



Project evaluation: summary report

Benin/West Africa II: Supporting capacity development in the education sector (Pro-Educ)

Project number:	2013.2273.4
Sectoral attribution (CRS code):	Education policy and administration in the education system (11110)
Project objective:	School authorities in Benin are able to perform their tasks of school supervision and school development more efficiently at individual, organisational and institutional level.
Project term:	January 2014 – January 2017
Project volume:	EUR 4,000,000
Commissioning party:	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
Lead executing agency:	Ministry of Preschool and Primary Education in Benin (MEMPE)
Implementing organisations (in the partner country):	
Other participating development organisations:	
Target groups:	Experts and managers at the school authorities

Project description

The Government of Benin has given priority to improving the quality of education for a number of years. Its educational goals to provide primary education of improved quality and equal opportunities for all children by 2015 are aligned with the goals of Education for All (EFA) and are described in the National Education Sector Development Plan PDDSE (*Plan Décennal de Développement du Secteur de l'Éducation 2006 – 2015*). The PDDSE's projections are calculated up to 2020; an updated version of the programme will probably be available in 2017.

The education sector is one of five pilot sectors for decentralisation under the National Decentralisation Policy (2009). In future, the Ministry is to be solely responsible for developing strategies related to education policy, whereas local education authorities in the provinces will be in charge of operational application of the policy.

The services of the 85 provincial school authorities are of poor quality because they are obliged to provide these services with too few staff that have insufficient expertise. The educational advisors are overstretched. The rare school visits they perform, under time pressure, are of little benefit to teachers and do little to improve their teaching performance. The processing of statistical data on schools by administrative staff does not meet the municipalities' demands for needs-based local educational planning.

The project strengthens the capacities of experts and managers at 56 of the 85 school authorities and advises them on improving their school inspection and development services. At the project's four outposts, local advisors maintain regular contact with the directors of school authorities, agree with them on individual goals for change processes and enter into advisory agreements. Gaps in expertise are filled by means of needs-based continuing training courses at national initial and

continuing training institutions. With this purpose in mind, the project supports these institutions in further developing their range of initial and continuing training courses. Improved performance capabilities on the part of the school authorities in the areas of school inspection and school development are expected to promote the development and application of skills-based teaching concepts and methods at school level, improve the quality of teacher training and cooperation between schools and municipalities, and increase teacher attendance. At the overarching level, this is intended to improve the quality and relevance of primary education and thereby lead to better access to primary education and equal participation in education by girls and boys. The hypotheses are considered to be verifiable and coherent.

The project's advisory activities have made a major contribution to improving school inspection, the presence of teaching staff at the schools, adherence to teaching hours and, indirectly, to mobilising parents. The functionality of the advised school authorities has been enhanced, and school statistics are more readily available.

Good results are achieved directly or indirectly also by means of measures that motivate teachers in their work and make lessons more enjoyable (work meetings on improving teaching and teaching hours, theatre forum, use of complementary didactic materials, art activities).

The indicators largely meet the SMART criteria. They are specific, relevant and time-bound. However, some of them cannot be correctly measured or achieved (indicators 1 and 4). The reason for teacher absences, and thus the reduction in teacher absences that were not due to illness or strikes (indicator 1), could not be measured. The evaluation team therefore focused on the improvements achieved during the project concerning the increase in the actual number of teaching hours, and specifically on evaluating hours of absence at the start and end of the school year. The team was provided with the relevant figures. The indicator should be changed so as to measure not the reduction in teacher absence, but the increase in actual lessons given, based on compliance at the start of the school year. The project has no means of influencing the fourth indicator. It is situated outside the system boundary and was therefore given less consideration in the rating.¹

Up to 2015, the project was geared to supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially Goal 2, 'Achieve universal primary education', and Goal 3, 'Promote gender equality and empower women'. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015, the project has focused on supporting the achievement of SDG 4, 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all', especially Target 4.1: 'By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes'. As a basis for assessing the impact dimension, the evaluation team developed assessment standards that are in line with the project's results model and with the offer dating from 2013. The results model shows that achievement of the module objective is meant to contribute towards improving (a) the quality of the education offered at municipal level, (b) quality assurance management within the education system, (c) access to schooling and the continued attendance of girls and boys at primary schools. Since the project's target group primarily consists of experts and managers at the school authorities, whose work is intended to safeguard the quality of primary education, it should be examined (d) to what extent capacity development at the school authorities has led to the development and use of skills-based and pupil-centred teaching and learning methods and materials at school level.

Basis for assessment of the OECD-DAC criteria:	Individual and overall rating of the OECD-DAC criteria:
<p>To determine the TC measure's overall rating, calculate the average of the individual ratings of the five OECD-DAC criteria:</p> <p>14 – 16 points: very successful 12 – 13 points: successful 10 – 11 points: rather successful 8 – 9 points: rather unsatisfactory 6 – 7 points: unsatisfactory 4 – 5 points: very unsatisfactory</p>	<p>Relevance: 16 points, very successful Effectiveness: 13 points, successful Impact: 11 points, rather successful Efficiency: 13 points, successful Sustainability: 10 points, rather successful</p> <p>Overall, the TC measure is rated 'successful' with a total of 12.6 out of 16 points.</p>

¹The objectives indicators do not all comply with the SMART criteria. That means some of them are not specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. This may limit the information provided by the findings.

Relevance (Are we doing the right thing?)

The measures carried out in the project's three fields of activity are embedded in Benin's poverty and growth strategy and in the national education strategy (10-year plan for education, PDDSE 2006-2015). The project sets itself the objective of increasing the capability of school authorities to perform their core tasks. Efficient school authorities help to improve the quality of education at primary schools. The project therefore aims to solve one of the core problems in the education sector. It also makes a contribution to achieving SDG 4 (see above). The advisory approach focused on capacity development promotes ownership and complies with the principles of international declarations (Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda for Action). Strengthening the performance capability of school authorities encourages them to assume responsibility and increases their willingness to engage in efficient technical and policy dialogue as part of the devolution process, and thus contributes to good governance (PD/GG1). Interactive, skills-based teaching and learning methods are trialled that make it possible to provide individual support to male and female pupils and that promote participation in education by girls (GG1). Most of the project's interventions are in rural areas. Advice is provided on integrating rural development issues into teaching design and teaching methods (LE1). The project is in line with BMZ's development-policy objectives in the education sector (BMZ Education Strategy 2015: Creating equitable opportunities for quality education).

The relevance of the TC measure is rated 'very successful' with 16 points.

Effectiveness (Will we achieve the project's objective?)

Objectives indicator 1:	Target value according to the offer	Current status according to the project evaluation
In the sphere of responsibility of the participating school authorities, teacher absence that is not due to illness or strikes drops to an average 15% of teaching hours.	15%	At the time of the evaluation mission, no adequately evaluated data were available to prove the achievement of module objectives indicator 1. Based on data surveys carried out by the project, only the presence of teachers at the start of the school year at selected schools in 2014/15 and 2015/16 could be measured: 32% increase. Data on teacher presence over the school year will be available at the end of 2016.
Objectives indicator 2	Target value according to the offer	Current status according to the project evaluation
Suitable technical modules of the existing integrated training concept for school authority directors, educational advisors and administrative officers have been integrated into the offerings of the relevant state training institutions (CeFAL, EFPEEN).	Suitable modules have been integrated.	Four modules have been integrated into the offerings of EFPEEN. Six modules have been integrated into the training courses offered by CeFAL. The objectives indicator has been fully met.
Objectives indicator 3	Target value according to the offer	Current status according to the project evaluation
Seventy per cent of the teachers trained by educational advisors improve their knowledge of mathematics and maths teaching (classes 1-6).	Seventy per cent of teachers improve their knowledge.	79.78% of the trained teachers improved their knowledge (random sample of a group of 120 teachers). The indicator has been fully met.

Objectives indicator 4	Target value according to the offer	Current status according to the project evaluation
In 25 of 40 municipal education forums in the catchment area of the supported school authorities, concrete measures are taken to address ways to promote continued school attendance by girls.	25 education forums address specific measures.	Despite various awareness-raising and advisory measures, there is no indication so far that the indicator will be achieved by the end of the current phase. The indicator goes beyond the project's system boundary, since the project has no direct influence on the establishment of education forums.

The evaluation team comes to the conclusion that objectives indicators 1, 2 and 3 will probably be *fully* achieved and that objectives indicator 4 will probably *not* be achieved by the end of the project.

The effectiveness of the TC measure is rated 'successful' with 13 points.

Overarching development results (impact) (Are we contributing to the achievement of overarching development results?)

The project shows positive impacts on the improved services of school authorities, the institutional mainstreaming of the modules developed by the project in the teaching operations of the educational training school, and compliance with set teaching hours. School directors in the project's intervention areas have formed voluntary teaching units and, on their own initiative, have trained teachers at a total of 229 schools in the development and application of complementary teaching concepts and methods. The open teaching method introduced together with the complementary teaching materials helps to make lessons at these schools increasingly pupil-centred. The integration of the training modules developed under the project into the courses offered by the national training institution for educational management staff (EFPEEN) strengthens the latter's autonomy. There is now a demand for its services from other organisations, e.g. currently the World Bank. The devolution of the project that involved setting up outposts and the advice provided to school authority directors on conducting activities related to the jointly agreed goals have made a major contribution to improving school inspection, the presence of teaching staff at the schools, adherence to teaching hours and, indirectly, to mobilising parents. The instruction ('lettre circulaire') issued by the Ministry for Preschool and Primary Education can be taken as a sign that the project activities are appreciated by policy-makers. This helped to ensure that teaching hours following examinations up to the start of the school holidays at the end of the 2015/16 school year were complied with at most of the project locations. However, these impacts are as yet geographically limited.

The impact of the TC measure is rated 'rather successful' with 11 points.

Efficiency (Are the objectives being achieved cost-effectively?)

As well as its office in Cotonou, the project has four outposts in the provinces to enable continuous provision of advisory services to the school authorities. The decision to decentralise the project in this phase helped to significantly reduce transaction costs compared with the previous phase. However, the functional costs remain relatively high (55% of overall expenditure). The project is therefore endeavouring to harness cost-saving synergies by cooperating with other TC measures and international donors. Accounting and administrative work at the outposts are handled via good cooperation with other TC measures, so there was no need to recruit additional administrative staff. The ProSol TC project also financed appropriate materials for the pupil-oriented teaching activities in order to integrate themes of environmental relevance into school lessons. Furthermore, the project cooperated with the TC project 'Supporting decentralisation and municipal development' in the joint field of activity of municipal planning, with national actors (e.g. the NGO WANEP as regards gender), and with international technical and financial partners in areas such as compliance with set teaching hours and good governance in school management.

The efficiency of the TC measure is rated 'successful' with 13 points.

Sustainability (Are the positive results durable?)

The project succeeded in making some of the tried and tested strategies sustainable. In fields of activity 1 and 2, strategies and instruments were successfully tested, and the partner wants them to be rolled out in modified form at national level with support from the project. The project identified four divisions responsible for mainstreaming the concepts and methods it had developed: the Teaching Inspectorate Division (*Inspection Générale Pédagogique du Ministère*, IGPM), the Decentralisation in the Education Sector and Cooperation Division (DDEC), the Human Resource Management Division (DRH) and the Planning and Future Development Division (DPP). The Ministry appointed a contact person (focal point) at each division. However, the staff named did not have adequate skills or influence at either technical or hierarchical level to sustainably

mainstream the project approaches at the Ministry. The project has no mandate in the current phase for formalised cooperation with the provincial education authorities (DDEMPs), which play an important role as interfaces between the Ministry and the school authorities. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Preschool and Primary Education did comply with the project's wish to provide offices for the project's technical advisors at the premises of these authorities. Owing to the pro-active approach of the advisors at these locations, it was possible to coordinate activities between the DDEMPs and the school authorities, and to carry out some joint activities. The project managed to increase the awareness of the partner and donors for the added value of capacity development. The directors and experts at the school authorities are highly motivated to achieve the goals agreed with the project to improve their performance capability, despite the sometimes discouraging lack of resources. The capacities of partners to take action and the development and transfer of quality standards, good practices and replicable innovative approaches and models in the education sector should be further promoted and institutionalised to support their broad impact and sustainability.

It can be presumed that the capacity development measures and innovative teaching and learning methods have been incorporated into the work processes and development strategies of some school authorities and schools in the intervention area, and will continue to be used beyond the work of this project. However, there is a lack of institutional mainstreaming at national level to promote broad impact. This should be the starting point for a follow-on measure.

The sustainability of the TC measure is rated 'rather successful' with 10 points.

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