

**Honduras: Promotion of Primary Education – (PROMEB)**

**Ex-post evaluation**

<b>OECD sector</b>	11220 / Primary Education	
<b>BMZ project ID</b>	1995 65 292	
<b>Project-executing agency</b>	Secretaría de Educación (SE)	
<b>Consultant</b>	GTZ	
<b>Year of ex-post evaluation</b>	<b>2005</b>	
	<b>Programme appraisal (planned)</b>	<b>Ex-post evaluation (actual)</b>
<b>Start of implementation</b>	2nd Quarter 1995	1st Quarter 1996
<b>Period of implementation</b>	5 years	8 years
<b>Investment costs</b>	EUR 11.13 million	EUR 11.23 million
<b>Counterpart contribution</b>	EUR 0.9 million	EUR 1.00 million
<b>Financing, of which Financial Cooperation (FC) funds</b>	EUR 10.23 million	EUR 10.23 million
<b>Other institutions/donors involved</b>	IBRD	IBRD/GTZ
<b>Performance rating</b>	5	
<b>• Significance / relevance</b>	5	
<b>• Effectiveness</b>	4	
<b>• Efficiency</b>	5	

**Brief Description, Overall Objective and Programme Objectives with Indicators**

The programme aimed at improving access to the primary school system and the quality of primary education in Honduras. The PROMEB (Programa de Mejoramiento de Educación Básica) was designed as a parallel co-financing together with the IBRD and became an FC/TC cooperative programme in the course of implementation. The overall programme comprised measures aimed at improving the quality of primary education as well as institutional reforms, particularly the decentralisation of the administration and organisational reforms. The FC funds were used for the construction of classrooms and administrative buildings, the procurement of new learning materials (textbooks, exercise books, school libraries) and for an assignment of an FC consultant that had not been planned initially.

In 1999 the objectives and indicators were modified because of changes in the programme environment. The overall objective was adapted to the TC cooperative programme: "The Honduran education sector works more efficiently and the primary school pupils benefit from the improved quality of primary education". The programme objectives are now: "improvement of the primary school infrastructure and the education administration and promotion of the decentralisation policy of the Honduran government".

The following indicators were established to measure the achievement of the programme objectives:

1. 90% of the classrooms constructed or rehabilitated are used by 40 to 50 pupils and maintained by the communities.

2. The school books and mini-libraries are used regularly and in accordance with the learning necessities in 90% of the schools.
3. The directors of the Departamentos exercise the competences attributed to them. The administrative buildings are used and maintained.
4. 90% of the schools are looked after regularly and appropriately by the administrations of the Departamentos.

The programme-executing agency was the Ministry of Education (Secretaría de Educación, SE).

### **Programme Design / Major Deviations from the original Programme Planning and their main Causes**

The original concept provided for the implementation of measures directed at expanding the education offer and improving the quality and efficiency of the administration. At the start of the programme a coordinated approach was agreed with the IBRD. The construction measures were carried out using the Honduran social fund FHIS. After Hurricane Mitch, which devastated vast areas of Honduras in October 1998, the programme situation changed. Some reform measures such as decentralisation could be sped up while other important initiatives, especially for improving the efficiency of the programme-executing agency (SE), were postponed. The implementing unit which was financed by the IBRD was dissolved and the remaining IBRD funds were reprogrammed already in the year 2000. Against this background German Technical Cooperation took over some tasks from the IBRD, particularly the capacity building measures. Targets and indicators were modified under the cooperative programme (see above).

An FC consultant was also contracted to speed up the implementation of the measures. This succeeded only to a limited extent, however, because the FHIS was very busy with the reconstruction as well. Overburdening the FHIS proved to be detrimental to the efficiency of the organisation. Considerable difficulties emerged in the construction of the administrative buildings as a result of the choice of the site, the capacity of the building contractor and the lack of experience of the FHIS with buildings of larger dimensions. Despite rehabilitation work most administrative buildings are still in a mediocre or poor state.

The following measures were implemented under the FC programme:

- construction and rehabilitation of 271 classrooms (target: 290)
- construction of 18 administrative buildings (target: 18)
- procurement of 14 million schoolbooks/exercise books (target: 14.5 million)
- provision of 2630 mini-libraries (target: not comparable)

The costs of procurement of the learning materials (textbooks, exercise books, mini-libraries) amounted to just over half the total cost.

Because of considerable weaknesses on the part of the programme-executing agency, natural disasters and changes in the organisational structure, the implementation of the programme was tedious and inefficient altogether. It was not possible to dovetail the different components as intended when the programme was planned with a view to improving the quality and efficiency of primary education.

### **Key Results of the Impact Analysis and Performance Rating**

In the analysis of the achievement of the programme objectives (improvement of primary school infrastructure and education administration and promotion of the decentralisation policy of the Honduran government), considerable deficits were found in all components and indicators (see above):

1. The classrooms are being utilised but the number of pupils varies heavily. The school rooms are not being optimally utilised and long periods of idleness occur. In rural areas the target number of 40 to 50 pupils per classroom is often not achieved, so that although most classrooms have been rehabilitated there is only a low net increase in pupils. The

field analyses conducted in the ex-post evaluation revealed that the state of the buildings is mediocre to poor here as well. The communities do not participate adequately in maintenance and the funds provided for maintenance by the Ministry and the municipalities are insufficient.

2. Many of the books purchased with FC funds cannot be used because their distribution exceeded the capacities of the programme-executing agency and some supplies of books and exercise books are still in the storage rooms of the Ministry. The school books and exercise books will be replaced by others at the beginning of the 2005 school year. Their useful life thus was limited, but this is warrantable. The utilisation of the classroom libraries could not be evaluated because the original conception was not put in place. The teachers were not adequately prepared for handling the new learning materials.
3. The subordinate offices of the Ministry have not yet been vested with broader competences and provided with more funds so that the contribution of the buildings to the decentralisation so far has remained limited. The administrative buildings are being used but maintenance is not taking place.
4. There is no effective school supervision nor any guidance for pupils. Neither in the provincial nor in the district offices are funds available for this.

Therefore the programme objectives were not sufficiently achieved overall.

No indicator was determined for the overall objective (the Honduran education sector works more efficiently and the primary school pupils benefit from the improved quality of primary education). Periodic surveys of pupils' performance in the third and 6th level revealed, however, that learning achievements and the level of knowledge of primary pupils have stagnated for several years, with girls performing slightly better than boys. The overall drop-out rate up to 6th level is unchanged at a high 31%. The administrative reforms needed for the decentralisation were implemented only in part and did not lead to cost reductions, so the overall objective generally was not achieved.

We rate the remaining programme impacts as follows:

The investments made under PROMEB contributed to improving pupils' access to school education and their learning conditions and to creating an awareness of the importance of school education among the overall population. Girls benefited most from the programme and female teachers were given preference in new hirings (around three-quarters of all teachers). This was part of the programme conception. As girls tend to attend school longer and perform better it would be appropriate in the future to seek ways of motivating boys to value education more highly. The programme schools are located in remote rural regions and poor suburban areas. They are inhabited primarily by poor groups of the population (poverty rate approximately 75%). The programme thus contributes directly to poverty reduction. The construction measures had no or only a minor impact on the environment. Specific environmental topics were adequately treated in the exercise books. Supporting decentralisation was one of the programme objectives; however, if it were fully implemented it could contribute much more to good governance at the local level.

The summarised performance rating is based on the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, significance and relevance:

- The indicators of the programme objectives were achieved only in part or to an unsatisfactory extent. We rate the effectiveness of the programme as slightly insufficient (sub-rating 4).
- Some of the unit costs for the infrastructure were very high and a substantial portion of the school books did not reach the schools for which they were intended. The decentralisation did not lead to more efficient procedures. Owing to these restrictions we rate the efficiency as clearly insufficient (sub-rating 5).
- The programme conception was relevant from the aspect of development policy. But despite the investments made in the sector the learning performance could not be increased and the rate of dropouts could not be reduced. The number of users actually

reached cannot be determined for lack of coherent data (it is likely to be lower than stated in the programme appraisal report). A contribution to the achievement of the overall objective is not apparent. We therefore rate the significance/relevance as clearly insufficient (sub-rating 5).

Therefore, overall we classify the developmental efficiency of the programme as clearly insufficient (sub-rating 5).

## General Conclusions

We consider the following general conclusions to be relevant:

- Any expansion of school infrastructure and provision of learning and teaching materials need to be accompanied by particular efforts aimed at ensuring the existence of further system components: the quality of teacher training, school supervision, development of curricula and good logistics to make the books and exercise books available on a decentralised basis (for instance through the involvement of parents, non-governmental organisations or the private sector). If the latter components are not an integral part of the FC programme a different approach must be taken to ensure that they are implemented by government agencies or other donors.
- In order to consolidate and improve the learning achievements in primary education the following measures are necessary: (i) adequate school supervision (monitoring of attendance and lesson periods, decentralised introduction and follow-up of performance tests) and (ii) instruction of the teachers in the use of the new teaching and learning materials.
- The participation and identification of the beneficiaries (teachers and parents) with the primary school facilities that were built are necessary but not sufficient preconditions for the sustainable operation of infrastructure. Further conditions that need to be agreed between the programme-executing agency and the beneficiaries prior to operation are the clear definition of responsibilities for different tasks and the allocation of funds. In many cases it will be indispensable for the Ministry of Education to make additional funds available for maintenance and upkeep.

## 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 below 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 concept)?
- 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, organizational and/or technical support has come to an end.