



1. Project Data

Project ID P144856	Project Name Improving General Sec & Pre-School Edu	
Country Uzbekistan	Practice Area(Lead) Education	
L/C/TF Number(s) TF-18066	Closing Date (Original) 31-Jan-2018	Total Project Cost (USD) 49,338,583.44
Bank Approval Date 23-Oct-2014	Closing Date (Actual) 31-Dec-2019	
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	49,900,000.00	49,900,000.00
Revised Commitment	49,900,000.00	49,338,583.44
Actual	49,338,583.44	49,338,583.44

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

According to the Grant Agreement of the Global Partnership for Education (between the Republic of Uzbekistan and IDA under TF018066, p. 5), the project development objectives were to: (i) increase access of children aged 3-6 to quality early childhood care and education in rural pre-primary institutions; and (ii) improve conditions for better learning outcomes of students of rural General Educational Secondary Schools.



Note: Two key associated outcome indicators and several intermediate results indicators were revised upwards, and the revised targets were met and/or exceeded.

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?

Yes

Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

1. Improving Access to Quality Early Childhood Education Opportunities (Appraisal US\$22.5 million; Actual US\$21.76 million). Planned activities focused on rural and remote areas of Uzbekistan and aimed at providing technical assistance and support to the development and implementation of more flexible and efficient models of service provision. The component included the following:

- Development and assessment of flexible forms of early childhood care and education (ECCE) service provision. The project financed the design of the half-day year-round school readiness program, complemented with communication campaigns to raise awareness on: (i) ECCE for children's development; (ii) parents' critical role in promoting early learning; and (iii) child and forced labor issues, and associated feedback mechanisms.
- Supporting ECCE opportunities through half-day school readiness program targeting children aged 5-6 in rural areas, nationwide distribution of storybooks to parents of young children living in remote areas to engage in early reading at home, and training and mentoring of preschool teachers.

2. Improving Conditions for Better Learning Outcomes in General Educational Secondary Schools (Appraisal US\$ 25.31 million; Actual US\$21.29 million). The component aimed at improving the training system for teachers and school managers and increasing the availability of adequate equipment and teaching and learning materials. The component included the following:

- Improving conditions of training and retraining institutes for teachers and school personnel through the development of a training management information system, teaching materials, provision of information and communications technology (ICT) and equipment for training in 16 In-Service Education and Training institutions, and preparation and delivery of specific training programs and modules in high-demand areas such as management, pedagogical techniques/methodology, ICT, distance education, inclusive education, language teaching, and labor protection and awareness regarding child and forced labor.



- Implementation of minimum learning standards for General Educational Secondary Schools through the provision of ICT equipment for computer laboratories and other related teaching and learning materials for secondary schools in rural areas of Uzbekistan.

Note: A previous Bank-financed Basic Education Project (2009-2014) supported textbook development and students' assessment system. Textbooks were also supported by the Asian Development Bank (ICR, p. 6).

3. Strengthening the Capacity to Monitor the Education System (Appraisal US\$6.3 million; Actual US\$5.31 million), aiming at strengthening existing capacities to monitor education quality and the education system by supporting the improvement of learning assessments and the existing management information systems. Activities included:

- Improving monitoring capacity through the development and carrying out of standardized sample-based student learning assessments in grades 4 and 9 in mathematics and native languages; analysis and dissemination of assessment results; improvement of the management information system and capacity for monitoring education quality of the Ministry of Public Education (MOPE); and provision of ICT equipment to MOPE and all 14 regional education departments.
- Project management and support for implementation of project-financed activities, including operating costs, monitoring and evaluation, and audits.

e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

Cost and financing. At appraisal, the total cost of the project was estimated at US\$54.1million, consisting of US\$49.9 million from a Trust Fund Grant of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and US\$4.2 million from the Government of Uzbekistan. Counterpart financing was planned to support the distribution of goods from the central warehouse in Tashkent city to schools and preschools. The actual cost reported by the ICR was US\$49.45 million (ICR Annex 3, p. 51), consisting of GPE financing. The ICR did not provide information on actual counterpart financing, but the Task Team (8/17/2020) reported an actual amount of US\$3.3 million. This would result in an actual total cost of US\$52.75 million.

Dates. The Project Appraisal Document was finalized on 10/9/2014 and the operation was approved on 10/23/2014. The project became effective on 1/26/2015. A restructuring on 9/9/2016 expanded coverage of project activities and revised the results framework, including upward revisions of two outcome targets and several intermediate results indicators. The 2016 restructuring extended the closing date by 18 months. A Midterm Review was carried out on 8/28/2017. A second restructuring on 3/26/2019 reallocated proceeds between disbursement categories. A third restructuring on 7/25/2019 extended the closing date for five more months to allow utilization of savings and to further reinforce results. The project closed on 12/31/2019.



3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

The objectives were responsive to the country challenges of low access to quality pre-primary education and to the needs for enhancing conditions for better learning in general secondary education. While Uzbekistan's children enjoyed nearly universal access to essential health and nutrition, the national enrolment rate in ECCE was low by international standards (23% nationally and 8.5% in rural areas in 2012, according to the ICR, p. 5). Access to pre-primary education and overall education quality issues were recognized as particular development challenges in Uzbekistan. The project was also responsive to analytical work for developing a holistic approach to improving the quality of education in the country.

At project closing, the objectives remained fully relevant to the sector context and to the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Uzbekistan for the period FY16-FY20, that was adjusted by the Performance and Learning Review (PLR, Report No. 126078-UZ, July 2018). The revised Focus Area 3 (Investing in People) emphasized access to quality education, and revised the indicator on enrollment of six-year-old children in preschools in line with the Government's National Development Strategy 2017-2021 and its ambitious plans to expand ECCE, all aiming to contribute to the goal of 100 percent enrolment for children age 6-7 by 2021. The CPF and PLR noted that, while access to general secondary education is nearly universal, learning outcomes and the quality of education vary across regions, with schools in rural areas faring worse in terms of available teaching and learning materials, quality of infrastructure, and student outcomes.

The project objective to improve access to ECCE through a more efficient half-day model of pre-primary education is also consistent with the CPF objective to improve efficiency of local public service delivery. Project objectives remained consistent with Focus Area 2 (Reform of State Institutions and Citizen Engagement), that calls for strengthened citizen participation in oversight.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

Increase access of children aged 3-6 to quality early childhood care and education in rural pre-primary institutions



Rationale

Theory of change

The theory of change was built on the premise that addressing supply- and demand-side constraints to ECCE enrollment would lead to greater participation of young children in early learning opportunities. International evidence indicates that foundational skills acquired through early learning and basic education are critical for human capital development.

Increased access of children to quality ECCE was reasonably expected to be achieved through interventions that address constraints to ECCE while taking advantage of strong parental support for early learning. The project adopted the half-day ECCE school readiness model and early literacy promotion activities that would address high household costs of the full-day preschool model that were a barrier to many families, since fees of a full-day were equivalent to 100% of the minimum wage in the country. Investments in learning materials, storybooks, equipment, furniture, and teacher training would plausibly improve parental perception of overall quality related to center-based ECCE. Additionally, the early reading program would provide children who could not attend the half-day program with age-appropriate storybooks and materials, as well as training and communication for parents to support their children's early reading at home while further building demand for ECCE among rural households.

For both Objectives 1 and 2, the explicit pro-equity design, with interventions focusing on low-income rural areas of the country, would plausibly benefit disadvantaged children and help close the gaps in achievement for disadvantaged segments of the population.

Outputs

Main outputs were related to the following:

- a. nationwide rollout of the half-day ECCE model in rural pre-primary centers, with adequate sequencing, including for teacher training focused on child-centered, interactive, and play-based approaches; equipment and furniture for rural pre-primary institutions (ICR, p. 14); and implementation of Third Party Monitoring against child labor and forced labor in cotton harvesting (ICR, p. 25);
- b. establishment of libraries within rural pre-primary centers, equipped with early reading materials; and
- c. distribution of high-quality early reading materials and storybooks (in Uzbek, Russian, and Karakalpak) directly to families in remote areas who could not enroll their children in pre-primary centers, thus promoting the engagement of parents, and early stimulation and learning.

Intermediate results



- The number of children aged 5-6 enrolled in the project's half-day ECCE model reached 98,855 children, exceeding the target of 98,000 children. This included 51,409 girls, exceeding the target of 49,000 female children.
- The number of pre-primary education teachers trained to deliver the half-day model reached 4,014 teachers, exceeding the target of 2,000 teachers.
- The number of children aged 3-6 benefiting from early reading activities at home reached 658,082 children, exceeding the target of 500,000 children.
- The number of small libraries established in pre-primary education centers reached 2,420, attaining the target of 2,420 small libraries.
- A review of existing state requirements for pre-primary education was completed.
- The establishment of a system for assessing school readiness of children aged 5-6 enrolled in the half-day model was not completed, and the target of completing two assessment rounds was not achieved.
- While observations in a sample of 39 rural preschools at the end of the project showed that 60% of trained preschool teachers were "using" play-based and child-centered practices most of the time in the classroom, the targeted increase of 20% in the share of half-day model teachers demonstrating "mastery" of key concepts of ECCE and child-centered teaching was not measured due to insufficient evidence, given the lack of a control or comparator group (ICR, p. 15).

Outcomes

The evidence shows that access to ECCE increased as intended, as the percentage of children aged 3-6 enrolled in ECCE in rural areas increased from a baseline of 8.5% in 2013 to 28.3% in 2019, exceeding both the original target of 13.1% and the upward revised target of 15%.

The ICR (p. 15) stated that the project had a strong demonstration effect that encouraged the government to further expand ECCE service provision, supported by a Presidential Decree in December 2016 (Measures Aimed at Further Improvement of the Preschool Education System from 2017-2021) for increasing both access and quality of ECCE. This was followed by the establishment in 2017 of a new Ministry of Preschool Education to play the lead role in expansion of ECCE in Uzbekistan.

Along with increased access, the ICR (p. 14) suggested that qualitative aspects also improved as a result of improved conditions for play-based learning, improved conditions for early reading activities at home, and enhanced pedagogical and child-centered practices among half-day teachers. However, as noted above under intermediate results, teacher-level improvements were not measured.



Also, the ICR (p. 23) suggested that, by increasing enrollment in ECCE in rural areas, the project provided greater opportunities for mothers to participate in informal livelihood activities, and allowed young female siblings to forego child supervision responsibilities in exchange for their own schooling and developmental activities. In addition, based on ICR interviews of parents, the ICR suggested that the project had a favorable influence on early learning activities at home and in reducing gender stereotypes through the involvement of both mothers and fathers in home-based storybook reading with children.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

Improve conditions for better learning outcomes of students of rural general educational secondary schools

Rationale

Explanation of conditions for better learning outcomes under the project: According to the PAD (p. 9), conditions for better learning included (i) the training system for teachers and school managers, encompassing professional development of education personnel and training conditions at all 16 in-service training and retraining institutions; and (ii) availability of adequate equipment, and teaching and learning materials.

Theory of change

It was reasonably expected that the availability of training systems for teachers and school managers, increased availability of adequate equipment and Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM), and improved capacity for monitoring would improve learning conditions by addressing deficiencies related to minimum school standards (see below). These changes would plausibly improve conditions for better learning, facilitate school improvement and accountability, and ultimately contribute to better learning outcomes.

Outputs

Main outputs included the following:

(i) upgrading schools' learning environments to meet minimum school standards related to TLM and ICT equipment for computer laboratories (Explanation of minimum school standards and their verification: Standards included ICT equipment and resources, teacher competencies, and information availability on student learning outcomes, ICR, p. 8. These standards were defined by MOPE according to the Education



Law approved by the Parliament and Cabinet of Ministers. Monitoring compliance was a regular task of the ministry, and undertaken in collaboration with regional and district departments of education, with officials assigned to the monitoring of standards in each of the regional and district departments. Verification of compliance with minimum standards was undertaken by box-checking. Verification was a highly rule-based procedure that was applied consistently throughout the project, per Task Team clarifications, 8/31/2020).

(ii) upgrading of teacher retraining curricula and rollout of training programs to master-trainers, teachers and school managers; and

(iii) implementation of student learning assessments and improved capacity to monitor education quality.

Intermediate results

- The number of teachers and school managers trained in advanced areas of teaching and education management developed by the project reached 200,271 persons, exceeding the target of 200,000 teachers and school managers.
- The number of master-trainers providing training in education management and teaching/ learning reached 192 trainers, attaining the target.
- The number of representatives of MOPE and provincial and district education departments trained in monitoring and evaluation reached 1,065 persons, exceeding the target of 832 representatives.
- The project developed six training modules, achieving the target.
- The project supported the purchase and distribution of ICT equipment and learning materials to 1,756 rural general educational secondary schools. However, the ICR stated that training on ICT was insufficient to adequately address teachers' skills gaps.
- There was no evidence on increased share of trained general secondary education teachers using classroom pedagogical practices developed by the project. The indicator was measured through a classroom observation study using the TEACH open portal classroom observation tool, which was well received, according to the ICR. The classroom observation study compared teachers who had been trained under the project against "untrained" teachers. The ICR suggested two possible explanations: insufficient time between teacher training and the classroom observation study; and insufficient quality and/or intensity of the training that was delivered (ICR, p. 43).

Outcomes

The percentage of rural general secondary education schools that meet minimum school standards increased from a baseline of 44.8% in 2013 to 72.9% in 2019, exceeding both the original target of 61.4% and the upward revised target of 63% (the above results largely relate to the availability of components that constitute



a prerequisite and/or an integral part of improved conditions for learning, and do not necessarily reflect full application and realization of ICT-enabled education that require more time to fully evolve).

Standardized sample-based assessment of Grade 4 students in mathematics and native language was conducted in 2019 for 9,590 students across 80 schools in Uzbekistan, and student assessment results were analyzed and publicly disseminated.

Standardized sample-based assessment of Grade 9 students in mathematics and native language was conducted in 2019 for 9,590 students across 80 schools in Uzbekistan, and student assessment results were analyzed and publicly disseminated.

Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

The project almost fully achieved its two objectives to increase access of children aged 3-6 to quality early childhood care and education in rural pre-primary institutions, and to improve conditions for better learning outcomes of students in rural General Educational Secondary Schools. The aggregation of achievements in both objectives is consistent with a substantial rating for overall efficacy.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

The PAD's economic analysis provided general arguments using public rationale, expected economic and financial benefits, and estimated cost-effectiveness to justify project investments (PAD, pp. 15-16). The analysis argued that ECCE interventions in rural areas would help to enhance equity by compensating for early learning gaps, and that the half-day model would be more cost-effective than the full-day program. Pursuing the half-day model would result in cost-savings of US\$10.4 million to parents over a three-year period. For secondary education, the PAD's analysis highlighted generic expectations in terms of social returns and future wages.



The ICR's economic analysis (pp. 20-22) used similar arguments and noted that global experience indicated that foundational skills developed through early learning opportunities and formal general secondary education were cost-effective investments. The half-day ECCE model allowed the government to expand access to quality pre-primary education and to transition from a model oriented around childcare to a more effective model emphasizing school readiness. The half-day model required fewer public resources per child compared to a full-day program, and allowed services to be provided for more children. The project created cost savings to parents, as fees for the half-day model were US\$13 per child per month, compared to the previous US\$30 for a full day, thereby increasing parental demand for ECCE. The cost of ICT investments compared favorably with other similar projects. For example, the average unit cost for ICT equipment was about US\$188 per unit, compared with US\$700 in another similar project implemented in China during the same time period.

Project procurement was efficient, and excluding consultancies, it generated substantial savings of about US\$14.7 million, mostly from large procurement packages of goods (Restructuring Paper, 7/25/19, p. 3; and ICR, p. 11). Procurement savings resulted from changes in technical specifications of ICT equipment and furniture that were being purchased for the implementation of minimum school standards in general educational secondary schools and for ECCE, and from discounts that were offered by bidders who submitted winning proposals in International Competitive Bidding (ICR, p.11 and p. 22; and Restructuring Paper, 9/8/2016, p. 5). Savings were judiciously used by the project to expand its activities in scale, further advancing results and benefits, and contributing to the institutionalization of project interventions.

There were some implementation delays during the project period, including an initial delay in the start of implementation, selection of consultants, training, and assessment of ECCE and early reading. There was a change in country leadership in 2016 with a temporary slowdown in project implementation. Nevertheless, in view of the cost-effectiveness of project investments in foundational skills, an efficiency-promoting design of the ECCE model, and a remarkably efficient use of project resources, overall efficiency is rated high.

Efficiency Rating

High

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable



ICR Estimate	0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
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* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

Relevance of objectives is rated high, as the objectives were closely aligned with country strategies and with the Bank Group’s Country Partnership Framework for Uzbekistan at project closing. Efficacy is rated substantial, as the objectives were almost fully achieved. Efficiency is rated high, as the project offered good value for money, and had a remarkably efficient use of project resources. These findings are consistent with an outcome rating of satisfactory, consistent with only minor shortcomings in the project’s preparation and implementation.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

The government remains committed to maintaining development outcomes, as it continues to promote ECCE, including under the recently approved project “Promoting Early Childhood Development” (P165737). In September 2017, the government established a new Ministry of Preschool Education (ICR, p. 15) to play a lead future role in the expansion of ECCE in Uzbekistan. The government is also expanding training on teacher classroom observation techniques to further institutionalize project-supported interventions.

The project resulted in substantial institutional strengthening, particularly in monitoring and standardized learning assessments. As a result, Uzbekistan committed to participating in OECD’s Program for International Student Assessment – or PISA -- in 2021, in line with national and international efforts for promoting education information.

However, extended school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the current shift by MOPE toward distance learning, present new challenges. Also, important issues are expected to arise once schools reopen, such as on how to accelerate learning, assessment of learning progress while schools were closed, and prevention of school dropout. In the larger context, the country is facing an economic slowdown along with the global economic downturn. This will likely create an increasingly tight fiscal environment. As such, substantial economic challenges may limit the ability of the government to maintain development outcomes.



8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

Project design was in line with the Education Sector Plan (ESP 2013-2017). According to the PAD (p. 16), analytical underpinnings benefited from numerous consultations with stakeholders, from technical discussions with national, regional, and international experts, and from international experience and good practices in pre-primary and basic education reforms. Project preparation benefited from lessons learned (PAD, pp 12-13) by similar Bank-assisted projects, including the consideration of appropriate time frames, institutional assessment to better address capacity gaps, effectively informing beneficiaries of project activities, and building on exiting child-friendly activities. According to the ICR (p. 29), preparation also benefited from comprehensive sector knowledge, and from UNICEF's half-day ECCE pilot. Fiduciary aspects were well prepared, and an action plan was agreed with MOPE to ensure adequacy of financial management systems (PAD, p. 17). MOPE was the implementing agency, and project activities were considered part of its regular work. A team of local consultants was constituted as a Project Management Team to assist MOPE with day-to-day project management.

There were moderate shortcomings in project preparation that relate to a pattern described by the ICR as misalignment of the Bank and the government's project preparation cycles (ICR, p. 31) that can create cumulative implementation delays, and that was a common reason for delays in Bank-financed projects in the country. Pending compliance by the implementing agency with in-country requirements related to project preparation, such as the preparation of a project feasibility study, delayed the actual start of project implementation by several months (ICR, p. 13). As for readiness of technical specifications, the subsequent launching of processes to procure furniture, outdoor and recreation equipment, and teaching and learning materials for half-day preschools was delayed because technical specifications had to be revised to be compliant with existing Uzbek standards (Restructuring paper, 9/8/2016 Report No: RES22276, p. 6). Overall, risks were adequately identified at entry (PAD), except for capacity risk of the implementing agency that was deemed to be moderate (PAD, p. 15), and yet it appears that variable capacities contributed to subsequent implementation delays, as confirmed by the TTL (8/19/2020).

There were also some shortcomings in M&E design, specifically in the selection of indicators. Two outcome indicators directly measured learning outcomes rather than improved conditions for learning (ICR, p. 27). Nevertheless, when considered in the larger context, learning assessments merit such emphasis, as they bolster attention to learning outcomes. This ICR Review considered this shortcoming as moderate since related progress on improved conditions for learning could be gleaned from another relevant outcome indicator (meeting minimum school standards) and from intermediate results.

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Moderately Satisfactory



b. Quality of supervision

There was continuity in implementation support. Supervision missions were regular. The ICR noted good performance on reporting and candor. Nine ISRs were updated in a timely manner. Supervision was proactive (ICR, p. 29), with close coordination with GPE, allowing three project restructurings that were responsive to the needs of the project and that facilitated the achievement of desired outcomes. Delays during implementation were unrelated to the performance of the supervision team, and beyond its control. The fiduciary team was based in the region and provided effective monitoring of fiduciary aspects and consistent support to the counterpart team. The ICR also noted a parallel stability of the government project team (ICR, p. 22) that further contributed to consistency in supervision and implementation support.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

Project objectives were clearly specified. The indicators were measurable, but, as stated in Section 8a, two outcome indicators on learning outcomes did not directly measure improved conditions for better learning outcomes. Well-developed M&E arrangements were in place from the beginning of the project. Data collection methodology and analysis were appropriate. M&E design was well-embedded institutionally and was owned by MOPE.

b. M&E Implementation

Overall, M&E activities were adequately implemented. Data were collected and analyzed in a sound manner, and in line with planned arrangements (ICR, p. 27). For the majority of indicators in the results framework, the project consistently collected the requisite data. The project restructuring in 2016 adjusted several outcome and intermediate targets upwards, and added new indicators. However, there were issues related to the assessment of teacher practices (under intermediate results) and where assessments were conducted only once, preventing the measurement of changes over time.



Also, the project facilitated International Labor Organization (ILO) surveys and visits to 198 preschools and schools in 2016, and to 340 preschools and schools in 2018, thus contributing to nationwide monitoring of social issues related to child and forced labor in cotton harvesting (ICR, p. 25).

c. M&E Utilization

In addition to regular project monitoring and evaluation of the project, findings were used to guide the scaling up of project activities. M&E data were used to inform other parallel studies and projects, such as the 2018 Education Sector Analysis, the Education Sector Plan (ESP 2019-2023), and the planning and design of the new Bank-financed “Promoting Early Childhood Development Project” (P165737). Findings were shared and used to communicate with the public through promotional materials (ICR, p. 28). In addition, and in collaboration with ILO, the project contributed to generating knowledge on good practices at the local level, including for tracking students to prevent child and forced labor in cotton harvesting, and integration of child labor topics into extracurricular activities and training curricula (ICR, p. 25).

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified under Environmental Assessment Category C. No social safeguard policies were triggered. As there was a risk that teachers and students may be mobilized to pick cotton during harvest seasons, the project participated in Third Party Monitoring for social compliance, and Feedback Mechanisms were established to focus on issues of child and forced labor for selected projects of the World Bank’s portfolio in Uzbekistan. The project complied with these aspects throughout its duration (ICR, p. 28).

b. Fiduciary Compliance

MOPE was responsible for financial management and procurement, and its financial management arrangements, including systems of budgeting, accounting, financial reporting, auditing, and internal controls, were assessed to be moderately satisfactory to the Bank at appraisal (PAD, 17). The Bank’s fiduciary team carried out regular reviews and reported no major issues in terms of compliance with financial management and procurement standards (ICR, p. 29). Fiduciary arrangements within MOPE remained satisfactory throughout the project implementation period. The Task Team confirmed on 8/17/2020 that procurement was undertaken according to Bank guidelines, and that there were no qualified audits under the project.



c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

Two positive impacts were reported by the ICR. Given the progress made with the half-day model for ECCE, the project contributed to stimulating a government decision to open the market for private providers and to establish public-private partnerships for ECCE delivery in urban areas (ICR, p. 24).

Collaboration with the ILO and adoption of Third Party Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms for social compliance in confronting child and forced labor generated knowledge on good practices at the local level, including tracking of pupils to keep children away from cotton picking, and integration of child/forced labor topics into extracurricular activities and training curricula (ICR, pp. 24-25).

d. Other

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11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	This ICR Review rated the Quality of Supervision as satisfactory, and the Quality-at-Entry as moderately satisfactory because of moderate shortcomings in implementation readiness and in M&E design.
Quality of M&E	Modest	Substantial	This ICR Review rated the quality of M&E as substantial because M&E shortcomings were moderate, and the M&E system as designed and implemented was sufficient to assess the achievement of objectives. M&E findings were effectively used to inform: (i) the direction of the project and the



scaling up of its activities; (ii) strategy development, including the 2018 Education Sector Analysis and the Education Sector Plan (ESP 2019-2023); and (iii) the planning and design of a future Bank-supported project “Promoting Early Childhood Development Project” (P165737). M&E findings were disseminated and used to communicate with the public through promotional materials. Also, in collaboration with ILO, the project contributed to generating knowledge on good practices to prevent child and forced labor.

Quality of ICR --- High

12. Lessons

The ICR (pp. 30-31) offered several lessons, including the following lessons restated by IEG:

Teachers and school directors appreciate the objectivity of performance assessment tools and monitoring of pedagogical practices as a formative and non-threatening approach to support their work. Teachers had no such standardized tools prior to the project, and once they understood that such tools could be used to incorporate feedback and adjust methodologies into their daily routine, there was substantial interest to apply them.

The provision of storybooks broadens the scope of early learning at home. Under the project, the provision of quality storybooks created several channels of positive impact, including the engagement of both mothers and fathers in the early literacy of their children, supporting the development of reading skills in children who were too young to attend center-based preschool, and providing a link between the home and preschool environments. The placement of storybooks at home and in preschool lending libraries contributed to a broad approach in creating opportunities for early stimulation and learning.

The alignment and sequencing of hard and soft investments facilitate the attainment of desired results. Under ECCE, investments in materials and equipment were well tied to teacher training and communication interventions. However, the blend of investments was less optimal



under general secondary education, where training on ICT was insufficient to adequately address teachers' skills gaps.

Misalignment of project preparation cycles between the Bank and the government can create cumulative implementation delays. Early start of preparatory work, including a project feasibility study required for government approval and drawing up of bidding documents during project preparation, is an important determinant of project implementation readiness.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR was clear and coherent. It was tightly written with a focused storyline, and with a candid and complete critique of the operation. The ICR was results-oriented and aligned to development objectives. It articulated the theory of change underlying the project's planned trajectory toward intended outcomes. The analysis was thorough, and the ICR adequately discussed the evidence and related gaps that were associated with the project itself rather than the ICR. The review was internally consistent with adequate links between the narrative and the evidence that substantiated efficacy. The ICR offered specific lessons derived from project experience. The ICR followed guidelines, with minor lapses in information on actual costs and fiduciary aspects.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

High