The Republic of Niger

Ex-Post Evaluation of Japanese Grant Aid Project

"Le Projet de Construction des Salles de Classe de l'Enseignement Primaire dans les Départements de Dosso et de Tahoua"

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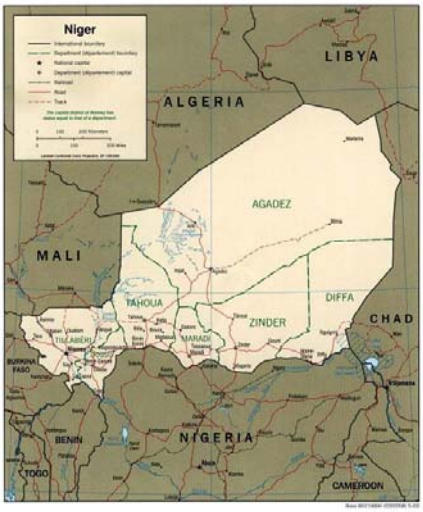
1 Overview of the Project



The Republic of Niger

Birni Quartier School in Dosso

1.1 Background

The Republic of Niger (hereafter referred to as Niger) is one of the poorest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, also having the lowest percentage of its population in education in the world. In 2000, Niger's primary education net enrolment rate was 34% and its adult literacy rate was 15.7%. Disparities in basic education between Regions and gender were widespread.

In order to improve the situation in the education sector the government of Niger introduced the Basic Education Law in 1998 and Ten-Year Education Development Program 2002 - 2012 (Programme Décennal de Développement de l'Education de Niger: PDDE) in 2001. The latter aims, through the construction and renovation of classrooms (among other policies), to enroll 70% of all children by 2012.

Against this background the Government of Japan dispatched a Basic Design Study (B/D) team in 2002 in response to a request by the Government of Niger for the construction of primary school classrooms. The exchange of notes (E/N) was officially signed by both governments in 2003 with the final stage of the project being completed in 2005.

1.2 Project Outline

The project was aimed at providing 9,250 students with a comfortable learning environment to study in, by constructing and renovating 185 schoolrooms at 52 primary schools in Dosso and Tahoua Regions[53] where primary school enrollment rates were low. In Dosso and Tahoua, there were more hand-made thatched-roof/straw-walled classrooms[54] than in other Regions in Niger.

Planned amount / Actual amount		Stage 1 : 705 million yen / 704.6 million yen Stage 2 : 326 million yen / 323.41 million yen
Exchange of Notes (E/N)		Stage 1 : 20 June 2003 Stage 2 : 29 June 2004
Executing Agency		Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy (now reorganized as the Ministry of National Education)
Project Completion		1 October 2005
Companies Involved	Contractor	Toda Corporation
	Consultant	Daiken Sekkei. Inc.
Basic Design		March 2002
Detail Design		Stage 1 : January 2004 Stage 2 : December 2004
Related Projects		• JICA Technical Cooperation Project, "The Project on Support to the Improvement of School Management through Community Participation (School for All)"[55] Phase 1, was supporting COGES[56] in primary schools in Tahoua and Zinder Regions. The project duration was from January 2004 to July 2007. • At the time of the B/D, the World Bank was implementing Projet Sectoriel de l'Enseignement Fondamental (PROSEF) and was in the process of designing a successor project. Likewise, European Union (EU), African Development Bank, Agence Française de Développement (AFD) were supporting or planning to support Niger with the construction and/or renovation of primary school classrooms as well as with school management.

2 Outline of the Evaluation Study

2.1 External Evaluators

Satoru Takahashi, IMG. Inc.

Shimako Narahara, IMG. Inc.

[53] When the B/D of the project was conducted, the administrative units for Dosso and Tahoua were called "Departments". In 2002, Departments were renamed "Regions" based on the government's decentralization policy. In the current system, a Department is a smaller administrative unit than a Region (a Region consists of Departments).
[54] Hereafter referred to as thatched classroom(s).
[55] Hereafter referred to as the "School for All project".
[56] COGES stands for Comité de Gestion des Etablissements Scolaires (School Management Committee). A COGES consists of representatives of parents and teachers and is responsible for the basic maintenance of school facilities and management of a school, as well as the provision of school materials. Since April 2005, through a ministerial order, all primary schools in Niger were required to organize a COGES.

2.2 Duration of the Evaluation Study

Duration of the Study: October 2009 - September 2010

Duration of the Field Study: March 13th - April 11th, 2010

2.3 Constraints during the Evaluation Study

The project sites are situated in a wide range of locations in Dosso and Tahoua Regions. Travel restrictions to visit some parts of Niger were placed when the field study was conducted, due to recent security concerns including suspected activities of Al-Quaeda linked groups. The Ex-Post Evaluation team was prohibited from visiting some of the departments/cities where project schools were located, including Tahoua City and Tahoua Department. To conduct the field survey the Ex-Post Evaluation team randomly selected 19 project schools as samples from locations in unrestricted areas. Most of the qualitative data used to analyze effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project was obtained from the information gathered at these sample schools.

The Ex-Post Evaluation team collected as much quantitative data as possible from the sample schools as well as from the Educational Inspector's Offices (Inspection de l'Enseignement de Base: IEB) which supervise these schools. However, much of the basic information needed was not systematically kept either at the schools or, in a considerable number of cases, by the IEBs. The failure of data management by the IEBs can partly be attributed to Niger's decentralization policy, through which many of the existing IEBs have been divided into two or more IEBs, with the then existing IEBs not properly providing the information to the newly created IEBs about the schools that they had become responsible for. As a result, at many project sites, it was difficult to obtain a comprehensive set of data to assess "before the project and after the project" quantitative differences. The Ex-Post Evaluation team decided to use for the evaluation data collected in the form of documented record which were obtained from IEBs or sample schools, and thus deemed as reliable.

3 Results of the Evaluation (Rating: C)

3.1 Relevance (Rating: a)

3.1.1 Relevance with the Nigerien Government Policies for Development

The project was consistent with the government policies of Niger at the time of the B/D as well as at the time of the Ex-Post Evaluation for the following reasons:

Niger enacted the Basic Education Law in 1998, which aspired to improve people's access to education, the quality of education, and the literacy rate. In its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

(PRSP) in 2001, the government identified the educational sector as one important area within the social sector. PDDE 2002-2012, formulated in 2001, mapped out the strategies to realize the Basic Education Law objectives and has been functioning within the PRSP framework. PDDE was also expected to contribute to poverty reduction and human development. PDDE aimed to increase gross primary education enrolment from 34% in 2000 to 70% in 2012. As one of the measures to achieve this goal, it planned to construct 19,385 classrooms and to renovate 6,701 classrooms. PDDE was split into three phases (phase I 2002-2007, Phase II 2007-2010 and Phase III 2010-2013), all of which prioritized the improvement of access to basic education.

3.1.2 Relevance with Development Needs

Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world with a Human Development Index (HDI) ranking of 172 out of 173 countries in 2000; of the three HDI components Niger's education index at 0.16 was significantly lower than those of the other two components, with a GDP index of 0.34 and a life expectancy index of 0.34[57]. In the latest HDI (2007) Niger ranked 182 out of 182 countries, but there had been some improvement compared to 2000 in the education index, now at 0.282, although it was still lower than the GDP index of 0.307 and life expectancy index of 0.432 [58]. The level of basic education in Niger was ranked amongst the lowest in the world: according to a UNESCO report (2000) in 1996 Niger's enrolment rate (29%) was much lower than those of neighboring countries such as Mali (49%), Burkina Faso (40%), and Chad (57%)[59]. Niger's enrolment rate improved to 34% in 2000[60], yet still remained at the lowest level in Sub-Saharan Africa[61].

The B/D listed the following contributing factors for the low enrolment rate in basic education: absolute insufficiency of educational facilities, dilapidated or poorly-structured[62] classrooms, and lack of basic equipment such as students' desks and chairs. Other factors that also affected the enrolment rate included the very limited capacity of teachers, lack of teachers, and inadequate school management[63]. As to inadequate school management, the B/D pointed out that more often than not parents (who were supposed to be the main people to manage and maintain schools) were alienated from school management.

In Dosso and Tahoua Regions where the project was carried out, the enrolment rates in 2000 were very low at 36.9% in Dosso and 29.5% in Tahoua. As a comparison in the capital city, Niamey, the rate was nearly 100%. The B/D found that in these two Regions the proportional

[57] UNDP, Human Development Report 2002
[58] UNDP, Human Development Report 2009
[59] p1-5, Basic Design Study Report
[60] Statistics on Basic Education 1999/2000, the government of Niger (cited in Basic Design Study Report, p1-5)
[61] The enrolment rate of Sub-Saharan African countries as a whole in 2000 was 80.3% (UNESCO Institute of Statistics).
[62] Such as thatched classrooms.
[63] For example, there were reported cases that school principals did not allow some children to be enrolled in order to avoid overcrowding of classrooms.

amount of thatched classrooms was higher than in other Regions in the country and yet hardly any support was being provided by other donors.

The Ex-Post Evaluation confirmed that there had been a drastic increase in the enrolment rates in the target Regions since 2000. In 2008/09, the enrolment rate in Dosso was 71.9% and in Tahoua 67.6%[64]. Schools had to accommodate an ever increasing number of children, thus the necessity for classroom construction has been an issue that has continued to remain pressing.

The request from the government of Niger for the project had included the construction of classrooms for secondary schools. However, the B/D concluded that there was no persuasive reason to include secondary school construction in the project and decided to carry out construction and renovation of only primary schools. Examining the B/D's decision, the Ex-Post Evaluation found that in 2 rural schools, out of the 19 sample schools, there were problems with the graduates of the primary schools because of a lack of secondary schools in the villages. Many of the graduates who proceeded to the secondary schools in neighboring towns had dropped out, which has made community members including their parents and younger siblings feel that education, primary or secondary, is meaningless (i.e., not being of any benefit to children). The parents' disappointment/disillusionment with the education system itself has in turn resulted in their reluctance to send their younger children to primary school. The two schools have suffered from a decrease in the number of students over the last few years and the IEBs that supervise these schools have started to recognize these problems[65]. Despite this new problem found, the unmet need for primary education was, and still is, acute in the target areas and has necessitated it being treated as a priority by the education sectors in these areas. Thus, the Ex-Post Evaluation team concludes that the B/D's decision to concentrate on primary schools was relevant.

3.1.3 Relevance with Japan's ODA policy

In both the Official Development Assistance (ODA) Charter (2003), and the Medium Term Policy on ODA (2005), which form the policy basis for Japanese development cooperation, Japan places priority on education as an important sector to be supported. It identifies the support for the education sector as a main priority under its poverty reduction policy.

In 2002, Japan announced "Basic Education for Growth Initiative" (BEGIN) at the Kananaskis Summit, identifying its strategy to support basic education in developing countries, giving due consideration to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) - Dakar Framework for Action, both of which were adopted globally in 2000. For BEGIN Japan

[64] Statistics on Basic Education 2008/09, the government of Niger

[65] The IEBs considered opinion is that children drop out from secondary schools because, in most cases, the schools are far from home and children consequently have to live away from their families, which makes them unstable, giving them difficulties with concentrating on their studies.

pledged over 250 billion yen in assistance for education to be provided for low-income countries over five years (starting in 2002)[66].

Japan's commitment toward improving Africa's educational sector has clearly been demonstrated by its proactive contributions, outlined in a series of Tokyo International Conference on Africa Development (TICAD) beginning with TICAD I in 1993. TICAD II took place in 1998 and TICAD III in 2003 (the same year as the B/D). In TICAD IV in 2008 Japan reiterated the importance of improving access to basic education in Africa and committed itself to construct 1,000 primary/secondary schools there (approximately 5,500 classrooms in total).

Having recognized the dire need for primary education facilities in Niger, Japan constructed a total of 235 classrooms[67] in Fiscal Years (FYs) 1993 and 1996 (i.e., prior to this project). After this project, another classroom construction project named Le Projet de Construction de Salles de Classe dans les Regions de Maradi et de Zinder had been implemented in 253 primary schools in Maradi and Zinder Regions and was still underway at the time of the Ex-Post Evaluation[68].

As discussed above, the project has been highly relevant with the Nigerien government policies for educational development, the development needs in target Regions, and the Japan's ODA policy; therefore the relevance of the project is high.

3.2 Efficiency (Rating: b)

3.2.1 Project Outputs

From the original plan in the B/D, three classroom buildings (eight classrooms) and four latrine buildings (12 pit latrines) were cancelled as it was found during the Detailed Design Study that these facilities had already been constructed by the Nigerien government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or other donors[69]. After this revision, the project constructed or renovated 185 classrooms, constructed 49 latrine buildings (147 pit latrines) and provided 9,250 student desk-and-chairs[70] (50 sets for 185 classrooms) in 52 primary schools (see Table 1).

[66] Supporting the Joy: Japan's Support for Education of Leaning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
[67] Out of the 235 classrooms, eight in FY 1993 were secondary school classrooms.
[68] The B/D of the project was submitted in December 2006.
[69] 1 school (3 classrooms planned) was excluded from the plan as an NGO had already constructed classrooms at the time of the Detailed Design Study. In 5 schools at which the government/donors/NGOs had constructed classrooms, the number of classrooms to be constructed by this project was reduced by 1 classroom each. Latrine buildings: 4 schools (including the school which was excluded from the project) were found to have latrines built by other donors/NGOs, thus the project decided not to build latrine buildings at these locations.
[70] The desk and the chair are attached to each other in one combination unit, made from plywood with a steel frame.

Table 1 Comparison between the planned and actual project outputs

	Schools	Classrooms	Latrine buildings	Pit latrines
Planned (B/D)	53	194	53	159
Actual	52	185	49	147

Source: B/D and Project Completion Reports

The design standards of the classroom construction conformed to Nigerien national building standards and regulations. Beneficiaries both at policy level and at the localities (Ministry of National Education, IEBs, school principals and teachers, and parents) acknowledged that the quality of the project classrooms was either equal to or higher than that of the classrooms constructed by the government and/or other donors, and that the project classrooms require minimal maintenance (which was highly appreciated by the beneficiaries).

During the field visits, many principals and COGES members made positive comments especially about: the solid foundations of the project classrooms; and that the construction work had been monitored far more frequently and carefully than with other organizations' projects.

However, one interviewee[71] commented that the design of the schools constructed by MCC (Millennium Challenge Corporation, an independent USA foreign and agency with USA government backing) was better than that of this project in terms of providing more comfortable educational environments for the students. The MCC classrooms have open spaces between classrooms where it is airy (see Photo 2). This space is relatively cool and comfortable, which is valuable in the severely hot climate of Niger. Using these spaces, students can play between classes, and teachers and COGES members can work after school[72]. An additional advantage is that the open space could be transformed into a closed classroom with straw walls when/if the number of students of the school increases and another classroom is required.

Photo 1 Typical classroom building constructed by the project (Konni Department, Tahoua Region)

Photo 2 Classroom building constructed by MCC

[71] An officer in charge of education facilities at an IEB in Konni Department in Tahoua Region.
[72] Some aid agency officers, however, indicated that MCC-style classroom buildings, which require more space to be built, may not be suitable in crowded urban locations, while they are suitable in rural areas where it is easier to secure land.

Defects in the school buildings: from the 19 schools that the Ex-Post Evaluation team visited, 13 schools (68%) had broken hinges and/or locks on the classroom doors and/or windows and 5 schools (26%) had broken door hinges on the latrines. The problem may be attributable to the use of cheap low-quality materials, as well as to rough handling by the teachers and students, although it was impossible to identify which was the determining factor for the breakages in each case.

In 12 schools out of the 19 schools (63%), bats have nested in the space between the roof and the ceiling causing problems such as: their chirping being noisy during classes, and their excrement that produces an unpleasant odor and that has leaked out down the walls. All of these disturb students' concentration on their classes. As not all the schools visited suffered from the problems with bats problems, it is unlikely that there was a flaw in the design of the construction itself. The field research revealed that bats have most likely entered the building through the narrow gap(s) that have formed in the plaster that was used to fill the space between the joists and the outer walls (see Photo 3). Two schools[73] reported that the problems started directly after the completion of construction, this indicates the possibility of shoddy workmanship, such as not putting sufficient plaster around the joists.

Photo 3 Narrow gap observed between the joist and the wall
(Konni Department, Tahoua Region)

In 13 schools out of the 19 schools, many students desk-and-chairs (in some cases 75-100%) provided by the project had problems. Typical problems were: screws had come out (Photo 4) and the surface of desk/chairs had peeled off (Photo 5). The Ex-Post Evaluation team observed many desks being used had screws missing, sometimes meaning that the top boards had come loose from the steel frames (as Photo 4 shows), which is dangerous as (for example) students may slip off the chairs.

[73] The remaining 10 schools were unable to identify when the bats started to invade, as the principals working at the time of the completion of construction had been transferred and the information/reports on the problems were not kept.

Photo 4 Desk-and-chair being used with the screws off

Photo 5 Surface of the desk peeled off

The problem with the screws was thought to be caused mainly by the students who would play with and loosen the screws, as the screw heads were exposed on the top surfaces in the boards of both the desk and chair parts. Some of the schools had other types of desk-and-chairs provided either by the government or by other donors, these screws of which were placed not on the top surfaces but on the sides of the furniture; very few of these desks have had a problem with screws. The damage to the surfaces (peeling-off) of the boards was apparently caused by children's vandalism. By contrast, the surfaces of the solid planked desk-and-chairs provided by the government were not seriously damaged. Thus, the surface damage of the desk-and-chairs provided by the project could be attributed to plywood being used.

The Ex-Post Evaluation team observed in a few schools that the blackboards, two of which were placed on the walls of every project classroom, developed cracks in their surfaces. This may be attributable to the use of a wet cloth for cleaning (commonly practiced in Niger), damage from which is not offset with regular repainting.

3.2.2 Project Inputs

3.2.2.1 Project period

The project was implemented in two stages: Stage I (August 2003 – February 2005) and Stage II (August 2004 – October 2005)[74]. The duration of the project, 33 months, was marginally longer than planned in the B/D which was 31.5 months (over 100% and under 125% of the planned amount). Table 2 shows the comparison between the planned and the actual construction periods.

[74] For both stages, the starting month is when the Detail Design Study began and the end month was when the construction was completed.

Table 2 Comparison between the Planned and Actual Construction Periods

	Stage I		Stage II	
	Detailed Design	Construction	Detailed Design	Construction
Planned (B/D)	5.5 months	12 months	5 months	9 months
Actual	6 months	12.5 months	5 months	9.5 months

Source: B/D and Project Completion Reports

The Detailed Design period in Stage I was 0.5 month longer than in the planned period; this was caused by the one-year blank period between the submission of the B/D and E/N which was due to the Iraq war (started March 2003). Because of the time that had elapsed between the B/D and the Detailed Design Study (which could be conducted only after E/N), the situation had changed in some target areas which required the Detailed Design to take more time than expected (than expected at the time of the B/D); this included having to spend time in discussions with the Nigerien government. Additional time delay was added as the bidding date was rescheduled, as the original bidding period had been during the year-end and New Year holiday season. In both Stages I and II, there were half-month blank periods between the contract date and the starting date of construction, which was due again to the year-end and New Year holiday seasons.

3.2.2.2 Project cost

The total project cost was 1,028.01 million yen, which was within the amount stated in the E/N -1031 million yen (99.7% of the planned amount).

There were different views regarding the cost effectiveness of the project within the Ministry of National Education. The Department of Study and Programming (Direction des Etudes et de la Programmation: DEP) argued that the buildings constructed by Japan were more durable and did not require much repair due to their superior quality, and that this compensated for the cost of construction being higher than that of other donors. Conversely the Department of School Infrastructure and Equipment (Direction des Infrastructures et Equipements Scolaires: DIES) claimed that the project cost was too high e.g. a classroom constructed by the World Bank cost approximately one third of one constructed by the Japanese. According to DIES this was because with Japanese grant aid it is required to use a Japanese contractor, although the contractor does use local sub-contractors. DIES argued that, to lower the construction cost, the Japanese government should have allowed the recipient government to directly assign contracts with local companies, which would have with the savings resulted in an increase in the number of classrooms constructed by the project.

Detailed data that should indicate the differences in the quality of the classrooms constructed by the Japanese contractor, local contractors (through domestic bidding), and other donors, was unavailable. At the time of the Ex-Post Evaluation it was also impossible to compare the

durability of the classrooms constructed by different organizations, as only 5 years had passed since the completion of the project. Thus, it is difficult to compare the cost-effectiveness of the classrooms constructed by various different donor projects (including this project) and the government.

Although the project period was slightly longer than planned, the project cost was lower than planned; therefore the efficiency of the project is fair.

3.3 Effectiveness (Rating: b)

3.3.1 Quantitative Effects (Results from Operation Indicators)

In the B/D and the Detailed Design Study, the projected direct effect of the project was to provide approximately 9,250 students with improved learning environments by constructing/renovating 185 classrooms at 52 schools.

Photo 6 Thatched classroom

Photo 7 Class in a thatched classroom

Photo 8 Class in a project classroom

In order to assess to what level the set objectives were achieved, the planned and actual figures on the following indicators were used for comparison:

(1) Number of students learning in the project classrooms

(2) Increases in the number of girl students and the utilization of latrine buildings

(3) Reduction of the economic burden on parents

(4) The soft component implementation status

The Ex-Post Evaluation team selected the above four indicators since in the B/D they were categorized as follows: (1) was the primary numerical indicator to assess the direct effect of the project, (2) and (3) were also emphasized as direct effects indicators of the project, and (4) was a component of the project which should achieve a direct effect ("the maintenance system for the facilities provided by the project is consolidated"[75]).

(1) Number of students learning in the project classrooms

As a planned effect of the project it had been envisaged that upon the completion of the project in 2005, 185 classrooms (either constructed or renovated by the project) would provide 9,250

[75] See p.iii-iv and p4-1 of B/D for the detailed description of the direct effects projected.

students (50 students per classroom) with improved learning environments. While it was impossible to visit some of the project areas due to the travel restrictions (see "2.3 Constraints during the Evaluation Study"), the Ex-Post Evaluation team did examine the number of students learning in the classrooms provided by the project by performing field research at the 19 sample schools (37% of all the project schools), which were all located in unrestricted areas. The evaluation was therefore conducted based on the data obtained from the 19 schools[76] visited.

At the 19 schools, 62 classrooms were constructed/renovated by the project. The set target number of students for the 19 schools was 3,100 (50 students multiplied by 62 classrooms). At the time of the Ex-Post Evaluation 2,429 students were estimated to be learning in these 62 project classrooms, which was 78.35% of the target number. The estimated number of students learning in the total 185 classrooms (52 schools) by using this percentage (78%) against the set target of 9,250 is 7,247; so an additional 2,000 students could be accommodated. Although it was planned that 50 students would be accommodated in each classroom only four schools had 50 or more students, with another four schools having 45 or more students, in the project classrooms at the sample schools. Out of the eight schools above, six were located in the urban areas, and the remaining two schools were located in rural but relatively populous communities which were easily accessible from nearby towns.

In the other eleven schools the project classrooms were not fully utilized at the time of the Ex-Post Evaluation (four years after the project completion), with less than 45 students learning in each project classroom. Out of these eleven schools nine were located in rural areas with only two schools in urban settings[77]. In particular, the project classrooms in four schools (three in rural areas) had less than 25 students per classroom and two of them (both in rural areas) only had 16–17 students per classroom.

Table 3 Average number of students per project classroom in the 19 sample schools

Urban/Rural	Average number of students	Number of schools
Urban	44.9	8
Rural	33.5	11

Source: Ex-Post Evaluation team

As shown above, the level of utilization of the project classrooms (number of the students who are learning in the classrooms) is closely associated with the locations of the schools i.e., whether the school is located in: an urban area, where many children live and thus a school

[76] Including the data obtained from the IEBs that supervise the schools.
[77] "Urban area" hereafter in this report refers to an area that experiences an inflow and growth in population, even if it is not physically located in a city or along a paved road. "Rural area" hereafter in this report refers to an area where population is small and migration into the community hardly occurs, regardless of its physical location (such as located in a city, an administrative unit or close to a paved road).

tends to have many students; or rural area, where the community is small and thus a school tends to have less students.

In the B/D, the construction plan including the number of classrooms at respective schools was made based on the estimations of future population growth in the target Regions: 3.6% per year for Dosso and 3.3% per year for Tahoua. Within these Regions however there are both populous and sparsely-settled areas and their rates of population growth are significantly different from each other. The Ex-Post Evaluation revealed that there were not enough students to fill in the classrooms in some of the schools[78], especially in rural areas. The construction plan appears to be inappropriate as it applied a uniform population growth rate in each entire Region and then calculated the number of students who would enroll into the schools from that rate, and then accordingly the number of classrooms to be constructed. A plan that took into consideration communities' locations and their demographic features (e.g. urban or rural, within or near a large community) would have been more effective.

An example of the problem in the B/D discussed above was seen in a school where a building with only one classroom was built, this school was located in an urban community into which people had continued to migrate, and it had experienced a large increase in the number of the students since the time of the B/D: 259 students at the time of the B/D compared to 411 students in 2009/10 school year. As a result, this school had to build 5 thatched classrooms in 2009/10 to accommodate ever-increasing students.

When it comes to the average number of children per permanent classroom[79], the number had however decreased from 132.8 (in 2001) to 50.3 (at the time of the Ex-Post Evaluation). Thanks to the project classrooms, as well as the government's and other donors' construction of classrooms, the number of permanent classrooms increased in the target areas which contributed to a decrease in the number of children per permanent classroom. In project schools, congestion in the permanent classrooms has been mitigated.

(2) Increases in the number of girl students and utilization of latrine buildings

The B/D expected that the construction of the latrine buildings (1 latrine building [3 pit latrines] per school) would promote hygiene education and improve sanitary conditions in the target schools. It was also envisaged that each of 3 pit latrines would be used individually by boys, girls, and teachers, which would develop an environment to promote the enrolment of more girl

[78] The level of utilization of the project classrooms was unable to be examined in Tahoua City (the Regional capital) and its neighboring Tahoua Department, due to the travel restrictions which prohibited the Ex-Post Evaluation team from visiting schools there. As discussed, the tendency was that the schools in urban areas, especially in big highly populated cities, had higher enrolment and thus the project classrooms tended to be fully utilized. This could also be the case with the project schools in Tahoua City and in Tahoua Department.

[79] A classroom which is made of concrete and the like i.e., not thatched one. The analysis includes not only the project classrooms but also those constructed by the government and other donors.

students. Within the 19 sample schools however there was not a single case of proactive hygiene education, including no initiatives to promote utilization of the latrines. Moreover, the field observation and interviews at the sample schools by the Ex-Post Evaluation team found out that not many students (neither boys nor girls) used the latrines frequently.

At a majority of the schools visited the pit latrines doors were always locked. When a student wanted to use the latrine they had to get permission from either a teacher or a student representative. This cumbersome procedure to use the latrine, coupled with the fact that most children were not accustomed to using latrines in everyday life, appeared to have lead to a continuous practice of open-air excretion by students (including many girls).

The fact that no schools visited had ever had the pit latrines pumped out, because they had not yet been filled, was a supporting evidence for the under usage of the latrines. According to the B/D's estimation, the pit latrines would become full in 3 years if the latrines were fully utilized.

The number of girls enrolled varied greatly from school to school and no definite tendency was found either in its increase or decrease. In a "before the project and after the project" comparison, out of the eleven schools from which reliable data was obtained, eight schools had seen an increase in girl students, while three schools had seen a decrease. Even in the eight schools that had seen an increase in girl students, the number of girls fluctuated over the years, with no consistent increase in the number of girls. It is thus concluded that the expectation in the B/D (the construction of latrines promotes the enrolment of girl students) has not been realized.

(3) Reduction of the economic burden on parents

The B/D predicted that after the completion of the project parents (and communities) would be freed from the economic burden of the construction of thatched classrooms[80] (approximately 35,000 FCFA per classroom per year). The Ex-Post Evaluation confirmed that the construction cost of a thatched classroom was on average between 35,000 – 50,000 FCFA[81], tending to be higher in urban areas (as there were additional material transportation costs). Since a typical target school was provided with two classrooms (one classroom building) by the project, the parents' and the community's economic burden was reduced on average by 70,000 – 100,000 FCFA. To support this finding, the majority of the interviewed parents/community members reported that the most tangible benefit of the project was the reduction (or elimination) of economic and/or physical requirements for thatched classroom construction.

[80] A thatched classroom would last one school year at the maximum and thus needs to be rebuilt every year.
[81] 5 FCFA was approximately 1 Japanese yen at the time of the field survey (March-April 2010).

(4) The soft component implementation status

The B/D expected that the implementation of the soft component named COSAGE (Composante soft visant à l'amélioration de la gestion des écoles) would activate parents' associations and COGES so that the parents (and the communities) would be more capable of maintaining school facilities and more motivated to do so. Main components of COSAGE were:

- Producing training manuals on participatory school management
- Implementing training targeted at school principals and teachers
- Promoting school management activities targeted at community members
- Holding elections of COGES members
- Supporting COGES in strengthening their organizational capacity and formulating school activity plans[82]

COSAGE was implemented in all the project schools (52 schools). However, approximately half of the interviewees in the sample schools did not remember anything about COSAGE. In Tahoua Region (also one of the target Regions of the "School for All" project [phase 1][83]) the interviewees – principals/teachers and parents – in four out of the seven schools visited by the Ex-Post Evaluation team did not remember COSAGE at all. While those interviewed in the remaining 3 schools could not differentiate between COSAGE and the "School for All" project activities (supporting COGES), they did remember vaguely that some training had been conducted through COSAGE or that COSAGE had told them to contribute the efforts towards school management. The "School for All" project had in the meantime adopted the concept of COSAGE, thus COSAGE functioned as its de facto pilot project. The Ex-Post Evaluation confirmed that in most cases COGES activities in the project schools became more active after the involvement of the "School for All" project (see "3.5.1 Structural Aspects of Operation and Maintenance").

Therefore, it is fair to hypothesize that COSAGE contributed to the smooth start-up of the "School for All" project, while it is difficult to conclude that COSAGE directly developed the maintenance capacity of the project schools, which had been its primary objective.

3.3.2 Qualitative Effects

The project aimed to reduce thatched classrooms in the target schools as they were vulnerable to bad weather and dust and therefore tended to have an adverse impact on students' health and ability to concentration on their studies. The constructed classrooms were expected to provide

[82] A school activity plan is an annual plan for a COGES to manage school-related activities and to maintain school facilities, equipment and materials.
[83] The "School for All" project is a JICA technical cooperation project to support COGES activities. Phase 1 of the "School for All" project started in January 2004, which was in the middle of the implementation of this grant aid project.

improved learning environments for the children. The Ex-Post Evaluation confirmed that the construction of permanent classrooms had eased the problems caused by thatched classrooms. Below are the positive effects that were reported by the interviewees (mainly teachers and parents).

- School terms tended to start late in thatched classrooms as their construction can be done only after the harvest season (September – October); the main materials used for thatched classrooms are straw, branches, and the remains of harvested crops. The construction of permanent classrooms has enabled classes/terms to start as scheduled.
- The very existence of classroom buildings has raised parents' awareness about school education. People tended not to be conscious of the beginning of the school year (October), especially in communities with schools that only had thatched classrooms. October is the end of the rainy season, during which plants including agricultural crops grow as tall as 2m virtually everywhere including the schoolyards. Thatched classrooms built in the previous school year become unseen in the overgrown plants and finally collapse. The permanent classroom buildings are in contrast visible throughout the year, which helps to remind the community members of sending children back to school when October comes.
- Construction of solid and high-quality classrooms has motivated parents to enroll and keep their children in school.
- Both teachers' and students' concentration in lessons has increased.

This project has somewhat achieved its objectives, therefore its effectiveness is fair.

3.4 Impact

3.4.1 Intended Effects

The average student to teacher ratio in 2001 (before the project) in the 19 sample schools was 45.7: 1 and at the time of the Ex-Post Evaluation the ratio had fallen to 34.2: 1. This reduction in ratio coupled with a more spacious and comfortable learning environment, in the project classrooms, has enabled teachers to take better care of the students as they are now able to assess more precisely what each individual student understands.

An additional unexpected impact was the reduction in the number of younger students dropping-out. The project classrooms were usually used for higher-grade classes, which reportedly made lower-grade children think that they too wanted to study in the "nice" classrooms, thus they were motivated to stay in school (however, data to support this phenomenon such as the number of drop-outs by grades was unavailable). Teachers and parents reported that the children who used the project classrooms became more willing to study and

concentrated more in classes. Some interviewees told the Ex-Post Evaluation team that the passing rates for the final examinations for the primary education certificate (Certificat de Fin d'Etudes du Premier Degré: CFEPD) had increased, although the data collected by the team did not show any clear evidence of improvement in the last 3-4 years.

The B/D expected that the project would reduce the construction cost needs of thatched classrooms by a total of 4,935,000 FCFA every year, which had been previously borne by the parents. The Ex-Post Evaluation found that the construction cost of a thatched classroom was between 35,000–50,000 FCFA per year, therefore as a result of the 185 classrooms constructed/renovated by the project, parents related to the target schools have been freed from paying a collective total of between 6,475,000 – 9,250,000 FCFA every year. Parents interviewed from the 19 sample schools revealed that the project had greatly eased their economic burden of construction of thatched classrooms, although no case was identified in which parents invested the money saved in other types of educational activities. The Ex-Post Evaluation could not identify a case in which parents had become more proactively involved in school management due to the project.

3.4.2 Other Impacts

Neither relocation of residents nor land acquisition was needed for the project. There was no perceivable environmental impact caused by the construction of the schools.

As discussed above indirect effects, to some extent, occurred through and after the implementation of the project and the project has brought about positive impacts.

3.5 Sustainability (Rating: b)

3.5.1 Structural Aspects of Operation and Maintenance

As a part of the decentralization policy in the education sector in Niger, the Basic Education Law of 1998 designated local governments and community people (in the form of COGES) to handle primary schools' management and maintenance. The B/D reported that the local government's maintenance system of education facilities were hardly functioning and that COGES which were responsible for small scale facility maintenance were not necessarily active.

The Ex-Post Evaluation found that among the 19 sample schools there were only 2 schools for which local governments had conducted maintenance activities (i.e., repair of students' desk-and-chairs and ceiling repairs of a government-constructed classroom). Involvement of COGES varied significantly from school to school. Three COGES out of the 19 were actually

dysfunctional[84] due to problems in human relations[85]. The remaining 16 COGES took care of small-scale maintenance of school facilities (especially the construction of thatched classrooms), in most cases without any help from local governments. It would be fair to surmise that the management and maintenance of the education facilities by the local governments is yet become functional, and thus problems that are beyond the capacity of COGES are left unsolved.

While a JICA technical cooperation project, the "School for All" project, has supported the establishing and operation of COGES in schools, it also encouraged COGES to include school facility maintenance in school activity plans. These activity plans, which have been built on the consensus of teachers and parents, have made the necessity of maintenance visible. In the school activity plans of the 16 functioning COGES, the average number of school activities was 6.4 in Tahoua and 3.8 in Dosso. This difference may be attributable to the fact that Tahoua Region was a target Region in both Phase 1 and 2 of the "School for All" project, while Dosso was only a target Region in Phase 2.

3.5.2 Technical Aspects of Operation and Maintenance

The facilities constructed or renovated by the project were designed to be relatively easily maintained from both technical and financial perspectives.

According to the B/D it is beneficial to repaint blackboards every year which can be done by teachers and/or parents without requiring any special techniques. The Ex-Post Evaluation found that some schools recognized the need for regular repainting, while others did not even have any comprehension of necessity to repaint. Reliable data on blackboards could be obtained from 10 schools; 6 had repainted the blackboards at least once since the completion of the project. In the schools that had not repainted the blackboards, cracks were observed on the surface due to oil wearing out.

The B/D stated that the repainting of the inner walls of the classrooms would be needed once in every 10 years and the repainting of fitments[86] once in every 5 years, and that the work needed to be done by professional painters due to its technical requirements. However, no sample schools recognized the need for repainting nor had ever done so, it was also reported that professional painters in the project areas were scarce (with the technical level being low).

The B/D considered pumping out of pit latrines would be needed once in every 3 years, which technically had to be done by professional workers. All the sample schools, however, reported that pit latrines had never been pumped out as they were not yet full. The fact that no pit latrines

[84] The three schools include two in Tahoua Region (out of the seven interviewed) and one in Dosso Regions (out of the 12 interviewed). Tahoua was one of the target Regions in the "School for All" project phase 1, while Dosso was included only in phase 2 which started in August 2007 and was in operation at the time of the Ex-Post Evaluation.
[85] Including conflicts between the teacher(s) and villagers, and among villagers.
[86] Such as built-in filing cabinets in each classroom.

had become full even after 5 years (since the completion of the project) appears to indicate under-usage of the latrines (see "3.3.1 (2) Increases in the number of girl students and the utilization of latrine buildings"). Pumping out of a pit latrine would cost approximately 25,000 FCFA.

3.5.3 Financial Aspects of Operation and Maintenance

Neither the Ministry of National Education nor the local governments had sufficient budget to maintain schools' facilities. Most of the costs for the maintenance have been borne directly by the parents of the students of their respective schools. The B/D planned to conduct the soft component (COSAGE) to build up the capacity of the COGES of the project schools so that they could properly estimate and secure the maintenance funds for the facilities constructed by this project. As discussed in "3.3.1 (4) The soft component implementation status", the "School for All" project, which adopted the concept of COSAGE, supported the capacity building of COGES in the project area. As a result, COGES in the project schools today formulate their activity plans (see "3.5.1 Structural Aspects of Operation and Maintenance"), in which the estimates of the expenses required for the annual school management and maintenance are done.

Among the 19 sample schools that the Ex-Post Evaluation team visited, only two schools received financial support for repair from local government authorities, while most COGES depended solely on parents for their maintenance funds. Although the amount collected varied between each COGES, the average contribution paid by parents was 500–1,000 FCFA per student at schools that collected contributions regularly. As the size of the schools (the number of students) ranged considerably[87], the maximum total amount that could be collected varied widely.

Collection rates for maintenance funds also varied; from the sample 19 schools, three schools[88] were hardly able to collect any contribution from the parents, while in the other schools the collection rates were between 60% and 70%. As the collected amounts were smaller than the planned, most COGES were short of maintenance funds. In order to compensate for the negative balances some COGES received in-kind contribution[89] from parents, including labor. Another means reported for making up the shortfall was to use the money and/or materials (especially materials for the thatched classrooms such as thatch and wood) that were left over from the previous year.

Some COGES used part of the money collected to purchase school consumables such as chalk, and in some cases construction of school-related small-scale facilities (such as school fences or

[87] The biggest and smallest schools in terms of student numbers out of the 19 sample schools were 707 students and 48 students respectively, in the school year 2009/10.
[88] These three schools were those in which COGES were dysfunctional (see "4.3.5.1 Structural Aspects of Operation and Maintenance").
[89] The materials for thatched classroom construction, such as straw and branches

a night-watchman's residence). However, in most cases the biggest expense was the construction of thatched classrooms to make up for the shortage of permanent classrooms.

Out of the expenses envisaged in the school activity plans, approximately 60% was applied to the maintenance and repair of facilities and equipment (especially students' desk-and-chairs).

As discussed in "3.5.2 Technical Aspects of Operation and Maintenance", none of the sample schools saved any fund for repainting the classroom walls and fitments, or for pumping out of pit latrines, as their needs were not acknowledged. When blackboards were repainted at some of the schools, teachers and/or COGES members usually performed the task by themselves in order to minimize the cost, and the paint was either supplied by the IEBs or purchased by COGES.

3.5.4 Current Status of Operation and Maintenance

(1) Management of COGES

Almost all of the maintenance work for the facilities and equipment provided by the project had to be assumed by the COGES of respective schools, as discussed above.

The soft component of the project (COSAGE) promoted the election of COGES members. In the "School for All" project that effectively was the successor of COSAGE, the democratic election of COGES members was one of the requirements. At the time of the Ex-Post Evaluation COGES had been activated in many schools through various inputs including the election process. COGES formulated the school activity plans annually and implemented small-scale repairs and maintenance of the school facilities and equipment.

In the schools that the Ex-Post Evaluation team visited, COGES members were essentially chosen through the election process[90]. Yet, in some cases one or more members had stayed in the COGES committee for many years. This had not posed any major problem but could lead to inappropriate management of COGES in the future; if one particular person continuously stays in an influential position in COGES it could make the school activity plans and their implementation rigid and inefficient.

(2) Maintenance of classroom and latrine buildings

Most of the sample schools checked all the furniture and equipment, following the governmental regulations, and gave a report of their condition to their respective IEBs at the beginning and end of every school year.

[90] In one school where COGES was dysfunctional, the COGES committee was in name only and there was no plan for a next election.

No major damage of the buildings had been reported so far. However, the furniture (students' desk-and-chairs) had severe breakage (see "3.2.1 Project Outputs"). The Ex-Post Evaluation team also observed breakage in doors and windows at several schools.

The functioning COGES have carried out small-scale repairs of facilities/equipment. Out of the 19 sample schools, seven have repaired students' desk-and-chairs, five have fixed doors and/or windows of the classrooms, and three had fixed doors of the latrine buildings.

The Ex-Post Evaluation also confirmed that 13 schools had constructed thatched classrooms in order to resolve the shortage of permanent classrooms and one school had constructed an office for its principal, albeit a thatched one.

The latrines were kept clean and hygienic, although it may be attributable to the under-utilization of the latrines (see "3.3.1 (2) Increases in the number of girl students and the utilization of latrine buildings").

(3) Other issues relating to school management

Issues pointed out at the time of the B/D concerning school management included the: low capacity of teachers, shortage of teachers, and shortage of school materials such as textbooks.

Classes in three schools (out of the 19 sample schools) have been impaired by the shortage/inappropriate assignment of teachers. Two of them reported that they could only admit first graders once in every two years due to a shortage of teachers, and one of these two schools had been forced to operate a multiple class system. The third school was not conducting some classes at the time of the Ex-Post Evaluation, as a teacher was transferred out of the school during the school year. Teachers tend to be transferred within one to three years (more frequently in the rural areas).

How to secure teachers with adequate capacity has therefore continued to be a big problem since the time of the B/D. The Ex-Post Evaluation confirmed that several COGES, though yet small in number, had requested the IEBs that supervise the schools to assign additional teachers or to relocate problematic teachers. The concerned IEBs reportedly responded to these requests.

The distribution of textbooks by the Ministry of National Education was quite often delayed, according to the interviews. The sample schools were unable to provide one textbook to each child and in most of the sample schools student to textbook ratio was 2:1 to 4:1, which was approximately the same as that of the time of B/D.

Inappropriate storage of basic information on school activities and management was another prevalent problem revealed by the Ex-Post Evaluation. In most of the sample schools, fundamental data on the last few years of school management were not kept properly such as:

the number of students; the number of drop-outs; the number of students who took and passed CFEPD; and school activity plans. The lack of all of this impeded the Ex-Post Evaluation in its ability to assess the changes in the situations. Some of the IEBs in charge of these schools were also unable to provide data, as they did not systematically store records.

Some problems have been observed in terms of the organizational, financial, and technical aspects of the project; therefore the sustainability of the project is fair.

4 Conclusion, Recommendations and Lessons Learned

4.1 Conclusion

The relevance of the project has been evaluated as high since it is consistent with the Nigerien government's development policies, the Japan's ODA policy, and the local development needs. The efficiency of the project has been evaluated as fair as while the project cost was within the planned amount and the actual project period was only slightly longer than planned, the durability of the furniture (students' desk-and-chairs) was not satisfactory. The effectiveness of the project has been evaluated as fair, as although the project contributed to improving learning environments for the students, congestion in the permanent classrooms was eased, and the economic burden on parents from having to constructed the thatched classrooms was reduced, the number of the students learning in the project classrooms was estimated to be slightly lower than 80% of the projected figures and the latrines were not fully utilized. The sustainability of the project has been evaluated as fair, as the durability and the quality of the facilities constructed/renovated by the project were of a superior standard and the COGES that were responsible for the maintenance of the facilities had become more active than before the project (this is mainly attributable to the achievement of "School for All" project), although their (COGES) managerial and financial capacity was still insufficient in collecting and utilizing contributions for the maintenance of the facilities and equipment.

In light of the above, the overall rating of the project is fairly satisfactory (C).

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Recommendations to the Executing Agency

(1) Appropriate assignment of teachers

The Ex-Post Evaluation confirmed that some of the classrooms were not utilized to a satisfactory extent due to a shortage of teachers. In urban areas, the number of teachers in a school was more or less sufficient (i.e., at least a minimum number of teachers were allocated), while the schools in rural areas suffer from a severe shortage of teachers. The Ministry of National Education, though realizing the importance of assigning an appropriate number of

teachers, has had difficulties in transferring teachers from urban to rural areas as teachers often resist transfer to rural schools. The Ex-Post Evaluation found a few cases in which COGES had requested the IEBs concerned to allocate additional teachers, which was later realized. It would be recommendable for the Ministry of National Education to make continuous efforts to respond to the requests from the schools, so that as much need for teachers as possible will be met.

In Niger, 82% of the primary school teachers are employed on contract basis while only 12% are permanent teachers[91] and many of the contracted teachers do not officially qualify as teachers[92]. Some parents and principals pointed out to the Ex-Post Evaluation team the poor teaching capacity of some of the contractual (unqualified) teachers in their schools. The Ministry of National Education has been conducting special training courses to enable contractual teachers to obtain teachers' qualification, a scheme appreciated by the principals and parents interviewed. It is recommended to the Ministry that the Ministry continuously makes efforts to increase the number of qualified teachers by conducting more training courses.

(2) Mandatory compilation and storage of data on the operation of schools

Basic information on schools including the student enrolments and the number of students who had successfully passed CFEPD was not available at some of the schools and IEBs. Several cases were reported in which former principals had carried away the school data when they were transferred. It would be advisable to impose mandatory compilation and storage of school-related data, so that the data would be kept in the school regardless of the transfer of principals and/or teachers. COGES members, with support and instruction from the IEB officers, could assume the role of data keepers. Recognizing the importance of the issue, the Ministry of National Education expressed its readiness to establish proper data handover procedures for principals.

(3) Appropriate use of facilities and equipment

It would be recommendable that the Ministry of National Education organize a campaign aimed at better handling of the equipment provided (especially desk-and-chairs). The target audience would be the students of the project schools, and at the school level the campaign would be conducted by the COGES members and teachers. The IEB officers, who monitor and supervise the schools regularly, could utilize their opportunities to visit the schools to support and instruct the COGES members and teachers on how to carry out the campaign. Students who have learned how to handle equipment with more care would be less likely to break furniture, which

[91] The percentages do not add up to 100%, as there are some other types of teachers including "communal masters" (Maître Communautaire). Statistics on Basic Education 2008/09.
[92] All permanent teachers must be graduates of technical courses for teachers and hold a teachers' qualification, while a majority of contracted teachers are not course graduates (and thus unqualified).

in turn would lead to a reduction of furniture repair costs, which currently represents a considerable amount out of the overall expenses in school activity plans.

The latrines constructed by the project were not utilized much, as the children frequently excreted outside. The Ministry of National Education could also launch a campaign for appropriate utilization of the latrines, aimed at improving health and sanitation. The IEB officers who supervise the project schools could assume the role of instructors/monitors in this.

4.2.2 Recommendations to JICA

As a result of the Ex-Post Evaluation, it was confirmed that there were dysfunctional COGES within the project sites. Human factors such as conflicts between COGES members and other villagers appear to be the reasons for the problem. These problematic COGES need regular monitoring and guidance from outside, and under the current system the IEB officers, who supervise the schools (teachers) in their routine work, would be the people in the best position to provide guidance to COGES. It would be beneficial for JICA to encourage through the "School for All" project the IEBs in the target areas to thoroughly assess the actual conditions of COGES as a first step towards the proposed monitoring and guidance to be given to problematic COGES.

It would also be recommendable that JICA support COGES, through the "School for All" project, in collecting contribution from the broader community. COGES at present raise funds for school management and maintenance from the parents of the students. However, due to insufficient contribution some of the project schools are unable to implement planned activities. Others try to cover the lack of funds by parents' in-kind contribution (e.g. labor contribution). It would be advisable for COGES to request not only parents but also the community to provide materials, labor, and even financial support.

4.3 Lessons Learned

(1) Construction plans taking into consideration the demographic features of the target schools' locations

The Ex-Post Evaluation revealed that while many thatched classrooms had been constructed in urban areas due to a shortage of permanent classrooms, permanent classrooms constructed in rural areas tended to be under-utilized due to the smaller number of students. This is attributable to the B/D which had estimated the number of classrooms to be constructed by applying a uniform population growth rate across each of the entire target Regions. In future school construction projects, it would be beneficial to design a plan with due consideration of respective target communities' demographic changes, so that the plan would be prepared in conformity with local circumstances.

(2) How to foresee grant aid projects' effects

One of the project's effects expected at the time of the B/D was that construction of latrines for girls would promote enrolment of girl students. It did not materialize: the constructed latrines were not fully utilized (see "3.3.1 (2) Increases in the number of girl students and the utilization of latrine buildings"). The B/D's hypothesis that the constructed latrines would be unconditionally used and that it would promote enrolment of girls did not properly consider the circumstances in Niger.

It would not be correct to assume that infrastructure development (in this case, construction of latrines) would directly promote an outcome such as an increase in the number of girl students. It would be advisable that similar projects be more prudent when assuming improved girls' enrolment in the expected effects of the project. Support for the promotion of girls' education would require a technical cooperation project and could not be to be dealt with in a grant aid infrastructure construction project (including in its soft component).

Construction of latrines is considered to be important for the improvement of health and sanitation of the target population. However, in order for its effects to materialize some measures that promote utilization of the latrines (e.g. introduction of a soft component instructing how to use the latrines; see "(3) Contents of soft components in grant aid projects" below) should accompany their construction.

(3) Contents of soft components in grant aid projects

COSAGE, the soft component of this project, was rather ambitious as it tried to involve both teachers and parents in school management by instructing them, among other trainings, how to conduct democratic election of COGES members. The impact of the soft component on individual project schools was not perceived with its experiences and concepts not remembered or utilized well, although it contributed as a de facto pilot project to the smooth implementation of the "School for All" project (JICA's technical cooperation project).

This finding indicates that a simpler soft component, such as ones instructing how to handle the furniture (desk-and-chairs) with care or how to properly use the latrines, would have been more effective and have brought about changes in the behavior of the beneficiaries, thus laying the foundations for the proper maintenance and use of the provided facilities and equipment.

(4) Choosing appropriate designs and materials for building furniture

Many of the project schools suffered from the problem of bats, which had nested in the ceilings and disturbed the students. In similar future projects, it would be beneficial to adopt building designs that would eliminate an invasion of small animals.

In this project, there was room for improvement with the material selected for the furniture. The plywood used for the students' desk-and-chairs were prone to breaking. It would be sensible for the subsequent projects not to use similar non-durable materials.

Another problem with the furniture was that the screw heads were exposed on the top surfaces in the boards of both the desk and chair parts, which were then subject to vandalism by students. It is important to work out a design to avoid children's misbehavior damaging furniture, such as putting the screws on the sides of the furniture so that they are not exposed to children's sight.

(5) Effective utilization of the facilities

The Ex-Post Evaluation found two cases that the provided classrooms were used in the evening for adult literacy classes that targeted community members. The solid and high-quality classroom buildings, constructed in these communities, appeared to have encouraged the community people to request its use. This was then seemingly discussed among the community and COGES members and an approval was given by COGES from the perspective of effective use of the facilities. This is a good example of effective utilization of the provided facilities based on the local needs, which should be shared among the concerned personnel for future reference.