

Project Name COLOMBIA-CO-CUNDINAMARCA...
EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROV

Region Latin America and Caribbean Region

Sector Primary education (100%)

Project ID P077757

Borrower(s) DEPARTMENT OF CUNDINAMARCA

Implementing Agency
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Environment Category C

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1. Country and Sector Background

1. Sector-related Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) goal supported by the project: (see Annex 1)
Document number: CAS document number: R99-201- Date of latest CAS discussion: 18 November 1999

The proposed project is in conformity with the goals and priorities outlined in the CAS for Colombia, whose main two objectives are (i) poverty reduction and social development, and (ii) sustainable growth. Specifically, this project would contribute to these goals by expanding coverage and improving the quality of education as key factors for increasing economic competitiveness and growth, reducing poverty and inequity, supporting the decentralization process in the education sector, and building a peaceful society. The 1999 CAS update put a stronger emphasis on successfully implementing Colombia's decentralization and community participation policies.

The new CAS under preparation (to be presented to the Board in January 2003) recognizes that the long-standing armed conflict and violence driven by common criminal activities, especially drug-related, are the most important issues facing Colombia as a nation. In Colombia, stable economic growth rates have historically been instrumental to reduce poverty and increase public resources for social spending. However, during the second half of the 1990s, Colombia entered into a severe economic crisis, erasing over a decade of progress in poverty reduction, and undermining Colombia's ambitious social agenda. Economic prosperity alone will not be sufficient to stop the violence, but increased poverty

could further inflame the situation.

To support this strategy, the Bank lending program focuses on operations that would: (a) have the most tangible impact on poverty alleviation; (b) achieve fast and sustainable growth while protecting the poor; (c) incorporate the lessons learned from Bank operations, particularly from on-going Learning and Innovative Loans, and (d) pilot innovative interventions with important demonstration effects. The CAS proposes a lending program for IBRD of about US\$3 billion for the remainder of FY03 to August of FY06, in order to align the WBG's strategy and instruments with Uribe's administration term of office. This substantial increase in lending is justified by the ambitious program of the Uribe administration to build the foundation for lasting peace and to achieve poverty reduction.

2. Objectives

The developmental objective of the project is to assist the Government of the Department of Cundinamarca in improving the productivity, competitiveness and citizenship of young people joining the labor force after completing basic and secondary education. This development objective, which supports the Department's economic and social progress strategy, would be achieved by improving the academic outcomes of the basic and secondary education system and achieving better competencies and life skills among young graduates. These goals would be accomplished through the following main two components: (i) improving the pedagogical and management performance of schools; and (ii) increasing the management capacity and effectiveness of the Education Secretariat of Cundinamarca at both the central and decentralized levels. The pedagogical and management performance of schools would be strengthened by improving the quality and relevance of the learning process through continuous and comprehensive interventions with respect to the classroom pedagogical process, educational inputs and school management. This approach recognizes the crucial complementarity of five dimensions of academic performance: teacher effectiveness, quality of the learning experience the classroom (pedagogical practices, instructional resources and competency-based content); school management; partnerships with enterprises and social actors, and systematic evaluation of the educational outcomes. The institutional capacity of the Educational Secretariat of the Cundinamarca Department would be strengthened by: (i) improving the educational evaluation system; (ii) developing the tools for a medium term participatory educational planning process; (iii) improving educational statistics; and (iv) enhancing decentralized management at the municipal and school levels.

These objectives would contribute to: (i) supporting the educational quality improvement policy and strategy of the Department of Cundinamarca targeted to disadvantaged schools in rural areas and peri-urban areas and students under high educational risk; (ii) achieving increased equity by providing better educational inputs in socially and economically deprived areas; (iii) increasing coverage in agreement with the goals of the Departmental Development Plan 2001 - 2004; (iv) strengthening the participation of key stakeholders in the educational process and management of schools; and (v) offering new opportunities for continuing education to dropouts and graduates.

3. Rationale for Bank's Involvement

The Bank's financial and technical assistance will provide a valuable contribution to project design and implementation. First, the Bank has played a key role in the initiation of several education reforms in past years following requests of the Colombian authorities. Second, the Bank has substantial lending experience with projects focusing on quality improvement programs that ensure a maximum efficiency of educational investments in client countries, including Colombia. Third, the preparation of this project is based on a strategy of progressive interventions in the education system applying the lessons learned in Colombia and elsewhere in the region. Four, project preparation offers the opportunity to bring to Colombia global expertise associated with successful interventions in education quality improvement and decentralization. Finally, this proposed project will in turn become an important laboratory for continuous learning by the country and the Bank.

4. Description

The Project includes the following three components (i) Improving Quality and Relevance; (ii) Institutional Strengthening; and (iii) Project Administration and Monitoring

Component 1. Improving Quality and Relevance (80% of the total amount). This first component would entail: (i) improving pedagogical practices; (ii) developing and providing adequate instructional resources, learning materials and competency-based curriculum guides; (iii) building up the managerial capacity of school principals; (iv) establishing strategic partnerships between the schools, the productive sectors and civil society to increase the relevance of education and facilitate the labor market insertion of secondary graduates. The partnerships will be the recipients of funds and those will be allocated on a subprojects competitive basis.

Component 2. Institutional Strengthening (10% of the total). This component will strengthen the institutional and management capacity of the Cundinamarca Education Secretariat. It will address, in particular, the institutional and organizational needs generated by an increasingly decentralized system. This component will focus specifically on: (i) improving assessment methods for the continuous evaluation of education quality, including the expansion of the existing student achievement tests to all grades; (ii) improving education statistics and performance indicators; and (iii) designing and implementing a Ten Year Education Development Plan. The main focus of the Plan would be on: (a) setting objectives and targets for each educational level; (b) strengthening the decentralization process in terms of the new responsibilities and accountability structures in the provision of educational services at the municipality and school levels; (c) developing strategic partnerships for the management of the education system; (d) implementing an equity strategy to reduce regional and social disparities in the delivery of education services; (e) formulating a strategy to improve the internal and external efficiency of the education system; and (f) using the quality assessment system to measure the educational results for policy-making decisions.

Component 3. Project Administration and Monitoring (10%): This component will finance the Project Coordination Unit operating within the Education Secretariat of Cundinamarca. The PCU will be in charge of (i) planning

and programming, (ii) monitoring project implementation including disbursements and collection of expenditure documentation, (iii) carrying out the procurement of goods and services financed by the project (Loan and counterpart funds), (iv) coordination of technical activities of the project with the national Ministry of Education, the municipalities in Cundinamarca and the partners in the productive sectors and civil society, (v) communicating with the Bank.

Project Cost. During the project preparation process the costs and sources of financing will be more thoroughly defined.

- 1.Improving the quality and relevance of basic and secondary education
- 2.Strengthening the institutional capacity of the Cundinamarca Secretariat of Education
- 3.Establishing a project coordination unit

5. Financing

Total (US\$m)

BORROWER \$10.00

IBRD \$15.00

IDA

Total Project Cost \$25.00

6. Implementation

implementation period: August, 2003 to July 31, 2007

The following aspects related to project implementation will be confirmed during preparation and pre-appraisal.

ñ Overseeing : Government of Cundinamarca

ñ General coordination: Educational Secretariat

ñ Management structure: Project Coordination Unit (PCU)

ñ Execution: Structure of the education secretariat, municipalities and schools

ñ Monitoring and evaluation: PCU

ñ Reporting: PCU

ñ Financial, Procurement and Auditing: Bank procedures

ñ Supervision: Bank

The project would be implemented by the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP). A Project Coordination Unit (PCU) will be established under the SEP. The PCU will be responsible for overall project coordination and will work in close coordination with the line departments within SEP which will be responsible for implementation of the components. Specifically PCU will be responsible for procurement, financing, follow-up, monitoring, and evaluation of project implementation. The operational procedures as well as the institutional mechanisms to approve and implement competitive projects for strengthening schools partnership will be formulated at the preparation stage and reviewed during pre-appraisal. It will be important to coordinate implementation of this new project with the ongoing Institutional Strengthening project of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Bank's own Rural Development project which promotes partnerships between municipalities and the productive sectors in several Departments, including Cundinamarca.

A draft Project Implementation Plan (PIP) will be elaborated by the project preparation team to be reviewed during the preparation mission. This PIP will provide full information concerning the general implementation and organizational arrangements of the proposed project and will include a detailed implementation schedule and yearly input, process and output targets, as well as a procurement plan. The Quality Assurance Group guidelines will frame the context of the Bank's pre-appraisal and appraisal missions (see section.. of the PCD). The usual accounting, financial, auditing and reporting procedures that Colombia sets up to implement investments projects will be adopted for the proposed project in line with Bank procedures and regulations. The monitoring and evaluation arrangements will be discussed and reviewed at pre-appraisal.

7. Sustainability

Sustainability of the proposed project has to be analysed along two dimensions: (i) financial; and (ii) institutional. As stated in section E2, a first draft of the financial requirements for project implementation including long-term recurrent liabilities (financial sustainability) will be made available during the pre appraisal mission. This information will allow to assess the recurrent cost implications of the project on the SEP budget. Equally important as the financial sustainability is the institutional sustainability, including the legal, organizational and technical arrangements needed to ensure the continuation of the activities developed and financed by the project beyond the life of the project. It should be highlighted in this respect that actual implementation of this project will take place within the context of the regular structure, procedures and responsibilities of existing SEP departments.

8. Lessons learned from past operations in the country/sector

The following key lessons, based on international experience and findings from ICRs and impact studies of recent education projects in Colombia as well as observations made derived from the supervision of ongoing projects at the national and decentralized levels, have been considered in the project design:

- ñ The most effective pedagogical interventions take place at the school and classroom level and are student-centered, meaning that an effective learning environment is constructed in the education community around a curriculum connected to skills, competencies and knowledge.
- ñ Learning inputs need to be aligned with the curriculum and expected competencies.
- ñ Comprehensive interventions that deal in a complementary way with school management, the provision of educational materials, and the introduction of innovative classroom methodologies are likely to be more effective.
- ñ To promote strategic partnerships at the school level, it is better to combine supply-driven actions (initiated by the Education Secretariat) and demand-driven programs like the use of competitive subprojects.
- ñ To increase the likelihood of achieving the expected project impact, it is recommended to have a simple design including: (i) limited objectives; (iii) a simple structure; and (iii) alignment with the existing implementation capacity of the Department
- ñ For improved decentralized management there is a need for: (a) strong leadership by school principals; (b) clear goals that can be monitored; (c) widespread ownership of the reform goals through participation of the beneficiaries and teachers in the diagnosis of the schools problem and the

design of the changes/solutions; (d) empowerment of schools to implement their own pedagogical projects in connection with the needs of the local labor market; and (e) school accountability based on the use of continuous information and feedback on performance and ways of improve it.

ñ There is a need for a well-designed monitoring system and for continuous cross-fertilization activities to be in a position to make adjustments as issues arise during project implementation. Monitoring performance objectives in coordination with representatives of participating national and sub-national entities is crucial for effective project implementation. In a decentralized context. a basic monitoring and auditing system is essential to the provision of timely assistance to local authorities.

Projects that undertake comprehensive national educational reform programs-such as achieving universal basic education, improving quality, and establishing sector finances at the local level- should identify concrete and measurable objectives that can be attained within the project period.

ñ Involvement of the Local Authorities can have a positive demonstration effect. The success of the Secondary Education Project in the mid-1990s incited Local Authorities to invest more in the education sector and to seek other Bank loans. In recent years, two "decentralized" loans are under satisfactory implementation (both in development objectives and disbursement/implementation) , one with the Department of Antioquia and the other with the Municipality of Pasto. The results and impact of those projects are going to be measured by an intensive learning ICR

ñ Need to anticipate the impact of frequent turnover of Education Secretariat staff: The political history of Colombia reveals that there are usually several changes of key government officials during any political term period. It is therefore important to anticipate what type of contingency measures can be taken to minimize the impact of these frequent changes on project ownership and implementation.

9. Environment Aspects (including any public consultation)

Issues : This proposed project does not envisage any significant environmental issues.

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Note: This is information on an evolving project. Certain components may not be necessarily included in the final project.

This PID was processed by the InfoShop during the week ending December 20, 2002.