

Mali: Promotion of Primary Schools

Ex-post evaluation

BMZ project number	1992 65 570	
Project executing agency	Ministère de l'Education National (MEN)	
Year of evaluation	2003	
	Project appraisal (planned)	Ex-post evaluation (actual)
Start of implementation	1/93	11/94
Implementation period	24 months	40 months
Investment costs	6.08 million EUR	4.63 million EUR
Counterpart contribution	0.99 million EUR	0.291 million EUR
Finance, of which FC funds	5.11 million EUR	4.34 million EUR
Other institutions/donors involved	incl. World Bank	Incl. World Bank
Performance rating	3	
• Significance/Relevance	3	
• Effectiveness	3	
• Efficiency	3	

Brief description, overall objective and project purpose with indicators

The overall objective of the project is to improve the quantity and quality of basic education provided nationwide in collaboration with the investment programme of the World Bank.

The purpose of the FC-funded project is to afford a larger number of children access to primary school by building classrooms and to help improve learning conditions in Bamako District and in the Koulikoro region by refurbishing classrooms and providing school furniture and teaching materials. The following achievement indicators were defined in the project appraisal report (PAR):

- Average enrolment rate at least 62% in Bamako District and 24% in the Koulikoro region
- Average pupil to classroom ratio at least 43 : 1
- Average teaching hours at least 600 hrs per year/classroom.

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

The allocation of the financed classrooms to Koulikoro (75%) and Bamako (25%) foreseen in the PAR was only changed slightly in favour of Koulikoro (plus 5%). On the explicit request of the project executing agency the number of new classroom buildings

was raised (296 from 190) and the refurbishments reduced accordingly (160 from 400). The majority of new buildings were extensions of existing schools and replacements for dilapidated and irreparable old buildings. This design alteration largely due to the local situation is in keeping with the large need for additional schoolrooms.

Water was available at all schools, in the schoolyard or directly adjacent so there was no need to build drinking-water wells as part of the project.

In view of the large need for schoolrooms, it was agreed to do without the comparatively costly erection of enclosures.

Due to problems in obtaining the educational material about half the schools could not be supplied with maps and teaching/learning aids until after the end of the project. As the pupils in the programme region already seemed to be provided with reading and mathematics books by other programmes, no finance was earmarked for a schoolbook component.

The intermittent assignment of the external consultant originally confined to altogether six months had to be extended to a total of 39.5 EM to offset deficits of the project executing agency and carry out the project properly and on schedule.

The project was completed with about 85% of funds disbursed, because the execution of the remaining measures would have incurred unwarranted consulting costs. In agreement with the project executing agency, the remaining funds were allocated to the project, Promotion of Primary Schools II (BMZ No. 1996 66 173) in the 5th region for erecting and fitting out additional classrooms.

Key results of impact analysis and performance rating

The follow-on costs of the programme are currently borne by the government and parents. A primary school pupil costs the government about FCFA 21,000 a year. This includes the prorata costs for teachers pay, schoolbooks and administrative costs. The increase in the education budget in favour of primary education on the one hand and the delegation of responsibility to the municipalities and districts on the other will be able to make a contribution to relieving the burden on the Ministry of Education and therefore to improving the supply of teachers and textbooks.

The not inconsiderable follow-on costs of the project for the parents comprise direct costs for the upkeep of the school, school clothing, school utensils, as well as indirect costs for the loss of earnings for the family whose children attend school instead of contributing to family income. According to a recent study, the direct costs for parents amount to as much as FCFA 27,000 per pupil and year. For a teacher family, for example, this makes up 3% of family income and considerably more for poor families. Although the cost estimate appears excessive for individual items and some savings can be made on school clothing and to a limited degree on stationery for the children, the substantial costs for parents are a definite impediment to school enrolment, particularly in rural areas.

Thanks to solid construction and the self-help abilities of the parents, school upkeep is ensured, if with limited means and at a low level.

The school-leaving qualification improves the economic chances of school-leavers. It improves the chances of individuals to earn or raise income. Evidence shows that a high balanced primary education level of the population makes a major contribution to national economic development.

The project is not expected to have any direct environmental impacts although school education in general and installing latrines in the schools in particular can have a long-term influence on hygiene awareness and bring about changes in environmental behaviour.

Despite the increase in the share of girls in the primary school classes, there are still difficulties with gender equity that are beyond the project's scope of influence.

The assumptions for project success defined in the PAR have occurred; the Malian government has recorded remarkable success in sectoral adjustment in education, for example: the overproportional increase in the budget share for primary education, improved access opportunities to basic education, higher efficiency by introducing more double-shift and multiclass teaching, reform of teachers' training, as well as expansion of training centres, recruitment of new teachers on a contractual basis, decentralized system of recruiting teacher trainees and teachers, introduction of initial lessons in the mother tongue in the majority of primary schools, adoption of schoolbook policy, preparation and production of new schoolbooks in several national languages.

Despite these major advances and successes, serious deficits remain in the sector: inadequate supply of teachers, far too few classrooms and not enough schoolbooks, because the schoolbook policy has not been implemented. Further measures to reduce the partially considerable disparities in the education sector are planned in the current regular sectoral investment programme.

Everyone involved in the sectoral investment programme is very cooperative, including the students and teachers associations, who appear to have abandoned their opposition to cutbacks for their interests groups in favour of the sector as a whole (cuts in grants, precedence to basic education over university education, abolition of civil-servant status for new teachers). Since the last school year, school and study operations have been conducted by these groups without any disruptions.

The projects of the current sectoral reform programme as well as those in administrative decentralization can substantially raise the sustainability of the project measures, if these projects can be implemented. Given the macroeconomic situation in Mali, it is still uncertain whether the sectoral reform programme adopted can be implemented in the long term at the planned scale without massive assistance from outside.

The developments outlined in the education sector give reason for a cautiously optimistic assessment of the sustainability of the projects carried out. A final overall rating of the project's developmental effectiveness of 3 would therefore appear warranted despite the sometimes substantial shortcomings cited.

Key

Developmentally successful: Ratings 1 to 3

Rating 1 Very high or high degree of developmental effectiveness

Rating 2 Satisfactory degree of 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 evaluating project success

The evaluation of a project's developmental effectiveness and its assignment in ex-post evaluation to one of the various levels of success described in more detail below addresses the following fundamental questions:

- Have the **project objectives** been reached to a sufficient degree (aspect of project **effectiveness**)?
- Does the project generate sufficient **significant developmental impacts** (project **relevance** and **significance** measured by the achievement of the predefined overall developmental objective and its political, institutional, socio-economic, socio-cultural ecological impacts)?
- Was/Is **funding/expenditure appropriate** for achieving the objectives and how can the project's microeconomic and macroeconomic impact be measured (aspect of **efficiency** of project design)?
- Where undesired (**side**) **effects** have occurred, are these acceptable?

Instead of treating **sustainability**, a key aspect in project evaluation, as a separate category, we look at it as a cross-sectional element of all four fundamental questions on project success. A project is sustainable if the project executing agency and/or the target group can continue to use the project facilities set up for an economically viable period of time in all or to carry on with the project activities on their own to beneficial effect after financial, organizational and/or technical assistance has ended.