

# A.I.D. EVALUATION SUMMARY PART I

(BEFORE FILLING OUT THIS FORM, READ THE ATTACHED INSTRUCTIONS)

ISA 85700

IDENTIFICATION DATA

<b>A. REPORTING A.I.D. UNIT:</b> USAID/Guatemala (Mission or AID/W Office)  (ES# )	<b>B. WAS EVALUATION SCHEDULED IN CURRENT FY ANNUAL EVALUATION PLAN?</b> yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> allpod <input type="checkbox"/> ad hoc <input type="checkbox"/> Eval. Plan Submission Date: FY <u>92</u> Q <u>0</u>	<b>C. EVALUATION TIMING</b> Interim <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> final <input type="checkbox"/> ex post <input type="checkbox"/> other <input type="checkbox"/> <div style="font-size: 2em; text-align: center;">PD-ABH-429</div>			
<b>D. ACTIVITY OR ACTIVITIES EVALUATED</b> (List the following information for project(s) or program(s) evaluated; if not applicable, list title and date of the evaluation report)					
Project #	Project/Program Title (or title & date of evaluation report)	First PROAG or equivalent (FY)	Most recent PACD (mo/yr)	Planned LOP Cost ('000)	Amount Obligated to Date ('000)
520-0374	Basic Education Strengthening (BEST) Project	FY 89	July, 1995	\$30,000	\$17,186

ACTIONS

<b>E. ACTION DECISIONS APPROVED BY MISSION OR AID/W OFFICE DIRECTOR</b>  Action(s) Required	Name of officer responsible for Action	Date Action to be Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conduct a strategic reassessment of the BEST project objectives, design, and strategy</li> <li>● Redesign the project to adjust the Project focus from the activity level to the policy dialogue level</li> <li>● Develop a new policy analysis component to focus on specific policy constraints as well as on project strategy and dialogue</li> <li>● Use the Mission long-term strategic plans in education as a basis for conducting a focused program of policy dialogue</li> <li>● In the Project redesign, develop both design and implementation strategies to strengthen the management capacity of the Ministry</li> <li>● Restructure the project management plan to simplify management of the project</li> <li>● In the project redesign, establish an integrated framework of design, financial, and implementation strategies</li> </ul>	Susan Clay, Education Officer	The Project Paper Amendment incorporated all major recommendations into the redesign of the BEST Project. The Project Paper Amendment was completed in May 1993
(Attach extra sheet if necessary)		

APPROVALS

**F. DATE OF MISSION OR AID/W OFFICE REVIEW OF EVALUATION:** mo 3 day     yr 93

**G. APPROVALS OF EVALUATION SUMMARY AND ACTION DECISIONS:**

	Project/Program Officer	Representative of Borrower/Grantee	Evaluation Officer	Mission or AID/W Office Director
Signature Typed Name	Susan Clay <i>Susan Clay</i>	<i>Peasegura</i>	<i>M. Klumbout</i>	<i>P. Mellars</i>
Date:	<u>11/26/93</u>	<u>11/30/93</u>	<u>11/29/93</u>	<u>11/30/93</u>

H. EVALUATION ABSTRACT (do not exceed the space provided)

The Project is focused on improving the quality and efficiency of primary education services in Guatemala by supporting improvements in four major education areas: bilingual education services for the Mayan-speaking population; support services to improve classroom instruction; research and development on low-cost alternative instructional methodologies (one-room school, girls' education, and interactive radio); and support for improvements in the management and planning functions of the Ministry of Education through the development of a computerized management information system, standardized achievement tests, and a research program. The BEST Project is a six-year effort that provides \$30 million to Guatemala's Ministry of Education (MOE) and is supported by an additional \$31 million in counterpart funds. The Project includes 16 separate activities in four components that are designed to address the institutional, financial, and technical constraints to productive, efficient education in Guatemala. This mid-term evaluation was conducted by a ten-person team from Creative Associates International and consisted of a review of project documentation and products, structured interviews and focus-group discussions with recipients of technical assistance, classroom observations, and interviews/focus groups with teachers, parents, and students in project areas. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the progress to date in meeting project implementation goals and to assess the intermediary effects of the project after two years of implementation and make recommendations for improving the project design and implementation.

ABSTRACT

I. EVALUATION COSTS

1. Evaluation Team Name	Affiliation	Contract Number OR TDY Person Days	Contract Cost OR TDY Cost (US\$)	Source of Funds
John Gillies	Team Leader Creative Associates International	520-0374-C-00-2221-00	\$2,44,000	Project Funded

2. Mission/Office Professional Staff Person-Days (estimate) 25 days

3. Borrower/Grantee Professional Staff Person-Days (estimate) 25 days

COSTS

2

# A.I.D. EVALUATION SUMMARY PART II

## J. SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Try not to exceed the 3 pages provided) Address the following items:

- Purpose of activity(ies) evaluated
- Purpose of evaluation and Methodology used
- Findings and conclusions (relate to questions)
- Principal recommendations
- Lessons learned

Mission or Office: USAID/Guatemala

Date this summary prepared: \_\_\_\_\_

Title and Date of Full Evaluation Report: Improving Basic Education: A Midterm Evaluation of the BEST Project

### 1. Purpose of evaluation and methodology used

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation was to assess the progress made after three years of implementation. Based on the findings and analysis, the evaluation team made recommendations for changes in the design and implementation procedures to increase the probability that project investments will meet the goal and purpose of the BEST project. For the 16 BEST Project activities, the Scope of Work (SOW) for the evaluation established six cross-cutting objectives and related questions that address design and implementation issues as reflected in the following key areas:

- goal and purpose
- program objectives
- implementation effectiveness
- project impact
- project innovations
- organizing principles of the technical assistance contract

An evaluation team composed of 10 specialists in different fields used multiple methodologies to review project accomplishments from different perspectives and to cross-validate conclusions. The methodologies included a review of project documents and correspondence; a review of products; structured interviews with project participants in AID, the Ministry of Education, the institutional contractor (the Academy for Educational Development), the Ministry of Finance, SEGEPLAN, and the private sector; focus group discussions with recipients of technical assistance; classroom observations; and interviews/focus groups with teachers, parents, and students in project areas. Five local field researchers assisted with the data collection. The team visited 34 schools; 20 rural, 10 suburban, and 4 urban. Forty-five teachers, school administrators, and students were interviewed. Eight groups of parents participated in focus group discussions. The team assessed progress as it related to evaluation objectives and project activities.

### 2. Purpose of activity evaluated

The BEST Project is a six-year effort that provides \$30 million to Guatemala's Ministry of Education (MOE) and is supported by an additional \$31 million in counterpart funds. The Project includes 16 separate activities in four components that are designed to address the institutional, financial, and technical constraints to productive, efficient education in Guatemala.

### 3. Findings and conclusions

The major findings and conclusions are:

- The current project EOPS are not achievable within the life of the project due to a reliance on activities of other donors that were not initiated as expected.
- Using the budget increases to date as an indication, the key policy indicator of increased budget for education is not likely to be achieved by PACD.
- Key project activities are not directed toward achieving the policy objectives and should be refocused.
- The existing mix of activities is mainly focused on improving the quality of classroom teaching and to a lesser extent on efficiency, equity, administration, and coverage.
- The project is not focused on the institutionalization of activities and needs to refocus on ensuring that institutional policies, budgetary commitments, and administrative and management capacity exist to support the activities.
- The project is too management intensive on both USAID and the Ministry of Education's part.
- The project PACD should be extended to permit the achievement of the reanalyzed objectives.
- The project planning needs to become more decentralized and less bureaucratic to permit greater participation and thus ensure the sustainability of the activities.

### 4. Principal recommendations

The major recommendations are:

- Conduct a strategic reassessment of the BEST Project objectives, design and strategy.
- Adjust the focus of the BEST Project from the activity level to the policy dialogue level.
- Address the policy constraints through specific activities as well as project strategy and dialogue.
- Use the Mission long-term strategic plans in education as an opportunity for focused policy dialogue.
- Develop both design and implementation strategies to strengthen the management capacity of the Ministry.
- Explore ways to simplify management of the project.
- Establish an integrated framework of design, financial, and implementation strategies.

Specific recommendations for activities:

- Strengthen the administration of bilingual education to ensure institutionalization and sustainability capabilities.
- Increase resources to the Girls' Education Program to ensure wider diffusion of the methodologies throughout the education system and examine the cost-effectiveness of the girls' scholarship program,
- Complete the one-room school pilot program in the 100 schools before expanding and focus on institutionalizing methodologies throughout the education system.
- Ensure GOG administrative and budget support, improve project management, and provide training in the use of information for decision making.
- Support the MOE initiative to create a policy research institute.

## 5. Lessons learned

- The Project was designed within the context of a 15 to 20 year commitment to the Guatemalan education sector. It was intended that a follow-on project would be designed to further expand the innovations being tested under BEST. A principle of project design was to fully fund Project innovations (pilot activities) during the first stage of development. Once project innovations were achieving impact, negotiations were to take place with the Ministry of Education (MOE) to incrementally absorb the costs of expanding these pilot activities to other regions of the country. A foreign policy shift in emphases away from Central America and a reduction in funding levels, however, has required the Mission to withdraw early from the education sector. The reduction in funding and the need to ensure MOE absorption of costs and institutionalization of activities has required the Mission to negotiate these changes before data are available on the cost-effectiveness of the activities and on the impact of the activities on quality, efficiency, and equity. While this strategy is a viable one in a country where a long-term commitment can be guaranteed, in an environment of changing circumstances and conditions, it is preferable to employ a design strategy that requires absorption of costs and focuses initially on institutionalization.

**K. ATTACHMENTS (List attachments submitted with this Evaluation Summary; always attach copy of full evaluation report, even if one was submitted earlier)**

ATTACHMENTS

1. Project Paper Amendment 1, which incorporates the findings and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation in the revised project design.

**L. COMMENTS BY MISSION, AID/W OFFICE AND BORROWER/GRANTEE**

MISSION COMMENTS ON FULL REPORT

1. The evaluation fulfilled the objectives of the scope of work. The evaluation recommendations were each assessed and incorporated into a redesign which reduced the number of activities from 16 to 10, three of which will be phased out during 1993 and 1994. Based on an evaluation recommendation, a major new focus of the Project will be on policy analysis and management strengthening.
2. The mid-term evaluation was conducted three years into the grant period for a design that was originally conceived to be a ten-year effort (implementation had been underway for two years when the evaluation was conducted). Because the majority of the Project activities were not under full implementation the evaluation team had limited activities on which to judge project effects. Despite this limitation, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations permitted the Project to make major changes in the Project design and objectives at a critical point in the implementation schedule.