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DI Acquisitions

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**IEES**

**Improving the  
Efficiency of  
Educational  
Systems**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
HOWARD UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH  
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY**

*Agency for International Development*

*Bureau for Science and Technology*

*Office of Education*

*Contract No. DPE-5823-C-00-4013-00*

## Project Description

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### **IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS**

Improving the Efficiency of Educational Systems (IEES) is an initiative funded in 1984 by the Agency for International Development (AID). The project's principal goals are to help developing countries improve the performance of their educational systems and to strengthen their capabilities for educational planning, management, and research.

To achieve this goal, a group of U.S. institutions has been chosen to work in collaboration with selected host governments and USAID Missions for a period of ten years. The IEES Consortium includes The Florida State University, Howard University, the Institute for International Research, and the State University of New York at Albany.

Seven countries currently are collaborating in this effort: Botswana, Haiti, Indonesia, Liberia, Nepal, Somalia, and the Yemen Arab Republic.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATIONAL EFFICIENCY**

In recent years, developing nations have made gains in the field of education. Donor assistance has been a major factor in supporting the expansion of educational systems and the development of new instructional programs in these countries. Such initiatives, however, can have lasting effect only if ways are found to improve the efficiency of educational systems and to keep the growth of recurrent costs in check. In a time of budgetary austerity, few governments can afford to continue increasing the proportion of public funds spent on education.

The central thrust of the IEES Project is to assist developing nations to design, plan, and implement programs that reinforce these recent gains in the quality and quantity of education by promoting more efficient use of available resources. The project focuses particularly on upgrading the planning and management capabilities of educational personnel and on developing strategies to improve the quality of instruction. This multi-faceted approach can be of critical importance to developing nations facing the dilemma of rapid growth in the demand for human resource development as resources become more scarce.

## **BENEFICIARIES**

The IEES Consortium provides technical assistance and other resources directly to developing nations. In the process, it also makes services available to USAID Missions and other donor agencies. National governments, working through USAID Missions, may obtain assistance in strengthening local institutional capacities for the planning and implementation of programs aimed at improving the efficiency of the Education and Human Resources (EHR) sector. IEES helps organize, fund, and staff training workshops, evaluation and assessment studies, research projects, and knowledge dissemination activities that contribute in a systematic way to improved educational performance.

## THE IEES STRATEGY

The rationale for IEES is based on an analysis of assistance to education in the developing world over the past quarter century. The primary lesson drawn from this analysis has been that a sustained, systematic, and multi-dimensional approach to the programming of human resource development is required if aid projects are to produce a lasting impact on the performance of educational systems. The IEES strategy is characterized by five features, outlined here and explained in greater detail below:

- **Long-Term Commitment.** The project is designed to provide technical assistance and other resources over a continuous ten-year period.
- **Sector Approach.** Assessment of the current status of the entire educational system and its relation to national development goals is used as a framework for the conception and design of all project activities.
- **Operating within Resource Constraints.** The project operates within confines of a country's fundamental resource constraints while working to improve the coordination and utilization of existing and potential AID and other donor agency funding.
- **Collaboration.** Close collaboration with host governments, USAID Mission staff, and other donor agencies is built into project activities at all levels.
- **Institutional Development.** Particular emphasis is placed on strengthening national capabilities for analyzing and planning the efficient allocation of human and fiscal resources within the education sector.

### Long-Term Commitment

Significant improvements in educational systems tend to occur slowly and in incremental stages that require sustained support and monitoring. IEES is designed to provide that kind of ongoing support. The ten-year life of the project represents a long-term AID commitment to the human resource development goals of collaborating countries. This extended time horizon allows the consortium institutions to acquire a comprehensive understanding of resources and constraints in each participating country and provides opportunities for the development of close working relations with host country and USAID Mission personnel. These factors, along with the continuity of policy and program support, establish an essential framework for strengthening local institutions.

## **Sector Approach**

IEES emphasizes the application of a systems approach to comprehensive EHR planning. The project seeks to promote a practical understanding of the current status of the educational sector as a whole and of the interaction of its various subsectors: primary education, secondary education, higher education, vocational-technical training, teacher training, nonformal education and the other major programs of human resource development in the host country.

In countries where appropriate baseline data on systems performance have not been systemically assembled or analyzed, sector assessments are conducted to obtain a preliminary overview of priority needs and constraints in each subsector of the formal and the nonformal education system. The assessment analyzes the internal and external efficiency of the various subsectors to provide a better understanding of their interaction. Issues of access and equity, administration and supervision, costs and financing are reviewed within the context of national fiscal capacity and manpower requirements.

On the basis of this information, the sector assessment identifies current constraints on educational performance, highlights priority areas for investment, and suggests strategies for coordination of donor assistance. Each country's EHR sector assessment is updated on a regular basis with increasing measures of participation and direction by host country personnel. This ongoing sector analysis effort provides a means to monitor the development of the educational system and to provide planning data for project design and management decisions.

## **Operating Within Resource Constraints**

In many developing countries with struggling economies, budgetary constraints have severely limited the level of government resources available for education in recent years. This situation is not likely to be reversed in the foreseeable future. In fact, resources available to cover operating and capital expenditures have decreased in real terms in a number of countries while social demand for education continues to grow.

## **Collaboration**

Technical solutions in themselves are not sufficient to improve educational systems. Each country has a unique social-cultural context that constitutes the framework for any effort at social and educational change. It is only through meaningful collaboration with local personnel that feasible strategies for change can be developed and available technologies adapted to country-specific conditions. The IEES Project has built-in mechanisms to ensure close collaboration with host country, Mission, and other donor personnel in all phases of work.

The overall strategy of project activity in each country is detailed in a five-year Country Implementation Plan for IEES Activities, which is developed jointly with a host country advisory committee and annually updated. Once this overall program is developed, individual undertakings, such as training and research activities, are planned and implemented in close association with host institutions. At both the individual and the institutional level, the counterpart relationship lies at the heart of the IEES approach.

## **Institutional Development**

A major aim of the IEES Project is to contribute to the development in each country of increased institutional capacity to conduct sector assessments, undertake systematic educational planning, and design and execute research studies and field projects for educational improvement. All major IEES activities are accompanied, therefore, by short-term training sessions, workshops, and seminars organized in collaboration with appropriate host country institutions. The training sessions are designed to enable host country personnel to participate more fully in the planning and execution of IEES-sponsored activities, thereby enhancing the likelihood that such activities will be carried on after the expiration of the project itself. A number of research studies called for in the Country Implementation Plan are directly undertaken by host country institutions.

## MAJOR COMPONENTS

USAID Missions involved in EHR development may be assisted by consortium technical advisors in developing, implementing, and evaluating a strategy aimed at promoting improved efficiency in education. Short-term technical assistance is available for assessment and planning activities, for targeted research evaluation, and for project design and implementation. Longer term support personnel may be furnished when needed. These services are provided in a flexible and timely manner that can significantly reduce the delays between conception, approval, and implementation.

Other international donor agencies may make use of the IEES sector assessment work and of IEES-sponsored research and training to reinforce their own contributions to educational development in participating countries. A basic IEES operating principle is that increased collaboration among donor agencies and between donors and host governments is necessary to maximize the effectiveness of resource allocation in the educational sector.

IEES is built upon five fundamental components, although others may be added as decided by country and Mission resources:

- Educational Sector Assessment and EHR Planning
- Research and Development Support
- Field Projects for Educational Innovation
- Knowledge Building Activities and Exchange Networks
- Training and Institutional Capacity Building

## **Educational Sector Assessment and Planning**

In collaborating countries, a comprehensive assessment of the education and human resources sector is conducted together with appropriate ministries and USAID Mission personnel, and is updated on a regular basis. The data assembled and analyzed in this way are intended to provide the necessary base for long-range EHR planning.

## **Research and Development Support**

IEES provides training and other forms of assistance for the design and execution of medium-scale R&D activities. These are chosen, designed, and carried out in close collaboration with host country institutions concerned with educational research. Research is now underway in collaborating countries in the areas of Education Management Information Systems, Teacher Incentive Systems, and Strengthening Local Education Capacity.

## **Field Projects for Educational Innovation**

Where appropriate, major field projects aimed at improving the efficiency of the educational system are designed and implemented. These projects address priority needs identified in the sector assessment process and are conceived and executed in collaboration with the host country and the USAID Mission as a means of accomplishing mutually defined objectives. They may involve implementation and/or dissemination of new educational methods, either those developed through IEES-sponsored R&D activities or others previously tested in a relevant environment. Projects may also be undertaken to enhance the institutional capacities of the host country institutions for educational planning and administration. Field projects now underway include the Junior Secondary Education Improvement Project in Botswana, the Educational Policy and Planning Project in Indonesia, and the Incentives for Improving Basic Education Project in Haiti.

## **Knowledge Building and Exchange Networks**

IEES contributes to building an in-country information base for future educational planning and decisionmaking and helps to develop networks of exchange among educational researchers and practitioners within the country and abroad. The information base takes the form of sector assessments and research studies carried out in-country, plus information from other IEES collaborating countries, as well as publications of interest to educational researchers and planners.

These are supplied by the central office of IEES at The Florida State University. Where appropriate, a local resource center is established to support an existing network to ensure maximum availability of this information for educational decisionmaking and to ensure that the knowledge gathered remains available in-country beyond the life of the project. At the same time, the project makes a systematic effort to create networks for the exchange of data and information among host country educational researchers and between them and colleagues in other IEES collaborating countries. International conferences of representatives from IEES collaborating countries were held in Botswana in 1985 and in Indonesia in 1987 as a means of promoting exchange across countries and for discussion of common problems and solutions for improving educational efficiency.

### **Training and Institutional Capacity Building**

Training represents the fifth major component of IEES, and it is an integral part of all project activities. IEES provides short-term training (workshops, seminars, conferences) aimed at reinforcing personal and institutional capabilities for EHR planning and management within participating countries. Project personnel are also available to advise USAID Missions on the development of longer term participant training programs tailored to the needs of the educational sector, where such are appropriate.

The five components of IEES -- EHR assessment and planning, R&D, field projects to improve educational efficiency, networking, and training are designed to be closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Together they provide a long-term strategy for improving the efficiency of EHR systems, for building institutional capacity in developing countries, and for enhancing international cooperation in education. Central funding is available for sector assessment, R&D support, knowledge building, and training activities. Field projects for educational innovation are generally funded through USAID Mission resources in participating countries.

The program of IEES activities in each country is designed and implemented in collaboration with an advisory committee made up of national education planners and USAID Mission personnel. In countries where additional support is desired, IEES Resident Technical Advisors may be assigned to assist host country counterparts in organizing IEES activities and in drawing upon the resources made available by the consortium. An International Steering Committee, composed of representatives of collaborating countries, guides and advises project planning.



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