

Mali: Promotion of Primary Schools in the 5th Region

Ex post evaluation

OECD sector	11220 / Primary education	
BMZ project IDs	1996 66 173	
Project-executing agency	National Ministry of Education (MEN)	
Consultant	-	
Year of ex-post evaluation	2006	
	Project appraisal (planned)	Ex-post evaluation (actual)
Start of implementation	2 nd quarter 1997	1 st quarter 1998
Period of implementation	14 months	58 months
Investment costs	EUR 2.13 million	EUR 2.88 million
Counterpart contribution	EUR 0.08 million	EUR 0.06 million
Financing, of which Financial Cooperation (FC) funds	EUR 2.05 million	EUR 2.82 million
Other institutions/donors involved	GTZ	GTZ
Performance rating	3	
• Significance / relevance	3	
• Effectiveness	2	
• Efficiency	4	

Brief Description, Overall Objective and Programme Objectives with Indicators

The project “Promotion of Primary Schools in the 5th Region” is the second FC-measure implemented in the education sector in Mali. The measures were designed as an FC/TC cooperative project. The FC component comprised the construction of 198 classrooms at 63 primary schools and their equipment with furniture and in part also with teaching materials. The TC measure (“Primary Education – Dogon Country”) supports the Mali Ministry of Education at the national and regional levels in developing curricula for initial tuition in the mother tongue, advanced teacher training and the mobilisation of parents for the new primary education concept, among others.

The overall objective of the project was the quantitative and qualitative improvement of primary education in the 5th region of Mali (also called Mopti region). The overall objective is considered achieved if three years after the termination of the programme the gross enrolment rate in the programme area has risen from 19% in 1997 (girls: 14%) to approx. 40% (girls: 35%) and the drop-out rate has fallen over the same period from around 80% (1997) to approx. 40%. However, the qualitative improvement of primary education, which is part of the overall objective, is covered only partially with the indicators defined and for this reason will be covered by another indicator on the internal efficiency, which is calculated from the repeat and drop-out rates.

The programme objective of the FC component is, through the construction of new school buildings and the expansion of existing ones, to give a greater number of school-age children access to state and municipal schools and to improve the learning conditions. The programme objective is considered achieved if three years after the termination of the programme on average 45 pupils are taught in the classrooms financed from FC and the furniture and teaching materials provided are used according to purpose.

Project design / major deviations from the original project planning and their main causes

The following measures were implemented under the FC programme:

- Construction and equipment of 198 classrooms;
- Construction and equipment of 63 school director offices with storage room;
- Construction of 207 latrines (69 units with three latrines each);
- Procurement of teaching materials for all FC-financed classrooms;
- Complementary measures (fencing, laying out of schoolyards) as a contribution made by the parents;
- Planning and monitoring services.

The construction measures were accompanied and supplemented by TC mobilisation campaigns targeted at schools, parents and municipalities to provide instructions on hygiene (use of latrines) and on the cleaning and maintenance of buildings. In this way the sustainability of the measures was to be improved by giving the municipalities more responsibility, especially for schools.

With funds of approx. EUR 770,000 remaining from the FC-project "Promotion of Primary Schools" (1992 65 570) it was possible to substantially increase the number of schools envisaged in the programme appraisal report. Instead of the planned 135 classrooms, altogether 198 classrooms were newly built and furnished. The number of school director offices was increased from the originally planned 45 to 63 and the number of latrines from 135 to 207. The primary schools are situated at 63 locations in the programme region. Approx. one third of the school sites were newly opened up, one third were existing sites that were expanded and the remaining one third of sites dilapidated school buildings were replaced.

The Agence des Travaux d'Intérêt Public pour l'Emploi (AGETIPE), which had been entrusted with the implementation of the project measures, did for the most part do a proper job. In individual cases, however, construction deficiencies were detected, which were partly due to insufficient supervision of construction works on the part of the assigned engineering firms. This, in turn, was due to inadequate supervision and control by AGETIPE of the services rendered by these firms. With regard to the large number of parallel and widely-dispersed construction sites AGETIPE was not always in the position to check the construction supervision services rendered by the engineering firms and the quality of the construction works. This is a conceptual deficiency of the project.

As far as the current state of the schools is concerned the regular intervention of TC animators helped to raise people's awareness of the importance of clean classrooms, schoolyards and latrines.

The concept of combining FC measures (school construction) and TC measures (further training and mobilisation) proved to be convincing in the sense that the concerned municipalities were given increasing responsibility for the FC-financed schools because they were involved in the joint planning and were given specific further support. Moreover, parents were sensitised to the importance of sending both boys and girls to school and the teachers were also involved in the

context of a teaching and further training concept. Both FC and TC measures complement each other purposefully.

Key results of the impact analysis and performance rating

All 63 programme schools have successfully gone into operation. Except for market days and on days when children are needed for harvesting, school attendance is very high. However, due to the long distances children have to walk to school and to their domestic duties many children get to school late. At some schools children attend schools in several shifts; this system is mostly practiced for the first and second classes. At schools with only three classrooms children are preferably enrolled over a period of two years instead of teaching children in double shift classes. In this way it can be assured that the number of lessons for the higher grades do not have to be cut. The number of children taught per classroom varies strongly, depending on the grade, the availability of teachers and the composition of classes, between 20 and 120 children. However, most classes are attended by 40 to 50 children. Places for more than 14,000 children were created at the programme schools and their learning conditions have improved because the new classrooms were equipped with furniture and didactic material. Thus, the programme objective was largely achieved.

The development of the indicators for the achievement of the overall objective is as follows:

- In the school year 2003/2004 the gross enrolment rates envisaged for the programme region were overachieved both for boys (51%) and for girls (48%) (planned figures: 40% for boys and 35% for girls).
- The drop-out rate in the programme area was 34% (target value: 40%). While the internal efficiency for the country as a whole rose from 31% at the time of project appraisal to more than 70% in 2002, the internal efficiency in the programme region rose only to 52%. This is primarily due to the high repeat rates.

Thus, it can be stated that the objective of a quantitative improvement of primary education was clearly achieved, while there are deficiencies with regard to the qualitative component. However, the complementary approach of the cooperative projects had a positive impact on the programme schools due to the implementation of advanced training and support measures for directors, teachers, parents and municipal representatives. As a result the project helped to improve the cooperation between schools and teachers, teachers started to apply new teaching methods ("pédagogie convergente" (PC)) and specifically trained animators offered advice on school matters. According to information provided by the National Ministry of Education (MEN) the learning results achieved at the schools with this "pédagogie convergente" are better than at the other schools. Therefore, we consider the qualitative component to have been just achieved.

Though specific promotional measures were implemented to target girls, these are still underrepresented in the educational system in Mali. There are several reasons for this: Mothers need their daughters for housework and child care, unprotected ways to school are dangerous for girls and traditional views still hamper the enrolment of girls. High repeat rates and the related additional cost for parents are other obstacles. The project had positive impacts in the sense that due to shorter distances to school the enrolment rate of girls improved and a contribution is made to improve learning conditions.

Given the high share of poor people in the target group – 76% of the population living in the 5th region are classified as poor or even very poor – and the intensive cooperation between schools, parents and municipalities the project renders an important contribution to self-help oriented poverty reduction. The programme is not expected to produce any immediate ecological impacts. However, it can be assumed that the school education as such and the introduction of latrines will in the long run have a positive influence on people's hygiene and environmental awareness.

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

- Owing to the additional funds provided the quantitative indicators for the achievement of the project objective were exceeded: As a result of the programme a denser network of schools was established, which provides places for approx. 14,000 children as well as solidly built schools and well-equipped classrooms. On average, classes in these new classrooms are attended by 43 pupils. The conditions for learning still need to be substantially improved, however, in comparison with the average condition at schools in the 5th region they are still above average: Overall, we classify the **effectiveness** of the project as **just satisfactory (sub-rating 2)**.
- Overall, the construction costs per classroom (production efficiency) are adequate. Certain deficiencies have to be mentioned with regard to the execution of construction works and the bad construction material used; this was partly due to the insufficient supervision of the construction works by AGETIPE. Due to the relatively low internal efficiency in the Mopti region, which is reflected in the uneconomical use of the existing material and human resources, we rate the efficiency overall as slightly insufficient (sub-rating 4).
- The cooperative FC/TC project was of high relevance for the Mopti region, which counts among those parts of the country with the lowest education indicators. The higher enrolment rates, which constituted the overall objective of the project, mainly benefited girls. Though the dropout rate improved substantially, the level reached is still not satisfactory. The quantitative component of the overall objective was clearly reached; nevertheless, the results with regard to some qualitative aspects are not satisfactory. However, we consider the overall objective to have been more or less achieved. Overall, the cooperation with TC and the influence of the activities of SIP I at the schools had a positive impact. However, with a view to the future perspective of the children at the project schools it is imperative to measure the teaching and the learning achievements in the 5th region also by international standards. The intensive support from TC, the World Bank and USAID in the development of a new curriculum on the basis of the so-called convergent pedagogics ("pédagogie convergente") have so far not produced any definite success, even though internationally the results are already being presented as such. Still, the TC activities have an impact in the so-called "partenarial framework" of the SIP because TC can contribute concrete experience gained in the 5th region (advanced teacher training, qualification of administrative staff and mobilisation of parents and communities). Thus, we judge the significance/relevance of the project to be sufficient overall (sub-rating 3).

The final assessment of the developmental effectiveness of the project is sufficient (rating 3).

General conclusions and recommendations

Latrines on school grounds are a hygienic necessity and often a prerequisite for the regular school attendance of girls. The continuing acceptance problems on the part of pupils show that this type of educational projects requires careful analyses already during the project design phase as well as a monitoring together with parents and school committees already in the starting phase of the project.

According to recent studies, the high repeat rates, which are fairly frequent in French-speaking countries, have a negative impact on children's learning results. Moreover, the (internal) efficiency of school operation is unduly hampered. For this reason the repeat rates should generally be closely reviewed and children should repeat classes only in individual cases.

Abbreviations

AGETIPE	Agence des Travaux d'Intérêt Public pour l'Emploi
GER	Gross enrolment rate
FC	Financial Cooperation
KV	FC/TC cooperation project
MEN	Ministère de l'Education Nationale (National Ministry of Education)
PC	Pédagogie Convergente (Converging pedagogics)
PA	Programme appraisal
SIP	Social Infrastructure Programme
TC	Technical Cooperation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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 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.