

Education and training project

Report No: Type: Report/Evaluation Memorandum; Country: Maldives; Region: South Asia; Sector: Secondary Education; Major Sector: Education; Project ID: P004335

Maldives: Education and Training Project (Credit 1981-MAL)

The Maldives Education and Training project, supported by Credit 1981-MAL for US\$8.19 million equivalent, was approved in FY89. The credit was closed on schedule on December 31, 1995, at which time a balance of \$0.3 million was canceled. The Implementation Completion Report (ICR) was prepared by the South Asia Regional Office. The borrower's full report on the implementation and achievements of the project is included as Annex B.

The project aimed to alleviate the serious shortage of skilled manpower in teaching and science-related fields by: (a) financing a program of overseas fellowships mostly at the post-secondary level; (b) upgrading the low instructional quality of upper secondary education, particularly in science; (c) increasing equitable access to secondary education; (d) strengthening the planning capacity of the Ministry of Education (MOE); and (e) improving labor-market information so that the appropriate numbers of suitably qualified teachers can be hired. The project financed fellowships, civil works, specialist services, and studies.

This successful project was IDA's first operation in the education sector of Maldives. The fellowships program was implemented effectively; all trainees returned from abroad and were located in positions of appropriate responsibility. The country's only upper secondary school was equipped for science instruction, and the secondary-school pass rates of the (British) General Certificate of Education examination improved from 50 percent to 70 percent. A secondary school was built, which increased equity and access for rural students, particularly girls. Cost recovery of textbooks was established for students who could afford to pay. MOE planning officers were trained in how to gather educational data, analyze them, and use the results. Project-financed studies on the number of teachers and scientists needed were completed, and the recommendations were mostly implemented.

The Operations Evaluation Department agrees with the ICR ratings. Outcome is rated as satisfactory, sustainability as likely, and institutional development as substantial. Bank performance is rated as satisfactory; for much of its life, the project was supervised by an educator who paid consistent attention to instructional issues.

The project outcome shows that a small country can efficiently implement a Bank project that has diverse components if there is strong government commitment and a political climate conducive to smooth implementation.

The ICR is clear and provides a comprehensive review of project events. No audit is planned.