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

IDENTIFICATION DATA

A. REPORTING A.I.D. UNIT: S&T/ED
(Mission or AID/W Office)
(ES#)

B. WAS EVALUATION SCHEDULED IN CURRENT FY ANNUAL EVALUATION PLAN?
yes ☐ slipped ☐ ad hoc ☐
Eval. Plan Submission Date: FY ___ Q ___

C. EVALUATION TIMING
Interim ☒ final ☐ ex post ☐ other ☐

PD-ABA-900
ISN 66136

D. ACTIVITY OR ACTIVITIES EVALUATED (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)
936-5823	Improving Efficiency of Educational Systems (IEES)	83	6/94	17,500	9,445

ACTIONS

E. ACTION DECISIONS APPROVED BY MISSION OR AID/W OFFICE DIRECTOR

Action(s) Required	Name of officer responsible for Action	Date Action to be Completed
Evaluation findings were folded into the RFP for the second five-year phase. Specific decisions: (a) Link management information work to actual policy decisions in education ministries. (b) Consolidate and improve quality of policy research. (c) More dissemination activities into an office-wide project. (d) Reduce contractor's stateside management costs.	C. Block	Dec. 1988

(Attach extra sheet if necessary)

APPROVALS

F. DATE OF MISSION OR AID/W OFFICE REVIEW OF EVALUATION: mo 12 day ___ yr 88

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	Bruce Fuller S&T/ED		Fern Finley S&T/PO	Gary Theisen (Actg.) S&T/ED
Date:	4/11/89			4/11/89

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

The university-based IEES consortium has been assisting eight countries to improve the quality and efficiency of their schooling systems. AID's Office of Education funds the project (from within the Bureau for Science and Technology) [1].

The Office of Education recently commissioned an independent evaluation of the IEES project. The evaluation team visited each participating country and reviewed written outputs. Here we briefly summarize key findings of the evaluation exercise.

Over the first four years of this (ten-year) project, IEES staff have been involved in the following activities:

(1) Conducting sector reviews that identify macro policies and budget choices that could be implemented to improve the quality and efficiency of basic education;

(2) Developing management information systems to improve descriptive data and to pinpoint policy changes that boost efficiency;

(3) Analyzing teacher training and curricular strategies that could raise school effectiveness at the classroom level;

(4) Engaging in R&D activities on topics of interest to host governments, including research on teacher motivation and incentives, as well as how to better mobilize local resources for education;

(5) Facilitating the exchange of information among the eight participating countries through international seminars and training; and

(6) Providing assistance to local AID missions in designing and implementing projects related to improving school quality and efficiency.

1. The IEES consortium is headed by Florida State University and includes the State University of New York, Howard University, and the Institute for International Research. Activities are currently supported in Somalia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Liberia, Nepal, Indonesia, (north) Yemen, and Haiti.

I. EVALUATION COSTS

1. Evaluation Team

Name Affiliation	Contract Number OR TDY Person Days	Contract Cost OR TDY Cost (US$)	Source of Funds
Education Development Center	PDC-1109-I-01-7118-00	$95,035	Program

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

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

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

ABSTRACT

The independent evaluation offers a fair and candid critique of IEES, focusing on four specific areas. First, the evaluation team examined the project's overall strategy and the basic assumptions upon which it is built. Second, positive effects and on-going problems with specific in-country activities were described. Third, the evaluators reported on the quality of products and analytic tools produced thus far by the project. Fourth, they asked how the internal management of IEES might be improved.

Overall the evaluation reports several positive and strong effects stemming from IEES activities. The project has contributed significantly in conducting education sector assessments, often providing the basis for policy and budget choices made by governments and donors alike. The evaluation team notes a clear project impact on improving the utility of management information systems in several countries. In some instances, policy research efforts also are yielding information that helps inform policymakers. The individual country reports, contained in the full evaluation document, provide more detailed illustrations of the project's important effects.

This summary of the evaluation report highlights the problems and constraints facing the IEES project, as reported by the evaluation team. Indeed this is the purpose of a hard-headed assessment: to identify ways in which a project can be improved.

COSTS

I. EVALUATION COSTS

1. Evaluation Team Name	Affiliation	Contract Number OR TDY Person Days	Contract Cost OR TDY Cost (US$)	Source of Funds

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

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

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: S&T/ED

Date this summary prepared: March 31, 1989

Title and Date of Full Evaluation Report: External Evaluation of IEES, April 28, 1988

Project Background / Basic Strategy

The evaluation report usefully reviews the original intent of IEES as conceived by the Office of Education in 1982-83. From the beginning, the project hoped to (a) improve the efficiency and performance of education systems, and (b) strengthen ministries' capacity to identify policy and budget issues that could boost efficiency (moving scarce resources to those school inputs, people, skills, and educational processes that yield the highest effects on learning at an affordable cost).

To accomplish these broad goals the IEES project supports long term technical assistance to engage in those activities outlined in the evaluation abstract.

From its inception, the IEES project suggested that central (S&T) Office of Education funding, set at $10 million, would be matched with support from in-country AID missions. Moving into the fifth year of the project, AID missions have committed $19.5 million to the IEES consortium for projects related to school quality and efficiency. This high level of mission buy-ins validates the perceived validity of the IEES strategy. On the other hand, demand for IEES staff on a variety of tasks appears to stretch the consortium's limited staff resources.

Project Assumptions

The evaluation reviews the basic assumptions upon which the IEES project was founded:

(1) Access to basic education is limited in many Third World countries, especially in Africa and south Asia. Primary school effectiveness is constrained by high dropout rates and high rates of grade repetition. Access is especially low for certain groups, particularly girls and rural children.

(2) Popular demand for schooling is growing at the same time that education budgets are static or declining, resulting in declining school quality and eroding impact on basic literacy.

(3) More careful use of scarce resources, by central governments, could yield cost-savings and more rational spending on school inputs that most effectively boost learning.

(4) Historically, many development projects simply insert novel materials or training, failing to improve the government's long run management of its much larger recurrent budget. Nor does the sprinkling of new project resources move government to address macro policy and fiscal choices that could boost the educational system's overall efficiency.

(5) Long term technical assistance is necessary to build the information, skills, and trust (between donors and governments) required to face policy and budget issues. This assistance should help education and planning ministries improve basic information about the supply and effectiveness of their schools.

(6) Donors rarely encourage governments to talk with each other about similar problems.

From its inception, IEES has worked from these assumptions and aimed its technical assistance resources at the central government level. This assistance has been long term in nature. IEES' heavy investment in sector assessments operates under the additional assumption that ministry staff must be intimately involved in identifying problems and policies related to school quality and efficiency.

The evaluation team poses two questions about the role and actual impact of management information. First, is the information collected from schools by central ministries reliable and useful? That is, are we collecting the right data on indicators that have utility to central policymakers and local school staff? Second, even if appropriate data were collected, would it be utilized when policy and budget decisions are being made?

The evaluators question whether IEES activity within central ministries simply builds on unrealistic expectations about educational planning. Education plans may serve a variety of purposes, independent of their possible contribution to day to day decisions and spending choices.

The flexible and broad-based character of IEES receives comment from the evaluation team. They see a tension between the rather clear purpose of the project versus a centrifugal pressure manifest in the various needs and priorities of the

eight participating countries. Indeed IEES consortium staff are pulled into a variety of activities; some of these tasks may be only peripherally related to central government action on educational quality and efficiency.

The evaluators query whether IEES has lived up to its promise of cross-country dialog. Discussions among IEES staff working in different countries are frequent. But to what extent do ministry officials from different IEES countries get together to discuss similar concerns?

The long term character of IEES assistance is applauded in the evaluation. However, its impact is constrained by high turnover of staff within education ministries, as well as within AID missions. This limits the intended transfer of skills to in-country staff. The IEES consortium also faces a dilemma between use of its regular stateside staff who have on-going relationships with ministry officials, versus attracting other consultants who may be more highly skilled in certain speciality areas.

The evaluation team questions the efficacy of focusing efforts on ministry planning departments (as is the case in the majority of IEES countries). More work within the line departments or at local provincial levels may be warranted, according to the evaluation report.

Project Impact and Accomplishments

The evaluation identifies three major areas of success. First, those interviewed by the evaluation team believed that the sector assessment process had a strong impact in identifying efficiency-related issues and mapping-out next steps. Second, IEES staff are helping governments and AID missions in the design of new education projects. Third, the development of management information systems, employing appropriate PC technology, receives a good deal of support from participating countries.

The evaluation team argues that IEES has not yet lived up to earlier expectations in the following areas: building in-country research capacity, synthesis and dissemination of IEES analysis and training tools, and encouraging coordination of donor activities.

The report sharply raises the question: Will IEES leave behind a stronger analytic capacity within education or planning ministries? Long term institutional development is a central goal of the project. But are the skills and analytic tools held by ministry staff really being up-graded on a sustainable

basis? In-country counterparts, in some countries, provide conceptual and administrative leadership. In other settings, ministry staff work alongside IEES staff on technical tasks. More effort needs to be focused on ensuring that durable skills and conceptual approaches are being transfered to ministry staff.

On the other hand, the evaluation team argues that skill-transfer in the MIS and microcomputer area is clearly occurring between IEES staff and ministry officials. The evaluation report recommends expanding and improving this activity.

IEES Management and Products

While acknowledging the size and complexity of the project, the evaluation team argues that the consortium should be attending to more careful internal assessment of its own activities. This includes more careful study of the quality, audiences, and utility of written products, tools, and publications.

Written documentation of IEES activities is voluminous. Production of these progress reports takes an enormous amount of staff time. The evaluation team argues that much of this reporting is either not necessary or fails to address actual project effects, lessons learned, or implementation problems. The evaluation encourages further streamlining of reporting requirement which began in late 1987.

The evaluation team also encourages production of more substantive papers, analytic tools, and training materials to strengthen dissemination activities. The audience of IEES reports is often quite narrow. Publications and training materials could better serve a broader audience: in-country policymakers, donors, and scholars.

The evaluation team noted the lack of documention regarding actual project effects. Over the first four years, the IEES consortium focused on initiating country operations and fielding resident staff. Thus far the consortium has spent little energy reflecting on and documenting their collective effects within the eight countries. Note that the evaluation team's individual country briefs, built from interviews with ministry staff, in-country IEES staff, and AID mission personnel, take an initial stab at reporting perceived effects of IEES activity. These country briefs are contained in the complete evaluation report.

The AID Office of Education received criticism for delays in approving initiatives proposed by local AID missions, as well as delays in reviewing basic documents and authorizations. The evaluation team also report a perception by some field staff that S&T personnel rarely visited in-country projects.

The evaluation team reports that some resident staff feel that their orientation to the project was inadequate prior to being fielded. In some instances, resident staff in the same country are on contract with different consortium institutions and receive different benefits. This can cut into morale, according to the evaluation team. Delays in salary and allowance payments to field staff are also indicated by IEES field staff. The evaluation team urges consortium member-institutions to become more responsive to their resident staff members.

Where is the Knowledge Building Agenda?

The R&D thrust of IEES in contained largely within its policy research initiative. These analytic and survey activities have focused on three topics: teacher motivation and incentives, strengthening local sources of school finance, and development of management information systems. The evaluation team notes that research reports have been very slow in coming, in part due to an emphasis on developing research skills of ministry staff.

The evaluation team also questions whether the project is delivering on its promise to build in-country "knowledge networks," linking local policymakers, analysts, and donors.

More broadly, the evaluation report asks whether IEES has a cohesive knowledge-building agenda. Policy research activities do center on three discrete topics. But other analytic activities are occurring based on country-specific interests. This may be appropriate in some cases. But how do they fit into a consortium-wide concern with building knowledge on a limited and focused number of topics.

Knowledge-building objectives may be better met by (a) specifying that more writing should be aimed at policymakers and academic audiences, and/or (b) pulling-in consultants who can deliver more consistently in this area.

Dissemination activities might benefit from publications in country-specific languages. To date, most IEES products are written in English.

The Buy-in Dilemma

The Office of Education (within the S&T Bureau) hopes to contribute expertise and tools for local AID missions and host countries. The IEES project is one means for providing technical leadership in the area of school effectiveness and efficiency. The Office of Education via the project defines a

core set of activities aimed at improving central governments' capacity to address this topic. Local AID missions then add on activities that relate to the central agenda. The field missions are in a better position to grasp and respond to country-specific interests. And the financial support of field missions has contributed greatly to IEES.

However, according to the evaluation team, these add-on activities, in some cases, strain consortium resources and dilute the basic focus of the project. For instance, where the local AID mission and host country seek support for redesigning the school curriculum or studying a radio instruction program, the IEES consortium may be turned to. Whether the consortium has expertise and the capacity to serve these diverse demands is a question raised by the evaluation team.

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