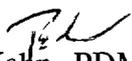


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ACTION MEMORANDUM FOR THE MISSION DIRECTOR

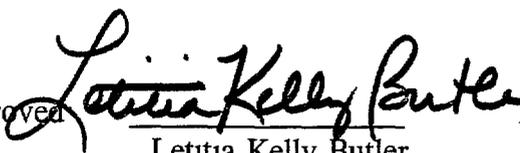
From  Robert Kallin, PDM

Subject Project Assistance Completion Report (PACR) - FUNDAZUCAR Girls' Education Component of the Basic Education Strengthening (BEST) Project (No 520-0374)

Date October 22, 1998

Action Requested That you sign below approving the subject PACR

Discussion The attached PACR was partially drafted by the Activity Manager for the FUNDAZUCAR Girls' Education Component of the BEST Project before her departure from the Mission in late 1997. Final drafting of the report was completed by the Chief of the Office of Health and Education following receipt by the Mission in June, 1998 of a CDIE assessment of the girls' education component of the BEST project, of which the FUNDAZUCAR Agreement was an integral activity. The PACR has been prepared in accordance with Mission Order 3 2 , PACD and Project Phase-out Procedures

Approved  Date 11/23/98
Letitia Kelly Butler
Acting Director

Disapproved _____ Date _____
Letitia Kelly Butler
Acting Director

Project Assistance Completion Report

FUNDAZUCAR Component of Project 520-0374 Basic Education Strengthening Project (BEST)

Cooperative Agreement 520-0374-A-00-3116-00

I Project Summary

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| A Date of Authorization | November 15, 1992 |
| B Project Assistance Completion Date (FUNDAZUCAR) | December 31, 1996 |
| C Amount Authorized (FUNDAZUCAR) | U S \$298,430 |
| D Amount Obligated (FUNDAZUCAR) | U S \$248,746 |
| E Counterpart Contribution | U S Q1,493,761 |
| F Implementing Agency | FUNDAZUCAR |

II Project Description

In 1991, USAID/Guatemala added a Girls' Education component (called Eduque a la Nina, in Spanish) to the BEST Project to address the demonstrated gap in girls' enrollment, promotion and completion rates in rural Guatemala. The purpose of the component was to determine cost-effective strategies for promoting girls' attendance and completion of primary school. These strategies were then to be considered by the Girls' Education Association and the Ministry of Education for expansion and replication in other communities of the country. Five public- and private-sector organizations participated in the component, under the coordination of the Girls' Education Association. In 1995, the Japanese Agency for International Cooperation (JICA), initiated support for girls' education under the USAID-JICA Common Agenda. JICA provided its support to the Ministry of Education. A local NGO, the Fundación del Azúcar (FUNDAZUCAR), was USAID's major implementing partner for girls' education, supported by a Cooperative Agreement.

FUNDAZUCAR implemented the project by testing the four following interventions

- 1 Small scholarships for girls (Q25 or about \$5 00/month at that time), consistent with global research on the potential importance of economic incentives to motivate parents to send their daughters to school,
- 2 Mayan community outreach workers assigned to assist in the organization of parents' committees and to provide academic tutoring and other support to girls,

- 3 Parent committees responsible for selecting scholarship recipients and monitoring project activities at the community level, and,
- 4 Educational materials for students and teachers including a teacher's manual, two posters, a flip chart, four reading books and a collection of children's literature and music focused on the education of girls (in both Spanish and four Mayan languages)

The four interventions were grouped into three packages for application at the community level (1) scholarship/outreach worker/parent committees, (2) outreach worker/parent committee, and (3) educational materials. The packages were then tested on a sample of 36 Ministry of Education primary schools (with 12 comparison schools) selected from 6 priority Departments (with the worst girls' education statistics). Each of the communities selected spoke one of the four major Mayan languages (Q'eqchi', Kaqchikel, K'iche', and Mam).

II Description of FUNDAZUCAR Cooperative Agreement

Agreement Objective and Result

The **objective of the Cooperative Agreement** was to fund FUNDAZUCAR to design, implement and evaluate potential strategies to promote girls' attendance and completion of primary school. The **specific purpose of the Agreement** was to create, apply, and test/evaluate different combinations of interventions in order to define a minimum package (or packages) of support to girls and their families to enable more girls to complete four to six grades of primary school.

Overall Result FUNDAZUCAR implemented the project as designed, identifying three packages of interventions, training teachers, developing educational materials, and carrying out the interventions in the schools/communities. The key findings of the pilot test were

The scholarship package was the most effective of the incentives for keeping girls in school and completing primary grades. The greatest impact of this package was on girls in the first three grades, especially first grade, where for rural schools as a whole, over 40% of girls drop out. During each year of the project, first and second grade girls receiving scholarships had significantly higher completion and promotion rates than girls without scholarships. When first graders were examined individually during the 1995 and 1996 school year, it was found that 10% more of the scholarship girls who had been promoted returned to begin second grade than promoted girls without scholarships. Although scholarship recipients generally had slightly higher completion and promotion rates in fourth through sixth grade, the rates for both groups of girls (with and without scholarships) were similar.

The materials package showed limited potential leading to higher percentage of attendance and overall completion rates than did the comparison group. However, promotion rates were lower in the intervention group - for girls in upper grades and especially for girls in first grade.

The outreach package (occasional visits by outreach personnel to work with parent committees on the importance of keeping girls in school) was not an effective incentive. On most indicators, this package had overall percentages similar to or lower than those of girls in the comparison group. This was especially true in terms of first grade promotion where girls were 10% below the comparison group.

None of the intervention packages appears to have had an impact on classroom interaction/participation patterns. This is likely due to the fact that the scholarship and outreach packages were focused more on the school level than the classroom level. With the materials package, the classroom materials were too advanced for early grades, and teachers were given no specific training in using the materials to stimulate greater girls' participation in the classroom.

Of the three packages, the scholarship package was the most cost-effective. The scholarship package had a cost per sixth grade graduate of Q7332, which was Q793 and Q2122 lower than the outreach package and the materials package, respectively. The cost of a sixth grade graduate from the comparison schools was Q5326. As this was a research and design effort, in which new elements such as training Ministry personnel were added throughout the program, costs remained fairly uniform over the three period of the intervention phase. Administrative costs averaged slightly over 44% of the total scholarship program costs over the three years and training costs represented about 19% of the program costs. Thus, if this 63% of the total program costs could be reduced over time, the cost differential between providing and not providing scholarships could be greatly reduced.

Specific Objectives and Results of the Agreement

Design packages/combinations of interventions aimed at ensuring girls' retention, promotion and completion of primary school (based on the baseline study of lessons learned from previous girls' scholarship programs)

Result This objective was fully accomplished. Four separate interventions (provision of scholarships, delivery of specific educational materials for students and teachers, establishment of parent committees and assignment of Mayan outreach workers) were identified for application at the community level.

Apply packages of interventions in selected communities in the six Departments with the highest drop-out rates and lowest rates of retention and completion by primary school girls

Result This objective was fully accomplished. The four interventions were organized into three separate packages (described above) and applied at the community level.

Identify the minimum package (or packages) of interventions required to ensure primary school retention and completion by disadvantaged girls'

Result This objective was met. Based on the data available at the end of the pilot, the scholarship package was successful. Girls who received the scholarship package had better rates of attendance, promotion and completion than the control group and than overall national statistics. The greatest impact was on girls in grades 1 and 2. Longitudinal data available for 1996 corroborated the project evaluation findings: only 2 percent of scholarship girls did not return to second grade in 1996 contrasted with 11 percent for girls without scholarships. In terms of the percentage of girls in the upper grades, the scholarship package had five percent more girls in these grades (27%) than the comparison group and also had the greatest increase over the three years (8%). Evaluation results indicate that the yearly attendance of both boys and girls was higher in schools in which girls received scholarships than in control schools. This phenomenon suggests that boys are not hurt by efforts to help girls and that, in fact, better school environments may develop for both boys and girls.

Establish matching arrangements for contributions of funds, services or resources among public and private sector agencies, international organizations and PVOs

Result This objective was dropped in December, 1994.

Establish efficient and practical funding and administrative mechanisms to ensure the institutionalization and sustainability of the program of interventions

Result This objective was partially met. The original intent of the pilot was to provide a local NGO with an "on-the-ground" experience in girls education and to consolidate its institutional capacity to manage the program with USAID funding over the long term. By the end of the project, FUNDAZUCAR had determined that it would not continue to implement girls' education programs in the 6 Departments where the pilot project had focused. FUNDAZUCAR reconfirmed that its institutional mission was to support projects in the sugar growing communities of the south coast region. Despite FUNDAZUCAR's decision, the Ministry of Education was so convinced that the scholarship program needed to be expanded that they financed 4,000 girls' scholarships in 1996, increasing the number to over 35,000 scholarships in 1997. The

Ministry established an agreement with a different local NGO (FUNRURAL) to manage the government's scholarship program and to maintain a strong focus on the predominantly indigenous areas. In the end, an important public-private sector partnership on behalf of girls' education was consolidated.

Analysis of the Agreement Results and Recommendations for the Future

In designing the Cooperative Agreement with FUNDAZUCAR, USAID was seeking to identify important building blocks for a future national program to support girls' education, specifically to improve girls' school attendance and performance. USAID was also interested in generating greater Guatemalan ownership of both the problem and the solution to the girls' education deficit. It is clear that the pilot program allowed USAID to accomplish both of these objectives. Although FUNDAZUCAR itself is not continuing its national leadership role in implementing girls' education programs, another local NGO (FUNRURAL) is working closely with the Ministry of Education to expand girls' scholarship projects. Both the Ministry and the Guatemalan Girls' Education Association have made great progress in acknowledging the severity of the girls' education gap and have shown a demonstrated commitment to tackling the problem. At the end of the BEST Project, the Ministry led the development of a multi-sectoral plan to address girls' education. The Association (an umbrella of 25 organizations, including FUNDAZUCAR) participated in developing the plan.

In 1997-98, the Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) conducted an assessment of the Girls' Education Component of the BEST Project as part of a series of six case studies. The CDIE study concluded that the Girls' Education Component of the BEST Project (of which the FUNDAZUCAR Agreement was an integral part) successfully

- gave visibility to the pressing issue of basic education for girls and the need for girls to attain complete primary education,
- promoted a strong interest in the need for girls' education among some leading business firms and other private sector groups,
- organized two national seminars focusing on the issue of girls' education and the role of women in national development,
- provided technical assistance on girls' education to personnel working on several other BEST components,
- conducted and evaluated an experimental pilot project that produced substantive evidence of the impact that scholarships for girls have on girls' attendance and retention in school,
- created interest within the Ministry of Education (MOE) in girls' education and encouraged the MOE to offer a scholarship program for girls in basic education,
- produced more gender-friendly classroom and teacher materials, and,
- increased self-esteem of students by highlighting the importance of girls and by using indigenous languages

The CDIE study also found, however, that the BEST Project had several shortcomings in the Girls' Education Component marked by

- an inability to affect substantial system wide change in the MOE regarding gender,
- weak integration and institutionalization of project achievements regarding gender-sensitive curriculum and teacher training into MOE plans,
- uneven investment and performance of the private sector in favor of girls' education, and,
- the exclusion of important voices of civil society in the effort to promote girls' education, particularly those of Mayan and women's groups

USAID/Guatemala made a strategic choice to establish a small pilot/experimental program to test interventions through a private sector NGO, rather than to pursue system wide sustainable impacts through the Ministry of Education. The CDIE study has criticized this choice. The evaluators argue that the project did not contemplate sufficient attention to the post experimental phase of scaling up the effort. They further argue that USAID should have considered incorporating the girls' component into other BEST components, such as the One Room School (NEU) component, where it could have had a greater possibility of expansion.

Another lesson generated from this project is that separation of girls' education issues from other issues related to women in development is not productive. The USAID pilot was a free-standing effort, yet in reality it is difficult to separate girls' education from the substance and politics of women's concerns. Within a democracy, women are an increasingly strong political force and, potentially, a voice for girls' needs and interests. The USAID project missed the opportunity for this type of engagement, by focusing efforts within the Ministry and the elite business sector (through the Association). Other civil society groups and women's associations were not folded into the effort.

In March 1997, USAID approved a new education strategy for Guatemala. A goal of this strategy is to prepare children, especially those living in poor rural communities in the Department of Quiche, for active economic and political participation. The basic education activities financed under this new strategy are to improve the quality and coverage of intercultural bilingual education. Girls' education is integral to the education strategy and were folded into the strategy using perspectives gained from a careful analysis of the lessons learned under the FUNDAZUCAR Girls' Education Component of the BEST Project.

No longer a free-standing, pilot activity, girls' education under the new education strategy is part of a larger vision for system-wide education reform. Working at the Quiche departmental level and at the national level, activities focus on increasing awareness of the importance of girls' education, mobilizing broad-based private and public sector support, and improving the quality of girls' education at the classroom level, especially within the intercultural bilingual education context. One of the

background studies to be conducted by the girls' education activity is an evaluation of the Ministry of Education scholarship program administered by FUNRURAL and the Girls' Education Association. The activity will also work with the Ministry to develop a three-year training plan for training teachers and technicians in methods to increase girls' performance and permanence in primary school.

Financial Reports and Audits

Total expenditures by FUNDAZUCAR under the Cooperative Agreement included \$248,746 in USAID funds and Q1,493,761 in counterpart. When the Agreement was signed, FUNDAZUCAR was not a registered local PVO. USAID provided technical assistance to FUNDAZUCAR to strengthen their financial and administrative systems in accordance with USAID accounting principles/standards. FUNDAZUCAR was then certified by USAID in 1995. During the implementation of the Agreement, there were no significant audit problems.

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