places created under the project was much higher than originally planned. The pupil-classroom ratio was substantially reduced. The indicators for pupils' school performance established by TC in the project districts clearly show an upward trend. However, the sustainability of the investment is to some extent limited as a result of the uncertain provision of maintenance funds. Thus, the project's effectiveness is rated as satisfactory (rating 2).
- The unit costs of the classrooms were in some cases considerably higher than had been estimated. Due to the lower dropout rates the sectoral efficiency was improved. However, the classrooms are not always sufficiently utilised (e.g. due to absence of teachers, pupils etc) so that the efficiency is rated as satisfactory (rating 2).
- The project made an adequate contribution to solving the sectoral problems (relevance). The gross enrollment rates, which are an important indicator for the achievement of the overall objective, improved noticeably (also in terms of girls' participation) in the three

project districts. Moreover, the cooperative project made structural contributions to the development of the primary school sector. Therefore, we consider the significance and relevance of the project to be satisfactory (rating 2).

In summary, we judge the developmental effectiveness of the project “Comprehensive Primary Education – Rajshahi Division (Phases I and II)” to be satisfactory (rating 2).

Lessons Learnt

From the very beginning the tasks of FC and TC in the area of school construction and teacher training complemented and mutually supported each other very successfully and, thus, helped to increase school enrolment rates and improve pupils’ learning performance. In addition, the systematic involvement of teachers, parents and community representatives (school management committees) is an important element in achieving a stronger identification with the schools and increased the chances for a higher sustainability of the project. The overall cost and effort of both FC and TC required to achieve these objectives can be reduced in the future through joint planning at an early stage and coordination during the phase of implementation.

Abbreviations

CPEP	Comprehensive Primary Education Project
FC	Financial Cooperation
CP	Cooperative project
MOPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme
PA	Project appraisal
SMC	School management committee
TC	Technical Cooperation
URC	Upazila Resource Centre (Teacher training center)

Legend

Developmentally successful: Ratings 1 to 3	
Rating 1	Very high or high degree of developmental effectiveness
Rating 2	Satisfactory developmental effectiveness
Rating 3	Overall sufficient degree of developmental effectiveness
Developmental failures: Ratings 4 to 6	
Rating 4	Overall slightly insufficient degree of developmental effectiveness
Rating 5	Clearly insufficient degree of developmental effectiveness
Rating 6	The project is a total failure

Criteria for the Evaluation of Project Success

The evaluation of the "developmental effectiveness" of a project and its classification during the ex-post evaluation into one of the various levels of success described in more detail above concentrate on the following fundamental questions:

- Are the project objectives reached to a sufficient degree (aspect of project effectiveness)?
- Does the project generate sufficient significant developmental effects (project relevance and significance measured by the achievement of the overall development-policy objective defined

beforehand and its effects in political, institutional, socio-economic and socio-cultural as well as ecological terms)?

- Are the funds/expenses that were and are being employed/incurred to reach the objectives appropriate and how can the project's microeconomic and macroeconomic impact be measured (aspect of efficiency of the project conception)?
- To the extent that undesired (side) effects occur, are these tolerable?

We do not treat **sustainability**, a key aspect to consider for project evaluation, as a separate category of evaluation but instead as a cross-cutting element of all four fundamental questions on project success. A project is sustainable if the project-executing agency and/or the target group are able to continue to use the project facilities that have been built for a period of time that is, overall, adequate in economic terms, or to carry on with the project activities on their own and generate positive results after the financial, organisational and/or technical support has come to an end.