

**PROJECT INFORMATION DOCUMENT (PID)
APPRAISAL STAGE**

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| Borrower(s) | GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA |
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I. STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

A. Country and sector issues

The near stagnation of the economy during the early 2000s has given way to sustained economic growth and a strengthening of consumer and investor confidence. The turnaround is partly due to a much improved global economic environment in which demand has soared, the prices of Colombia's primary exports have risen, and the cost of international borrowing has fallen. Domestic factors, particularly the improved security situation and the Government's stable macroeconomic policy, have played a major part in the country's recovery.

Real economic growth accelerated from 1.9 percent in 2002 to 6.8 percent in 2006, with private investment rising from 7.7 percent of GDP in 2002 to over 16 percent in 2006. Unemployment fell from over 17 percent in 2002 to below 11 percent currently, while inflation declined from 7 percent in 2002 to below 4.5 percent in 2006.

The economy is expected to remain strong in 2007. During the first semester of this year, GDP grew by almost 7.5 percent. In the absence of major external shocks, the economy is expected to continue growing after 2007. Significantly improved factors supporting both domestic demand (internal peace, healthy investment and credit levels) and external demand (rising exports and

foreign direct investment) should result in sustained economic growth in the 5-5.5 percent range through 2011. The main external risks would be a slowdown in the global economy, particularly if key trading partners like the United States or Venezuela were affected. Adverse commodity price shocks would be another risk. To reduce external risks, the government has reduced the foreign currency share of its public debt and overall external debt of both the public and private sector is low at about 30 percent of GDP. In addition, international reserves have increased substantially and now stand at over US\$20 billion. Both public and external debt sustainability analyses were conducted and show that sustainability is resilient to a number of shock scenarios.

Colombia's high rate of economic growth has had a positive impact on poverty. By 2006, the nationwide poverty rate dropped to 45 percent, and the extreme poverty rate to 12 percent. National estimates of 2-dollar and 1-dollar per day poverty levels reveal the same story, with a decline from 18 to 8 percent and 10 to 2.5 percent respectively between 1999 and 2004. With these trends Colombia is well on its way to achieving its Millennium Development targets in all categories except maternal health.

According to the national census, in 2005 the total population of Colombia was 42.9 million, of which 75 percent lived in urban areas. Of the total rural population (10.5 million), 30 percent were between 5 and 17 years old.

Despite such progress, overwhelming disparities remain. Improvements in national averages mask serious ethnic, gender, and regional differences. For example, Afro-Colombians, rural areas, indigenous peoples, and female-headed households continue to suffer disproportionately from poverty. Rural poverty is still very high, close to 70 percent of the rural population lived under the rural poverty line in 2005. Regional disparities mean that areas like the poor Pacific region limp along even while metropolitan areas like Bogota receive a boost from the renewed growth. For example, in 2003, 69.7 percent of the Pacific Region population was poor while 36.9 percent of the population in Bogotá was poor. The armed conflict continues to uproot and dislocate families, throwing them into poverty. Colombia has one of the most unequal wealth distributions in the world; the poorest 20 percent of the population receive only 3 percent of total national income. This is reflected in its Gini index of 0.55 which is the second highest in Latin America behind Brazil. Reducing these gaps and promoting social and economic inclusion of vulnerable groups remain one of Colombia's most critical unmet challenges.

Forced displacement is one of the most serious problems faced by Colombian society, and is a consequence of intensified violence. Violence affects civil society in the form of threats, attacks, indiscriminate military action, and forced recruitment practices, compromising the integrity and survival of rural individuals and families"¹. Forced displacement has affected the operation of the education system at all levels, as well as leading to increased dropout rates. Incremental intra-urban mass displacements have not only generated additional demand for school places but have focused attention on the positive role of schools in dealing with displacement-related problems.

Sector Background

¹ Rural Education Context in: *Unión Temporal CRECE - Universidad del Rosario*. "Evaluación de los modelos educativos que promueve el Proyecto de Educación Rural del Ministerio de Educación Rural" ("Evaluation of the educational models promoted by the Rural Education Project of the Ministry of Rural Education"). April 2005.

Public sector spending on education over the last three decades has quadrupled in real terms, while the school-age population grew by less than one-third. Currently, education spending as a percentage of GDP is 5.2 percent, which is higher than the regional average of 4.5 percent. In an effort to curb spending on education, while increasing the efficient use of resources, the Government of Colombia (GOC) passed Law 715 (2001), which seeks to strengthen decentralization and efficiency by establishing a regulatory framework. This new framework would allocate educational transfers to territorial entities on the basis of enrollment figures, and allow public education authorities to contract with the private sector to provide education services in a more cost-effective manner.

During 2002-2006, total enrollment increased by 9 percent, from 9.9 million to 10.8 million.. Most of the students attend public schools in urban areas. Students in rural areas represent 23 of total enrollment. Both urban and rural enrollment showed a similar increase, 8.9 percent and 8.8 percent, respectively.

According to the initial 2005 census results, school attendance increased nationwide. The attendance rate grew from 50.8 percent in 1973 to 83.8 percent in 2005 for the 5-17 age group; a 33 percent increase. Nevertheless, 4 out of every 10 youths at the secondary age level were not attending school. The lowest coverage occurred in upper secondary. Although enrollment increased by over 80,000 between 2002 and 2006, and one million students were provided education services, the challenge will be to cover 1.5 million students.

The gap between urban and rural areas is more significant at the preschool, lower, and upper secondary levels. For primary levels the difference in attendance rates is 6.5 percent, while for the other levels it is 18 percent on average.

Drop-out rates continue to be high in grades 1 and 6. This may indicate that repetition is one of the possible reasons why students leave school and do not finish their studies. At the same time, there are other variables that can explain the dropout situation in the system, the most important of which being the poor quality of education offered in lower secondary, difficult access to rural schools, overage, lack of incentives (food and transportation subsidies), high costs incurred by families (school supplies, uniforms, food, transportation, etc.), little relevance of the education provided, and the opportunity cost of schooling. The latter is one of the main obstacles for poor families as well as for rural families that depend on the contribution made by their children to family income.

The first assessment of learning achievement was administered to most students in grades 5 and 9 in 2002-2003. A second assessment was conducted three years later, in November 2005-2006. Although quality is low, on average, higher scores were obtained in 2005-2006 in both public and private sectors, as well as in urban and rural areas. In public schools language was the area with the best achievement, both in grades 5 and 9, although in the latter grade the results were more dispersed. Natural sciences and social sciences showed the lowest averages.

Results of Rural Education Project Phase I triggering Phase II and III. The triggers to begin Phase II (see Annex 1A)--namely, incremental increases in coverage and learning achievement, accompanied by reduction in repetition rates in the targeted municipalities; the effectiveness of municipalities in utilizing resources for educational subprojects; and the participation of civil society in education management—were met.

Phase II will support Colombia's National Development Plan (*Hacia un Estado Comunitario*) and National Education Plan (*Revolución Educativa*) (NEP) expanding on the achievements of Phase I delineated above. The National Development Plan (NDP) includes six broad objectives: (i) an assessment

designed to improve the quality of students, teachers, and schools; (ii) learning from best practices; (iii) developing educational models to improve educational relevance; (iv) expanding and improving the use of media and new technologies in education; (v) strengthening the capacity of Departmental and municipal educational administration; and (vi) developing a management information system. The latter two objectives are designed to support decentralization and institutional strengthening. The NEP places great emphasis on social development and economic competitiveness, which adds another dimension to the national strategy for improving access and quality of education. The NDP also seeks to increase the education system's internal and external efficiency by: (i) transferring sector management responsibilities to the Departments and the municipalities; and (ii) strengthening the capacity of the sector to function within a decentralized environment.

B. Rationale for Bank involvement

Link to Country Assistance Strategy

The Project supports the 2003-2006 CAS objective of *sharing the fruits of growth*, and the *peace pillar* introduced in the Country Assistance Progress Report (Report No.25129-CO), the Country Assistance Strategy, endorsed on December 24, 2002 and Report No. 32999-CO, the Country Assistance Strategy Progress Report, endorsed on September 9, 2005, which recognizes the importance of improving the coverage and efficiency of education at the secondary and tertiary levels, especially for the poor. The Country Partnership Strategy, now under preparation, will cover fiscal years 2008-2011. It is completely aligned with Colombia's new National Development Plan (2006-2010) and directs Bank support to five specific pillars of the Plan—High and Sustainable Growth, Peace and Security for Citizens, Poverty Alleviation and Equity in Opportunity, A State at the Service of its Citizens, and Sustainable Development. The Rural Education operation falls squarely under the Poverty Alleviation and Equity in Opportunity as well as Peace pillars of the current CAS and the new CPS. Regarding the Bank's future plans to support the education sector in Colombia, other areas of support being considered in the new CPS include investment lending for Upper Secondary Education in Antioquia, Higher Education (w/IFC), and AAA in Quality in Education.

C. Higher level objectives to which the project contributes

The Project seeks to contribute in the consolidation of the rural education policy developed and implemented during Phase I of the Rural Education Project (2001-2006). Phase I helped to extend coverage of education services to vulnerable populations, particularly in remote areas. Phase II will contribute to improve rural education quality at all levels (pre-school, primary and secondary); develop education equity mechanisms for vulnerable populations (including ethnic groups); and contribute to institutionalize rural education delivery capacity in departmental and municipal education secretariats of Colombia.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Project development objective and key indicators

The Project will contribute to increase rural access to quality education from pre-school² to upper secondary education, promote higher retention of children and youths in the school system, and improve programs relevant to rural communities and their school populations.

² (5 and 6 years old)

The Project seeks to contribute to consolidate the rural education policy developed and implemented during Phase I of the Rural Education Project (2001-2006). Phase I helped to extend *coverage* of education services to vulnerable populations, particularly in the remote areas. Phase II will contribute to improve rural education *quality* (at all levels: pre-school, primary and secondary); develop education *equity* mechanisms for vulnerable populations (including ethnic groups); and contribute to institutionalize rural education delivery *capacity* in Departmental and municipal Education Secretariats of Colombia.

The success of the Project will be measured by the following Project Development Objectives (PDOs) indicators. The impact evaluation will compare 2006-07 data to the 2013 Project data for the beneficiary:

- Improve Language and Mathematics outcomes (as measured by the SABER tests) for Grade 5 and 9 among rural public schools in the participating territorial entities. This overall improvement will be measured in comparison with the national average of the rural schools (Baseline will be 2007.)
- Improve completion rates among rural public schools in the participating territorial entities by at least 5 percentage points in primary, 13 percentage points in lower secondary and 7 percentage points in upper secondary education (Baseline will be 2007.)
- Decrease rural-urban disparities in the completion rates in public schools in the participating territorial entities (Baseline will be 2007.)
- Increase the allocation of financial resources to rural education in the participating territorial entities (Baseline will be 2007.)

B. Project components

The proposed Project is an APL (Phase II) for an estimated amount of US\$50 million, including the counterpart contribution. A US\$40 million investment loan is proposed for Bank financing. The proposed Project will focus at the school level to improve access, completion and quality of learning by including the following three components: (i) Improving Departmental Secretariat of Education and Municipal Management Capacity to support improvements in Rural Education Quality; (ii) Strengthening rural School Management to reach better and equitable results in terms of access, completion, and quality of learning; and (iii) Strengthening the Ministry of Education for Project Coordination, Monitoring, and Evaluation. The execution of the Project will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, the certified Secretariats of Education and participating schools.

Component 1: Improving Departmental Secretariat of Education and Municipal Management Capacity for Rural Education Quality (Total: US\$3.0 million; Bank financing: US\$3.0 million).

This component will contribute to build the capacity for systemic change of Secretariats of Education in Departments and municipalities of Colombia—which are certified (by the central Ministry of Education) to manage their own education systems. The proposed education system strengthening, at the Departmental and municipal levels, seeks to provide equitable education services, compensation strategies to close the gap between rural and urban areas, and education delivery mechanisms for the most vulnerable and remote populations and ethnic groups.

The component will provide technical and financial support to increase the capacity of Departmental and Municipal Education Secretariats. The interventions (systematic approach) will be initiated at the central Education Ministry level by: (i) establishing a MEN Technical Team specialized in education management and equitable rural education services, (ii) designing and implementing a methodology for training and technical assistance for Certified Education Secretariats and related instructional manuals; (iii) designing and reproduction of multimedia instruments for online technical assistance; and (iv) conducting workshops, site visits, and other technical assistance events, as well as monitoring related to territorial entities' planning and execution of their rural education subprojects.

At the level of certified Departmental and Municipal Education Secretariats, the component will provide technical assistance (including from the MEN Technical Team) to: (i) diagnose the rural and ethnic education needs in their regions; (ii) prepare education improvement subprojects to address the curricular, pedagogical, delivery, and assessment needs of rural, inter- and multi-cultural, and bilingual education; and (iii) support rural education improvements in all municipalities belonging to a certified Department.

For territorial entities with ethnic populations (indigenous, Afro-Colombian and Raizal, i.e., San Andres and Providencial islands populations), the component will work with the indigenous associations responsible for education and other social services in their communities. These associations will receive technical assistance for the identification and design of subprojects for appropriate linguistic policies, the selection and training of teachers, curricula design and study plans, and preparation of bilingual and cultural school materials.

Component 2: Strengthening rural school management to reach better and equitable results in terms of access, completion and quality of learning. (Total: US\$38.98 million; Bank financing: US\$30.02million).

Through the Secretariat of Education at the Territorial Entity and the support of the MEN this component will assist school principals, teaching staff, and teacher training institutions to develop a better understanding of the educational needs in rural contexts and corresponding education interventions in rural areas to improve school performance and student learning outcomes.

The Territorial entities will prepare subprojects that will include an integrated set of actions for the four interrelated sub-components. Criteria for preparation of subprojects will be specified in the Operational Manual. Expected results of subprojects include: quality education improvements in beneficiary schools, promoting more equitable access and increasing the retention of children and youths; improved teacher capacity to implement competency-based curricula, which include basic, citizen and overall labor market competencies; improved second language pedagogical processes among teaching staff and students; and improved pedagogical and school management capacity of principals, including reformulation or updating of the PEIs and the design and implementation of Performance Improvement Plans.

SubComponent 2.1: Increase equitable access and retention to rural education from preschool to upper secondary (Total: US\$17.22 million; Bank financing: US\$12.09 million).

This subcomponent will support rural schools in the improvement, adaptation, and implementation of flexible pedagogical models that promote both increased coverage and higher retention of children and youths in the school system. This strategy was tested during the first phase of the program with successful results, as was shown by the impact evaluation.

Colombia has generated a number of flexible pedagogical innovations both for the primary and secondary level. To build on those already in place, as well as other pedagogical innovations in Colombia, the

subcomponent will seek to identify second-generation reforms especially needed for rural contexts, the current international competitiveness environment, multicultural and bilingual contexts, and required school-to-work transition required of secondary education graduates.

Subcomponent 2.2: Implement a Comprehensive Quality Improvement Strategy in the Classroom and Schools (Total: US\$13.14 Bank financing: US\$12.84 million).

This subcomponent seeks to develop a comprehensive quality improvement strategy in the classroom and schools aimed at developing a competency-based curricula for competitiveness. School teams (teachers and principals) will make efficient use of learning achievement test results to generate quality improvement strategies for low performing schools; searching and adapting the application of effective teaching-learning strategies, particularly relating to competency-based education; design and implement a plan for the proper use of ICT and its pedagogical use in the context of competency-based curricula; incorporate teaching and learning of a second language; and seek articulation with the productive sector through the development of Productive Pedagogical Projects. All these interventions will be part of Rural Education Quality Subprojects prepared by the participating territorial units.

Subcomponent 2.3: Strengthen school management (Total: US\$3.02 million; Bank financing: US\$3.0 million).

This subcomponent will evaluate and strengthen the school management model of merged urban-rural schools, which was supported by Phase I of the APL. In some locations small rural schools were merged with a more central urban school, where the principal for the new network of merged schools is located. In addition, the merged network of schools prepares a strategic education plan (*Proyecto Educación Institucional*, PEI) and a school improvement plan (*Proyecto de Mejoramiento Institucional*, PMI). Similarly, there will be an evaluation of the school-based management elements related to leadership, school planning, management of funds, and monitoring of implementation and results of the school improvement plans.

Subcomponent 2.4: Strengthening Teacher Training Colleges (*Escuelas Normales*) (Total: US\$5.60 million; Bank financing: US\$2.09 million).

This subcomponent will expand and improve the successful experience of Rural Education Phase I. *Escuelas Normales* (ENs) in Colombia need to be accredited to guarantee the quality of teaching and learning of pre-service training of teachers. Accreditation needs to be renewed; thus, low performing ENs must participate in the PMIs to renew their accreditation. Teacher Training Colleges, or ENs, will receive support to develop their own Institutional Improvement Projects (PMI) in order to (i) make their curricula compatible with the competencies and skills needed for teaching in rural areas; (ii) upgrade their teaching and learning materials; (iii) train their students with emphasis on the application of pedagogy for rural models adopted by the Project; (iv) to develop diagnostic tools oriented to provide relevant information to address education problems in rural areas; and (v) to identify and provide management skills to more effectively administer rural schools. All of these actions will facilitate the ENs being in a better position to prepare for, renew and/or obtain their accreditation.

Component 3: Strengthening Ministry of Education for Project Coordination and Monitoring and Evaluation (Total: US\$7.61 million; Bank financing: US\$6.98 million).

This component will include support for overall Project coordination, supervision, and evaluation by: (i) designing and implementing different studies to promote quality education in rural areas; (ii) designing and implementing a Project-related monitoring and evaluation strategy; and (iii) strengthening the capacity of the Project Coordination Team to comply with its responsibilities for managing the Project.

The Project Coordination Team will be placed within the Vice Ministry, and there will be a special effort to facilitate ownership, continuity of program activities, and ensure sustainability.

Subcomponent 3.1: Studies to promote quality education in rural areas (Total: US\$0.61 million; Bank financing: US\$0.61 million).

This subcomponent will finance applied research to evaluate general education policies in rural areas, analyzing in particular the following aspects: (i) effects of merged schools in rural contexts, (ii) impact of frequent turnover of rural teachers on the quality of rural education, (iii) best practices in both traditional and flexible pedagogical models that can benefit second generation reforms in both models; (iv) special education strategies for conflict-ridden areas; and (v) review of incentives for teachers in rural areas, among others.

Subcomponent 3.2: Impact Evaluations and Monitoring Strategy (Total: US\$1.7 million; Bank financing: US\$1.7 million).

This subcomponent will finance design and development of a monitoring and evaluation system to systematically record information about all Project actions undertaken. This will allow the MEN and all entities involved in project implementation to monitor progress and assess performance. The system will analyze, compare, and interpret all performance indicators and suggest decisions based on the information supplied.

Subcomponent 3.3: Project Management (Total: US\$5.30 million; Bank financing: US\$4.67 million).

The objective of this subcomponent is to plan, implement, and monitor, on a timely basis, the quantitative and qualitative progress, achievements, results, and impact of the Project at each level of intervention and to take corrective action, as needed. The subcomponent also will design and implement a social communications strategy to inform and motivate the general community about the Project and the expected impact. Finally, the subcomponent will strengthen technical teams at the national level and support the creation of teams at the level of certified territorial entities to guarantee not only project execution but sustainability and institutionalization of rural education policies supported by the Project.

The Ministry of Education will have overall responsibility for managing the Project. The Project will be implemented within the regular structure of the Ministry, which should facilitate compliance with the technical, financial, and administrative procedures supporting the Project objectives.

III. SAFEGUARD POLICIES (INCLUDING PUBLIC CONSULTATION)

Approximately 14.05 percent of the Colombian population identify themselves as belonging to an ethnic group: 10.62 percent or 4.3 million are Afro-descendants (Afro-Colombians, Raizales, and Palenqueros); 3.43 percent or 1.39 million Indigenous peoples belong to 87 groups and speak 67 languages in 30 Departments of the country; and there are 4,858 Rom of an itinerant tradition. The Colombian Constitution (1991) recognizes the pluri-ethnic and multi-cultural nature of its population, as well as the equal rights to education of vulnerable groups,³ and underscores the rights of its citizens to an education that respects and develops their cultural identity. The laws, norms, and government policies emphasize the recognition of diversity, respect for cultural differences, and participation in the decision-making processes in education. Despite abundant legislation, however, Colombia does not have a clear education

³ “Vulnerable groups” include Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant population, the handicapped, people displaced due to armed conflicts, and the poor inhabiting low-density rural areas.

policy to safeguard the cultural identity of its ethnic population, or the 67 existing indigenous languages, most of which are at the verge of extinction due to the linguistic homogenization toward Spanish.

In the education sector, Ethno-education⁴ has been under implementation since the late 1970s in response to pressure of ethnic organizations. Ethno-education is defined as a process of self-determination by ethnic groups to attain cultural permanence and more equitable relations with the mainstream population through the development of their own education (bilingual)⁵ processes in their communities. Since 1991, an effort has been made to recognize and protect the diversity of ethnic groups, their organizational structures, decision-making processes, and traditional authorities and representatives at the national and local levels. Formal consultations began in the early 1990s and continue to their present form of *Mesas de Concertación*, including participation of the main ethnic organizations, such as the *Comisión Pedagógica Nacional* (CPN), *Autoridades Indígenas de Colombia* (AICO), *Organización de los Pueblos Indígenas de la Amazonía Colombiana* (OPIAC), *Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia* (ONIC), and *Cabildo Mayor de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta*, as described in Annex 10.

With the support of a Japanese Grant, a pilot Ethno-education project, uprooted in the *Planes de Vida*, is under implementation to test a methodology to prepare, formulate, and implement Ethno-education in a fully participatory manner with the ethnic communities, their traditional authorities (and teachers), and the Secretariats within the territorial entities. The three ethnic groups are *Wayúu*, *Ette Ennaka* (*Chimila*), and *U'wa*, located in the Northern part of the country. Results and lessons learned will be incorporated in a Model of Ethno-education applicable to the rest of the country.

Consistent with the Operational Policy 4.10 on Indigenous Peoples, the Borrower prepared an Indigenous People's Planning Framework (IPPF) to support the Colombian Ministry of Education in addressing the needs of Indigenous and Afro-descendant Peoples. The IPPF will seek to provide support and sustainability to the implementation of the Ethno-education model proposed, following flexible methodologies and processes adaptable to the different groups. The content of the IPPF described in Annex 10 is being incorporated into the project design, will be reflected in the Operational Manual, and will be subject to supervision and evaluation.

A. Environment

In agreement with MEN, no new construction will be financed under the project. Civil works to be financed include school rehabilitation and maintenance, mainly to improve sanitary facilities and adaptation of classrooms for computer installation. The potential environmental impacts of these activities are minor; therefore, they fall under category "C" rating, not requiring stand-alone environmental assessments. However, generic small-works construction guidelines (including provisions such as basic health and safety precautions for workers, management of dust and noise levels, and disposal of construction wastes) will be incorporated into all bidding documents for contractors.

⁴Ethno-education is defined as "a permanent social process immersed in its own culture, which includes the acquisition of knowledge and values and skill development, that train people to participate fully in the cultural control of their community" (Art. 1, Resolution 3454 of 1984, MEN).

⁵ Ethno-education promotes the use of the native language of ethnic groups.

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