Namibia: Primary Education Infrastructure in Rural Areas I and II

Ex post evaluation report

OECD sector	1122000 Primary school education	
BMZ project IDs	1997 65 033 (Phase I) 1999 65 898 (Phase II)	
Project executing agency	Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MoE)	
Consultant	Phase I: Jordaan & Oosthuysen; Africa Groups of Sweden; IBIS (WUS Denmark) Phase II: Jordaan & Oosthuysen; Windhoek Consulting Engineers; PAMWE Trust; IBIS (WUS Denmark); Axel Dainat Architects	
Year of the ex post evaluation report	**2008**	
	Project appraisal (plan)	**Ex post evaluation report (actual)**
Start of implementation	03/1997 (Phase I) 08/2000 (Phase II)	12/1997 (Phase I) 02/2001 (Phase II)
Period of implementation	42 months (Phase I) 37 months (Phase II)	44 months (Phase I) 92 months (Phase II)
Investment costs	EUR 5.3 million (Phase I) EUR 7.7 million (Phase II)	EUR 4.6 million (Phase I) EUR 10.4 million (Phase II)
Counterpart contribution	EUR 1.2 million (Phase I) EUR 1.1 million (Phase II)	EUR 1.0 million (Phase I) EUR 1.3 million (Phase II)
Financing, of which Financial Cooperation (FC) funds	EUR 4.0 million (Phase I) EUR 6.6 million (Phase II)	EUR 3.6 million (Phase I) EUR 9.1 million (Phase II)
Other institutions/donors involved	GTZ	GTZ
Performance rating	3	
• Relevance	3	
• Effectiveness	2	
• Efficiency	3	
• Overarching developmental impact	3	
• Sustainability	3	

Brief description, overall objective and programme objectives with indicators

The “Primary education infrastructure in rural areas I and II” projects were designed as open programmes and aimed to give children from poorer population groups equal opportunities for a better life through improvements in formal primary education (overall objective). The programme

objective was to create better teaching and learning conditions, primarily in the more densely populated north and sparsely populated southern Namibia, through the appropriate use of the primary school facilities financed through the programme. The target group comprised children of primary school age in rural areas in the school provinces of Namibia as well as teachers and school inspectors.

The programme was implemented as a cooperative project with GTZ, which advised the Namibian Ministry of Education on the introduction of a school cluster system. This system involves closer cooperation between schools and shifts responsibility for supervision, in part carried out by school inspectors, to district level. The aim was to promote the decentralisation process, to improve the efficiency of school supervision and to boost the quality of services provided by the schools. In the pilot phase, the school cluster system was introduced initially in the Rundu region only and then, over the course of the programme, extended to all other regions in the country.

In the two FZ projects, classrooms were built, and district offices, teacher training centres, school cluster centres as well as pupil and teacher accommodation facilities were set up. No new schools were constructed, but new buildings were added to existing schools. FC funding was also used to print 300,000 textbooks to promote classroom teaching in local African languages.

In Phase I, the indicator for measuring achievement of the overall objective was: the proportion of primary pupils between the ages of 7 and 13 has not fallen (net enrolment rate in 1995: 95.2%). For Phase II, the overall objective was to be considered achieved if the programme objective had been achieved.

The indicators for the achievement of the programme objective (Phases I and II) were:

1. At least 15 pupils use each newly built classroom.
2. Six school inspectors are performing their tasks in the Rundu region (Kavango) (Phase I only).
3. The pupil accommodation facilities are used to at least 80% of capacity.
4. The teacher accommodation facilities are used to at least 80% of capacity (Phase II only).
5. The ratio between the number of African-language textbooks to pupils in the lower grades has improved.
6. In all regions in Namibia the school inspectors have moved into the offices provided in the district offices, and the (school) cluster centres built within the framework of the programme are being properly used.

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

In the programme appraisal phase it was agreed that funding be channelled primarily into the provision of classrooms, school inspector offices and pupil and teacher accommodation facilities as well as other buildings considered expedient within the framework of the FC/TC measures (Phase II). Therefore, in addition to the infrastructure facilities mentioned above, financing was also provided for equipping district offices and cluster centres.

Under the open programme, the MoE allocated the funding based on the proposals made by the regional education offices. The decision-making criteria included:

- (extent of) capacity overload in the existing school facilities,
- traditional structures in the region,
- greatest need for new facilities,

- increase in pupil numbers,
- priorities set by the respective regions.

NGOs and local firms were to be commissioned to undertake some of the building measures. These NGOs had already gained experience in implementing primary school projects financed by other donors and had developed concepts that included hiring labour from within the user communities. These workers were also employed to execute the FC-financed projects. At the same time, the office infrastructure (district offices and cluster centres) financed by KfW supported the introduction of the cluster system developed with GTZ participation. The project appraisal report for Phase II made specific provision for financing the corresponding infrastructure facilities.

Key results of the impact analysis and performance rating

The indicators for the programme objective were achieved as follows:

1. There are an average of 33 pupils per classroom in the country as a whole. In the schools visited during the ex post evalution, the average was also 33, with individual values ranging from 25 to 36 pupils per classroom. All classrooms were being used. Indicator achieved.

2. According to interview responses, all six school inspectors are performing their tasks in the Rundu region, so that this indicator has also been achieved.

3. Official statistics on the use of the pupil hostels are not available. All school accommodation facilities visited during the ex post evaluation and final inspection were used to more than 80% of capacity, and capacity was often exceeded. The indicator is thus achieved.

4. The provision of teacher accommodation was partly intended to attract qualified teachers to more remote locations. In 1997, 23.5% of the schools had such facilities, and by 2005 this figure had risen to 29.5%. In the north, only 5% of the schools had such facilities in 1997, but by 2005 the figure had risen to around 14%. The teacher accommodation facilities visited within the framework of the ex post evaluation and final inspection visits were generally being adequately used; the evidence available suggests to more than 80% of capacity. The indicator is achieved.

5. Classes are taught in different languages in Namibia. Around 25% of primary school pupils (grades 1-3) are taught in English or Afrikaans, the remainder in 12 different African languages. There are still not enough textbooks in the African languages. For this reason, native-language textbooks were also procured within the framework of the cooperative project. The ex post evaluation showed that the provision of textbooks in the African languages most commonly spoken in Namibia had eased shortages in the lower grades. The indicator is therefore achieved.

6. In the pilot phase, the new school cluster and supervisory system was introduced only in the Rundu region and was extended subsequently to cover all other regions in Namibia. According to interview responses and information gained on site, the school inspectors are performing their tasks in all regions in the country and have moved into their offices in the administration buildings (most of them newly constructed). All school principals visited during the ex post evaluation were familiar with the new system. The general view is that the new system is being successfully implemented and helping reduce the level of isolation of teachers in remote regions. The indicator is therefore achieved.

The indicator for the achievement of the overall objective in Phase I was: the proportion of primary school pupils between the ages of 7 and 13 has not fallen (net enrolment rate in 1995:

95.2%). The net enrolment rate[1], determined by statistical analysis, has fluctuated widely since the appraisal of the programme (between 89.1 and 95.7), although we assume that survey methods are becoming increasingly systematic. However, the recorded value has decreased overall from 95.2% in 1995 to 92.3% in the 2007/2008 school year. The ratio between female and male pupils is balanced (a Gender Parity Index of >1 for girls). Accordingly, the indicator for the overall objective in Phase I is not achieved.

The overall objective for Phase II was to be considered achieved if the programme objective had been achieved. The programme objective indicators for Phase II were achieved, with the result that the indicator for the overall objective is also achieved in the formal sense. However, when assessing the achievement of the overall objective it is now evident that indicators should be used that primarily reflect quality aspects of school education. These can be measured in terms of repetition and drop-out rates or academic results etc. For this reason, details of gross enrolment, repetition, drop-out and promotion rates are also included below[2].

In Namibia, the gross enrolment rate[3] fell from 131.8% in 1997/1998 to 116.5% in 2007/2008. The repetition rate has risen steadily since the commencement of the programme. Current repetition rates stand at between 13.9% and 25.7% compared to 9.9% and 17.8% at the start of the programme. The drop-out rate declined in the same period. The promotion rate from primary to secondary education has fallen continually from 80.3% to currently 76.5%.

Overall, these values reflect a marked negative trend, as nearly all have deteriorated over the programme term. However, it is doubtful whether the programme could have had a decisive influence on the quality of teaching and learning. In view of the overall low level of funding and the concentration on infrastructure, the focus is clearly on improvement in access rather than improvement in learning performance. Nevertheless, the introduction of the new school cluster system and accommodation facilities for pupils and teachers has led to some improvements in quality (better supervision, improved attendance by pupils and teachers) in the Namibian education system.

Due to the concentration of the measures in the poorer regions of Namibia and the remoteness of some programme locations, we assume that the measures have been particulary effective in reaching children from poor households. The programme thus makes a direct contribution to poverty reduction.

In terms of access to education, no serious gender specific differences were observed either during the programme appraisal or at the time of the ex post evaluation. In some cases, girls outnumber boys, even though birth rates are balanced. Apparently this can be attributed to the fact that boys, even those of primary school age, make an important contribution to family earnings (agriculture and animal husbandry) and therefore do not go to school. We can thus observe that boys have a slight gender-specific disadvantage.

Summary evaluation of the developmental efficacy of the programme

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[1] Net enrolment rate: the proportion of pupils of primary school age who attend primary school expressed as a percentage of the total number of persons in the age group who are required to attend primary school.

[2] All data taken from EMIS

[3] Gross enrolment rate: the proportion of all children attending primary school (regardless of age and thus including “overage” pupils) expressed as a percentage of persons in the corresponding age group required to attend primary school.

Relevance: The new buildings are easing bottlenecks in educational infrastructure. However, this alone is not sufficient to significantly improve the quality of the education system. With the benefit of hindsight, poor infrastructure was not the single core problem. With a view to increasing relevance, the programme could have included more flanking measures aimed at enhancing quality (teacher training, incentive systems) and securing improved access (school hostels in the north) in addition to upgrading infrastructure. In summary, we evaluate the relevance of the programme as satisfactory (rating 3).

Effectiveness: The indicators for the achievement of the programme objective were met. However, from the current perspective, there is some doubt whether the indicators were appropriate, as they focus exclusively on the physical use of infrastructure facilities. At the time of the ex post evaluation, indicators relating to the availability and use of textbooks and to school cluster centres were added (indicators 5 and 6). They are more suitable than the original indicators for documenting improvements in learning and teaching conditions. We evaluate the effectiveness of programme Phases I and II as good, since the results match expectations and no serious deficiencies were identified (rating 2).

Efficiency: As only limited information on the costs of the individual classrooms was available, it is not currently possible to confirm compliance with the guideline value of USD 10,000 per classroom. The average costs were EUR 12,270 in Phase I and EUR 8,836 in Phase II. The difference is primarily due to exchange rate fluctuations in the Namibian dollar. In some cases, the infrastructure facilities were not used to adequate capacity levels or not at all. These facilities were therefore completely cost inefficient, although they represent only a small proportion of the facilities in the overall programme. In summary, the efficiency of the overall programme is assessed as satisfactory (rating 3).

Overarching developmental impact: In the programme planning phase, the overarching development objective was to improve primary school education in order to enable children from poorer population groups to achieve a higher standard of living. The indicators are school enrolment rates, improvement in graduation/success rates and a decrease in the repetition and drop-out rates. According to data supplied by the MoE, net enrolment rates fluctuated between 1997/1998 and 2007/2008 but showed a generally negative trend. Repetition rates in grades 1 to 7 are rising. At the same time the promotion rate between levels has fallen markedly. However, we assume that the indicator values would have been worse had the cooperative programme not been implemented. In addition, the interviews conducted at the schools indicate that improvements have been achieved in the educational indicators; this suggests that the statistically determined negative trend could be attributable to more systematic and improved survey methods. HIV/AIDS is a problem in all schools visited during the mission. There is general awareness of the UNICEF-backed information and education measures, and these are being implemented. However, pupils are not obliged to take part and do so on a voluntary basis only. In summary, we evaluate the overarching developmental impact as satisfactory (rating 3).

Sustainability: Although infrastructure maintenance is being carried out by the schools and the district offices/regional education offices, maintenance deficits were observed in some schools. The information available on the pilot project introduced by the MoE, in which certain schools are given a maintenance and repair budget, indicates that the problem has been recognised and is being addressed. However, it will not be possible to assess the results and sustainability until the pilot project has been completed. The school cluster system was developed with GTZ participation within the framework of the cooperative project. On the positive side, the MoE intends to continue to support the new system. There are, however, concerns that the discontinuation of GTZ support could impair operability and thus endanger sustainability. At the time of the ex post evaluation, sustainability is therefore assessed as satisfactory (rating 3).

Taking into consideration the above factors, we assess the overarching developmental impact of the programme as satisfactory (rating 3).

General conclusions and recommendations

Although it is essential to provide adequate and sufficient infrastructure facilities in the schools sector, this alone will not improve the quality of education. Other factors must also be considered and corresponding measures implemented. It is essential that pupils be in good health, as this affects their ability to learn (long and hazardous journeys to school and poor nutrition put this in jeopardy), and teachers must be qualified and motivated. If a DC programme addresses these issues piecemeal through individual components, it may produce positive results, but it will not change the educational situation as a whole. With this in mind, we stress the importance of the two-pronged approach adopted by KfW and GTZ within the framework of this cooperative programme, namely combining institutional changes (GTZ) with the implementation of the infrastructure measures (KfW) necessary to support these changes.

Notes on the methods used to evaluate project success (project rating)

Projects are evaluated on a six-point scale, the criteria being relevance, effectiveness (outcome), "overarching developmental impact" and efficiency. The ratings are also used to arrive at a final assessment of a project's overall developmental efficacy. The scale is as follows:

1 Very good rating that clearly exceeds expectations

2 Good rating fully in line with expectations and without any significant shortcomings

3 Satisfactory rating – project falls short of expectations but the positive results dominate

4 Unsatisfactory rating – significantly below expectations, with negative results dominating despite discernible positive results

5 Clearly inadequate rating – despite some positive partial results the negative results clearly dominate

6 The project has no positive results or the situation has actually deteriorated

A rating of 1 to 3 is a positive assessment and indicates a successful project while a rating of 4 to 6 is a negative assessment and indicates a project which has no sufficiently positive results.

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 an improvement is very unlikely. 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. A rating of 1 to 3 indicates a “successful” project while a rating of 4 to 6 indicates an “unsuccessful” project. In using (with a project-specific weighting) the five key factors to form a overall rating, it should be noted that a project can generally only be considered developmentally “successful” if the achievement of the project objective (“effectiveness”), the impact on the overall objective (“overarching developmental impact”) and the sustainability are considered at least “satisfactory” (rating 3).