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IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION AND RESULTS REPORT

ON A

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION GRANT

IN THE AMOUNT OF US\$84.2 MILLION EQUIVALENT

TO THE

REPUBLIC OF NIGER

FOR THE

SUPPORT TO QUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT

DECEMBER 31, 2019

Education Global Practice
Africa Region

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(Exchange Rate Effective June 1, 2019)

Currency Unit = Franc CFA

FCFA 592 = USD1

SD = SDR 1

FISCAL YEAR
July 1 - June 30

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFD	Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency)
AfDB	African Development Bank
AMO	Appui à Maitrise d'Ouvrage (Support to Contracting Authority)
BIC	Bureau d'Ingénieur Conseil (Consulting Engineer's Office)
CGDES	Comité de Gestion Décentralisée de Etablissement Scolaire (School Management Committee)
CONFEMEN	Conférence des Ministres de l'Education des Etats et Gouvernements de la Francophonie (Conference of Ministers of Education of States and Governments of La Francophonie)
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CBA	Cost-Benefit Analysis
CPS	Country Partnership Strategy
DPs	Development Partners
ECVM/A	Enquête sur les conditions de vie des ménages et l'agriculture (Household Living Conditions and Agriculture Survey)
EFA	Education for All
EFA FTI	Education for All Fast Track Initiative
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ENI	Ecole Normale d'Instituteur (Primary Teacher Training School)
ENISED	Etude Nationale d'Evaluation des Indicateurs Socioéconomiques et Démographiques (National Study for the Evaluation of Socioeconomic and Demographic Indicators)
ERA	Ecoles Rurales Alternatives (Alternative Rural Schools)
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
EU	European Union
FCFA	West African CFA Franc
FCSE	Sectoral Trust Fund for Education and Training
FM	Financial Management
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICR	Implementation Completion and Results Report
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDA	International Development Association
IFADEM	Initiative Francophone pour la Formation à Distance des Maîtres (Francophone Initiative for Distance Teacher Training)
IFR	Interim Financial Report
IPF	Investment Project Financing
IPV	Intimate partner violence
IRI	Intermediate Results Indicators
IRR	Internal Rate of Return
ISR	Implementation Status and Results Report
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LEG	Local Education Group
LIRE	Learning Improvement for Results in Education Project (P168779)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

MEP	Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire, de l'Alphabétisation, de la Promotion des Langues Nationales, et de l'Education Civique (Ministry of Primary Education)
MES	Ministère des Enseignements Secondaires (Ministry of Secondary Education)
MOA	Maîtrise d'Ouvrage Assumée (Assumed Contracting Authority)
MOD	Maîtrise d'Ouvrage Déléguee (Delegated Contracting Authority)
MS4SSA	Math and Science for Sub-Saharan Africa Initiative
NPV	Net Present Value
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PAEB	Projet d'Appui à l'Education de Base (Basic Education Support Project)
PAEQ	Projet d'Appui à une Education de Qualité (Support to Quality Education Project)
PASEC	Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN (CONFEMEN Educational Systems Analysis Program)
PCN	Project Concept Note
PDES	Plan de Développement Economique et Social (Economic and Social Development Plan)
PDO	Project Development Objective
PMAQ	Initiative du Paquet Minimum Axé sur la Qualité (Quality-Based Minimum Package Initiative)
PSEF	Education and Training Sector Program/Plan
PTSF	Plan de Transition de l'Éducation et de la Formation (Education and Training Transition Plan)
RESEN	Rapport d'Etat du Système Educatif Nigérien (Niger Country Status Report)
RPF	Resettlement Policy Framework (Cadre de Politique de Réinstallation des Populations - CPRP)
SE	Supervising Entity
SIG	School Improvement Grant
SWAP	Sector Wide Approach
TA	Technical Assistance
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	United States Dollar
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WFP	World Food Programme

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**DATA SHEET****BASIC INFORMATION****Product Information**

Project ID	Project Name
P132405	Niger - GPE - Support to Quality Education Project
Country	Financing Instrument
Niger	Investment Project Financing
Original EA Category	Revised EA Category
Partial Assessment (B)	Partial Assessment (B)

Organizations

Borrower	Implementing Agency
Republic of Niger	Ministry of Primary Education, Literacy, Promotion of National Languages and Civic Education, Ministry of Secondary Education

Project Development Objective (PDO)**Original PDO**

The objective of the Project is to improve access to schooling, retention of students in school, and the quality of the teaching and learning environment at the basic education level, in the Republic of Niger.

**FINANCING**

	Original Amount (US\$)	Revised Amount (US\$)	Actual Disbursed (US\$)
World Bank Financing			
TF-16565	84,200,000	84,200,000	80,046,125
Total	84,200,000	84,200,000	80,046,125
Non-World Bank Financing			
Borrower/Recipient	0	0	0
FRANCE: French Agency for Development	15,800,000	0	0
Total	15,800,000	0	0
Total Project Cost	100,000,000	84,200,000	80,046,125

KEY DATES

Approval	Effectiveness	MTR Review	Original Closing	Actual Closing
07-Jul-2014	19-Dec-2014	24-Jul-2017	30-Sep-2018	30-Jun-2019

RESTRUCTURING AND/OR ADDITIONAL FINANCING

Date(s)	Amount Disbursed (US\$M)	Key Revisions
12-Feb-2018	46.89	Change in Results Framework Change in Components and Cost Change in Loan Closing Date(s) Reallocation between Disbursement Categories Change in Implementation Schedule

KEY RATINGS

Outcome	Bank Performance	M&E Quality
Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Substantial



RATINGS OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN ISRs

No.	Date ISR Archived	DO Rating	IP Rating	Actual Disbursements (US\$M)
01	19-Dec-2014	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0
02	29-Jun-2015	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	5.03
03	21-Dec-2015	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	5.91
04	29-Jun-2016	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	17.82
05	27-Dec-2016	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	24.54
06	30-May-2017	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	29.18
07	29-Nov-2017	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	42.87
08	22-Jun-2018	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	60.25
09	04-Jan-2019	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	68.30
10	24-Jul-2019	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	79.26

SECTORS AND THEMES

Sectors

Major Sector/Sector	(%)
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Education

100

Primary Education	80
Secondary Education	20

Themes

Major Theme/ Theme (Level 2)/ Theme (Level 3)	(%)
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Human Development and Gender	101
Gender	7
Education	86
Access to Education	43
Education Financing	43
Nutrition and Food Security	8
Nutrition	4
Food Security	4

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I. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

A. CONTEXT AT APPRAISAL

Context

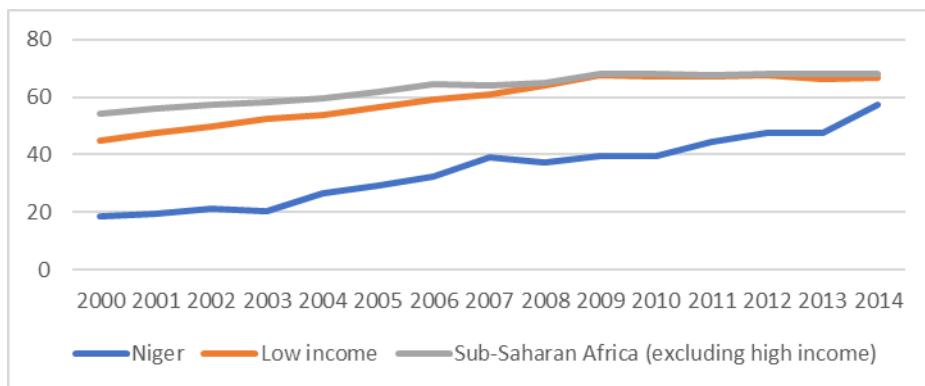
1. **Country context.** A large landlocked country with more than three-quarters of its territory covered by desert, Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world. It ranked 186 out of 187 countries on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index at appraisal. The country remains highly vulnerable to adverse weather conditions, especially droughts. It has also been affected by insecurity and instability in the sub-region, with growing threats of conflict and terrorism. Per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was at USD769 in Purchasing Power Parity terms and Niger had a population of about 17.2 million at appraisal. High fertility rates (more than seven children per woman) have contributed to high population growth (3.9 percent per year at appraisal). Together with low population density (82 percent of the population is rural), the fact that half of the population is below 15 years of age, makes it difficult for the Government to provide quality services for the growing population.
2. Niger's security situation is challenging and complicates the delivery of basic education services in certain areas. The regions of Diffa, Tahoua, and Tillabery are particularly affected with attacks by armed groups and extremists as well as inter-ethnic violence resulting in forced displacement of populations and school closures. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the population of concern in Niger comprised 383,666 individuals as of September 2019. This includes mainly refugees from Nigeria (118,868) and Mali (56,343), internally displaced persons in Diffa (104,288), Tillabery and Tahoua regions (76,634) and returnees from Nigeria.
3. Despite a growing mineral sector, economic growth per capita is relatively low and remains dependent on climatic conditions and the agriculture and livestock sector. Government expenditure was at 24.9 percent of GDP in 2012, in part thanks to donor support. Aid in the form of grants and concessional credits contributes to about 30 percent of Niger's budget on average. While this is substantial, it still represents only USD30 per capita. It also implies that the social sectors, including education, are dependent on donor support. The main budget support donors are the International Development Association (IDA), the European Union (EU), the French Development Agency (Agence Française de Développement - AFD), and the African Development Bank (AfDB).
4. **Sector context.** Basic education consists of six years of primary education and four years of lower secondary education, with schooling legally required until age 16 although many students drop out of school before that and some never enroll. Most students (80 percent) enrolled in the formal education system attend primary school, with only 5 percent enrolled in pre-school, 11 percent in lower secondary education, and 4 percent in upper secondary education, technical education, or higher education. Basic education is essentially provided by the public sector, as the market share of the private sector is very low. The Ministry of Primary Education or MEP (*Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire, de l'Alphabétisation, de la Promotion des Langues Nationales, et de*



L'Education Civique) is responsible for preschool, primary education, and literacy and non-formal education. The Ministry of Secondary Education or MES (*Ministère des Enseignements Secondaires*) oversees secondary education. Both Ministries were supported by the project.

5. In the decade preceding appraisal, the gross enrollment rate (GER) for primary education more than doubled in part due to increased budget allocations that funded an expansion of the school network and the recruitment of teachers. This, in turn, led to a substantial increase in primary completion rates, although those rates remain well below the average for low income countries and sub-Saharan Africa, as shown in Figure 1 (estimates from the World Development Indicators differ slightly from estimates from Ministries). As is the case in other countries, children from poor households and those living in rural areas are especially at a disadvantage, and at the lower secondary level girls lag behind boys in part due to child marriage: three in four girls marry before 18, the highest rate in the world. Both supply (lack of schools) and demand (lack of affordability) factors lead to low attainment. But lack of learning while in primary school also leads children to drop out or not be able to pursue their education (see Box 1 on the reasons for girls to drop out of school).

Figure 1: Primary Completion Rate before Project Implementation in Niger (%)

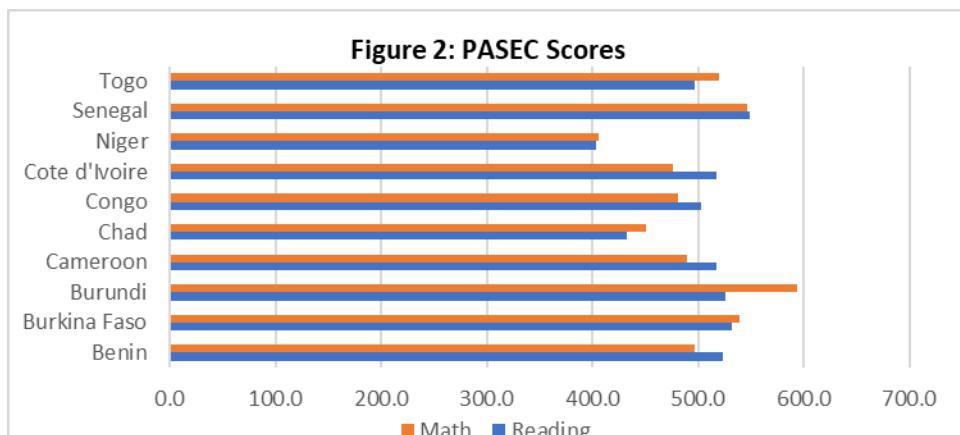


Source: World Development Indicators Data.

6. On the quality of the education received by children, data from the 2014 PASEC (*Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN*) student assessment (which became available after the start of the project) suggest that Niger has much lower levels of learning in both grade 2 and grade 6 than the other nine francophone African countries that participate in the assessment. As shown in Figure 2, this is the case for both reading and mathematics. Weak education outcomes translate into a severe learning crisis. Estimates of the Human Capital Index for Niger show that children can expect, on average, to complete only 5.3 years of pre-primary, primary and secondary school by age 18. However, when years of schooling are adjusted for the quality of learning, this is only equivalent to 2.6 years of schooling, with a learning gap of 2.7 years.
7. Despite substantial efforts by the government to improve educational outcomes, lack of learning is due to multiple factors, including lack of textbooks (hence the effort under the project to provide textbooks), poorly qualified teachers with limited subject knowledge and teaching methods that often place an emphasis on content and rote learning (hence the effort under the project to provide teacher training), high pupil-teacher ratios in some schools despite a comparatively low ratio nationally, and poor school infrastructure (hence effort under the project to build classrooms). As a result, the education system may not prepare students



adequately with the reading, mathematics and problem-solving skills that they need. In addition, for girls, pressure to marry early also leads to low educational attainment. The lack of affordability, especially at the secondary level, coupled with the limited learning in primary school, leads many children, and especially girls, to drop out early (see Box 1 on the complex reasons for dropping out for girls).



Box 1: Selected Reasons for low educational attainment for girls

The issues faced by Niger's education system are complex and require multi-faceted interventions. This can be illustrated through an analysis of the factors leading girls to drop out of school. When parents are asked in surveys such as the ENISED (Etude Nationale d'Evaluation des Indicateurs Socioéconomiques et Démographiques) survey implemented in 2016 why their daughters dropped out of school, issues related to the cost of schooling (out-of-pocket and opportunity costs), early marriages and pregnancies, a lack of learning while in school, and a lack of interest in remaining in school often come up. In addition, even if this may not be mentioned explicitly in survey responses by parents, social norms and gender roles also affect the ability of girls to remain in school. This emerges clearly from qualitative work in Niger. Analysis suggests that six main obstacles lead most girls to not pursue their education beyond the primary level. Many of these obstacles were implicitly considered in the design of PAEQ with specific efforts targeted at girls.

1. Poor learning outcomes and cost. Rural government schools especially have low quality and limited resources, leading many children to graduate from primary school without learning to read. The schools do not charge tuition, but parents complain that the cost of uniforms, guard fees, transport, lunches and the opportunity costs of losing their daughters' labor are hardly worth the poor learning outcomes they see.

2. Failure at examinations. Until recently, students could only take the primary school completion exam twice. If they failed, they were ineligible to continue in public education. When girls failed examinations, parents used to say that they had little choice but to begin looking for a suitable suitor whom their daughter could marry.

3. Lack of nearby secondary schools. Few rural communities have their own secondary school and there are few boarding schools serving communities. Parents must send their children to nearby towns and cover the costs of transportation and room and board. Students stay with relatives or contacts and parents are reluctant to leave their daughters without what they consider proper oversight.

4. Withdrawal of married adolescents. Once a girl is married, it is often difficult for her to remain in school. Husbands show little interest in supporting their adolescent wife's education especially if they must enroll in a private school. This is an expense that they cannot afford. Conversely, the fear of not being allowed to withdraw their



daughters from school for marriage is a complaint of some parents.

5. **Never enrolling in school or enrolling too late.** Some families never enroll girls in school, perhaps in part because parents had no educational opportunities themselves. In some cases, teachers may refuse to enroll children that are considered too old to start primary school.

6. **Influence of relatives and demands on first daughters.** Extended family members may influence parents on the value of educating girls, not always with positive outcomes. Schooling decisions may also depend on household composition and the activities of other children. Being the first daughter lessens a girl's chances of going to school as they are expected to help their mother at home during the day.

Source: Adapted from Perlman et al. (2018, 2020).

8. Public spending on education was estimated at 3.2 percent of GDP and 23 percent of total public expenditure before appraisal. This placed Niger above the median compared to other countries in the region, and the Government's ambition is to reach 25 percent of the budget allocated to education. However, at the same time, one of the reasons for high levels of spending as a share of GDP or the national budget is the fact that the unit costs of primary and secondary education in Niger tend to be high in comparison to other countries. An education and sector plan for 2014-2024 (*Programme Sectoriel de l'Education et de la Formation or PSEF*) was adopted, emphasizing: (1) improving access to basic education through increased supply in poorly served geographic areas; (2) improving the quality of teaching; and (3) improving the sector's governance (since then, a new *Plan de Transition de l'Éducation et de la Formation or PTSEF* was adopted for 2020-2022).
9. **Rationale for World Bank engagement.** The World Bank, as part of the Local Education Group (LEG), led by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has been supporting the Government's education strategy. The estimated financing needs for the implementation of the PSEF from 2014 to 2017 was estimated at USD1,631 million, with a financing gap for primary education of USD168 million. The USD84.2 million grant from the GPE together with USD15.8 million from AFD was to focus for the most part (80 percent) on primary education and cover half of the financing gap. The Government is working with development partners to mobilize additional resources to fund the PSEF, while also aiming to raise education expenditures as a share of the budget from 22 percent to 28 percent. The Government and the LEG decided that the World Bank would be the Supervising Entity of the GPE Fund given the Bank's knowledge of the education sector in Niger and its experience in supporting EFA FTI programs in many countries whose lessons may be useful for Niger. The contribution of GPE represented a major investment since funding of USD84.2 million was a multiple of past contributions from GPE for the education sector at USD 13.0 million from 2004 to 2008 and USD 7.5 million from 2009 to 2012. Information on the main donors for the education system in Niger is provided in Table 1.
10. Finally, it is important to note that the project benefitted from additional funding apart from the GPE grant. The activities were financed by a pooled fund (*fonds commun*) of USD100 million. This included a USD84.2 million grant from the GPE and a grant of approximately USD15.8 million from AFD (up to a maximum of EUR 12 million). The GPE grant, administered by the World Bank, thus financed 84.2 percent of the project activities. Subsequently, the Swiss Corporation provided funding with a contribution of USD 4 million, also included in the pooled fund. As an alternative financing mechanism, a Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) was considered, but was deemed not appropriate because of concerns about governance and fiduciary arrangements in the sector and the fact that there were too few donors in the education sector in Niger to justify a SWAP. Additionally, the depth of knowledge and analytical work to underpin the development of a



sector-wide program was not yet in place for secondary (and tertiary) education. Given the significant positive externalities associated with basic education, the Government and donors decided to proceed first with a basic education project and financing through a pooled fund instead.

Table 1: Role of Other Main Donors in Education in Niger (as of 2018)

Donor	Subsector(s)	Main Activities
Sectoral trust fund for education and training (FCSE)	Pre-primary, primary, secondary and vocational training	The sectoral trust fund for education and training (FCSE) was launched in 2017 by the Government to enhance access, quality and governance in education through the implementation of the national policy of education. Currently, partners contributing to this fund are French Development Agency (AFD), Swiss cooperation delegation, Luxembourg cooperation and UNICEF.
UNICEF	Pre-primary, primary, secondary and vocational training	UNICEF currently supports the Government to implement the national education policy through its work in 35 municipalities of convergence out of 255 municipalities. Interventions target students of preprimary, primary and secondary schools and include: support for school kits in all the schools, girls' schooling, preprimary education, improve the quality of teaching / learning, the steering of the education system and support to schools in emergency zones.
European Union	Pre-primary and primary	European Union supports the National Statistical System in the fields of education and contributes globally for access, quality and governance improvement in education.
Swiss cooperation	Non-formal education	Swiss cooperation is implementing in Dosso and Maradi a Program to support quality alternative education for youth.
French Development Agency (AFD)	Vocational training	AFD currently supports the Government in Niamey, Agadez and Diffa for youth education and training. AFD will lead the next GPE fund allocated to Niger from 2020.
Luxembourg cooperation	Preprimary education and vocational training	Luxembourg cooperation contributes to training and professional integration of young girls and boys in Agadez and Zinder.
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)	Pre-primary, Primary and secondary	JICA is active in Tillabery region to improve pre-primary and primary children learning and in Dosso, Maradi, Niamey, Tahoua, Tillabery and Zinder for the vulgarization of functional school management committee in secondary schools. Both two experiences are pilot.
German cooperation (kfW)	Primary education	German cooperation supports the ministry of primary education with infrastructures construction and equipment.
International Rescue Committee	Preprimary and primary	IRC is supporting the Government to address education in emergency through a multisectoral assistance for refugees and displaced persons in the Tillabery, Tahoua and Diffa regions.
World Food Program (WFP)	Primary	School feeding in 35 municipalities of convergence of United Nations agencies.

Source: Concept note for Niger Learning Improvement for Results in Education Project (P168779).

Higher Level Objectives

11. Education is a major driver of expected earnings and therefore a key factor helping households emerge from poverty and the country to achieve shared prosperity. By improving educational attainment and achievement, the project contributes to poverty reduction, in line with both the Government's new Poverty Reduction Strategy – the Plan for Economic and Social Development (PDES, 2012-2015) which identifies development of human resources and access to basic social services as major priorities, and the objectives of the first phase of the PSEF (2014-2024) endorsed by the LEG. The project is also consistent with the World Bank's Country



Partnership Strategy (CPS) (2013-2016) which emphasizes reducing vulnerability (CPS Pillar 2). Finally, the project is aligned with the Bank's Education Strategy 2020 by improving the provision of essential inputs (school buildings, textbooks and trained teachers) while also strengthening accountability in the education system. Finally, the project incorporated all three strategic directions of the GPE (i.e., Girls' Education, Education Quality and Learning Outcomes, and Fragile States), contributing to the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

Theory of Change (Results Chain)

12. The Project Appraisal Document (PAD) did not illustrate the project's results chain, as this was not a requirement nor a standard practice at the time of project preparation. However, in this Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR), Table 2 was created to show the theory of change underpinning the project. The project's interventions under each of the three components were designed to promote the achievement of the project's objectives, and the project's outputs were closely linked to the expected intermediate results indicators (IRIs) and to the Project Development Objective (PDO).

Table 2: Implicit Theory of Change

Activities	Outputs	PDO-level indicators	Long-term Outcomes
Component 1			
School construction and related equipment	Better conditions in the classroom and expanded capacity for enrollment	Increase in primary enrollment rate	Higher educational attainment and higher earnings in adulthood
Support for girls' education	Reduced cost of schooling and awareness of benefits from girls' education	Improved gender parity index in targeted areas for primary/secondary	Reduction in gender gaps and multiple benefits from girls' education
School feeding and hygiene	Improved nutrition leading to better ability to learn and retention in school	Increase in primary enrollment rate	Higher educational attainment and cognitive abilities from nutrition
Component 2			
Pedagogical inputs	Improved designed and accessibility of textbooks	Tools/materials for reading in early grades	Improved learning leads to higher attainment and benefits in adulthood
Teacher training	Improved subject knowledge and pedagogy	Better pedagogy for reading in early grades	Improved learning leads to higher attainment and benefits in adulthood
Measurement of learning outcomes	Improved data on learning outcomes and capacity for analysis of data	Better student assessment at the primary level and utility of system	Improved student assessment helps inform programs/policies by MEP
Component 3			
Capacity enhancement for Ministries	Improved management of education system at central (Ministries) level	Not directly measured in PDO-level indicators, but contributes indirectly	Stronger capacity to improve student attainment and achievement
Capacity enhancement at decentralized level	Improved management of education system at local (schools) level	Not directly measured in PDO-level indicators, but contributes indirectly	Stronger capacity to improve student attainment and achievement
Project management	Overall quality of project management including procurement practices	Not directly measured in PDO-level indicators, but contributes indirectly	Not applicable



Project Development Objectives

13. The objective of the Project is to improve access to schooling, retention of students in school, and the quality of the teaching and learning environment at the basic education level, in the Republic of Niger. The wording of the PDO was the same in the PAD and in the Financing Agreement.

Key Expected Outcomes and Outcome Indicators

14. The direct project beneficiaries were expected to be Niger's primary and lower secondary education students and teachers, staff of the MEP and MES at central and decentralized levels, and parents. Most of these beneficiaries were to be located in the poorest regions/districts of the country, in line with Government policy to target support and resources towards reducing poverty. The project was expected to benefit two-thirds of the schools and 2.1 million students (85 percent of them in primary schools and 15 percent in lower secondary schools). Access to education would be improved through school construction, and quality would increase thanks to the availability of new textbooks, more qualified teachers, and other system-wide improvements.
15. A special focus was placed on educating girls by including incentives for enrollment at the secondary level as well as communications campaigns. This made sense given the fact that girls were lagging behind boys in educational attainment especially at the secondary level, due in part to high rates of child marriage. The objectives of the project, together with the PDO level indicators and intermediate indicators are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Objectives of the project, PDO level indicators, and intermediate indicators

Objective	PDO Level Indicators	Intermediate Indicators
Improve access to schooling and retention of students in school at the basic education level	1. Primary completion rate 2. Increase in primary education gender parity index in areas targeted by the project 3. Increase in lower secondary education gender parity index in areas targeted by the project	1. Number of additional classrooms built or rehabilitated at the primary level resulting from project interventions 2. Number of classrooms built at the lower secondary level resulting from project interventions 3. Total enrollments in primary education (all schools) 4. Girls, boys, parents and teachers reached through sub-component 1.2 on promoting girls' education 5. Students reached through school feeding programs
Improve quality of the teaching and learning environment at the basic education level	4. System for learning assessment at the primary level 5. Utility of the learning assessment system 6. Appropriate tools and materials for improving reading in the early grades are adopted by MEP	6. Curriculum review for first cycle of primary school completed 7. Contract teachers trained as a result of the project 8. Share of grade 1-3 teachers trained for teaching early grade reading and simple classroom assessment 9. Teacher trainers, inspectors and pedagogical advisors trained through the project 10. Assessment of reading fluency conducted for grade 2 and 3 and results shared widely 11. Human resource management strategy developed and implemented



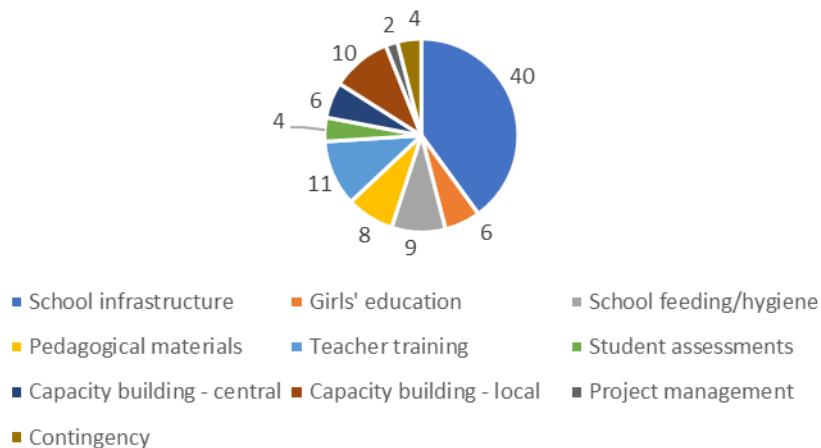
		12. Number of school management committees (CGDES) strengthened through the project 13. MES organizational review completed 14. Regular education sector reviews held during project implementation
All	7. Direct project beneficiaries, of which female	

Components

16. The project supported an ambitious government program centered around three main pillars: i) Expanding access to and retention in basic education in an equitable way, with particular focus on education infrastructure, girls' education and school feeding; ii) Improving the quality of teaching and learning, through more and better pedagogical inputs and teacher/teaching skills with more emphasis on learning outcomes; and iii) Strengthening management capacity, with focus on improving institutional capacity and incentives at the ministry, system and school level. The project design was therefore developed around three corresponding components. The budget allocations under the three components made sense. Given that the total budget for the project including the allocation from AFD was at USD100 million, the amounts in millions of dollars are also percentage values for total allocations.
17. As shown in Figure 3, the largest share of the funds was allocated to the first component, including USD40 million for school construction, USD 6 million for girls' education, and USD 9 for school lunches and hygiene. This was reasonable given the rapidly growing enrollment in both primary and secondary education. The second largest share of the funds was allocated to interventions to improve learning, with USD8 million for pedagogical material, USD11 million for teacher training, and USD 4 million for student assessments. The third component included USD6 million for capacity building at the central level (MEP and MES), USD10 million for capacity building at the local level, and USD2 million for project management. Actual costs at the end of project implementation were broadly in line with estimated costs, although with differences due to both some funds not disbursed and slightly lower levels of spending for school constructions due to lower costs versus estimates.



Figure 3: Initial Budget Allocations under the Project (USD million)



A. Project Components

Component 1: Expanding equitable access to schooling and retention of students in school (estimated cost: USD55.0 million; actual cost: USD45.0 million)

18. This component aimed to increase equitable access to and retention in basic education by tackling supply and demand-side constraints to enrollment. The project was to finance: (i) the construction and equipment of classrooms and other important school infrastructure; (ii) incentive schemes to promote girls' education in both primary and lower secondary education; and (iii) school feeding and hygiene programs to stimulate demand and enhance students' nutritional status and health.
19. ***Sub-component 1.1: Education infrastructure (estimated cost: USD40.0 million; actual cost: USD31.4 million).*** This sub-component aimed to: (i) build 1,245 primary school classrooms equipped with student benches and teacher desks, latrines and water supply points, where possible; (ii) build 330 lower secondary school classrooms also with equipment and latrines; and (iii) strengthen Government capacity for supervision of school construction. The emphasis was on priority areas identified by the Government and agreed with DPs, based on both need and demand. At least 150 classrooms were to be built as Alternative Rural Schools (smaller multi-grade facilities for remote areas).
20. ***Sub-component 1.2: Girls' access to education (estimated cost: USD6.0 million; actual cost: USD5.0 million).*** This sub-component aimed to reduce gender disparities in access to education through incentives to promote girls' enrollment in both primary and lower secondary education in targeted areas, including awareness activities, a girls' tutoring program, and Girls' Education Grants. The target was to reach 51,500 girls by supporting the following interventions: (i) continue an information campaign at the primary level on the benefits of girls' education; (ii) provide training for mothers of young and adolescent girls, mostly in functional literacy and financial literacy, to sensitize them to the importance of educating their daughters; (iii) provide



tutoring for poorly performing students in selected schools to reduce dropouts; and (iv) provide awards and small non-monetary incentive to promising students at the regional level. At the secondary level, this component would also: (i) finance information campaigns and other sensitization activities to raise awareness of the importance of lower secondary education for girls; and (ii) finance education grants for eligible girls attending lower secondary school in order to incentivize school attendance and retention for girls. The project was also meant to support an impact evaluation of different approaches to assess relative cost-effectiveness.

21. ***Sub-component 1.3: School feeding and student health (estimated cost: USD9.0 million; actual cost: USD8.6 million).*** This sub-component aimed to stimulate demand for and retention in school, reduce the prevalence of nutritional deficiencies and support student health in primary schools. Priority was to be given to areas where: (i) enrollment rates were the lowest; and (ii) schools buildings were incomplete and/or destroyed. The sub-component supported: (i) the extension of school feeding programs (canteens) in areas suffering from food shortage and/or natural disasters or conflicts; (ii) school health and hygiene activities, including school-based deworming where relevant; and (iii) training and sensitization for teachers and other staff on health, hygiene, and nutrition-related issues.

Component 2: Improving the quality of teaching and learning (estimated cost: USD23.0 million; actual cost: USD25.5 million)

22. This component aimed to improve the quality of teaching and learning by supporting: (a) increased provision of teaching and learning materials and a curriculum review; (b) pre-service and in-service teacher training; and (c) better tools for the measurement and improvement of learning outcomes.
23. ***Sub-component 2.1: Pedagogical inputs (estimated cost: USD8.0 million; actual cost USD10.4 million).*** This sub-component aimed to support higher quality teaching and learning through the provision of teaching and learning materials for primary and lower secondary education and a curriculum and textbook review for primary education. Pedagogical materials would include teachers' guides and students' learning materials for core subjects. Assistance for textbooks would support: i) acquisition and distribution; and ii) design of new textbooks aligned with new curricula being finalized. The curriculum and textbook review would build early lessons from early grade reading interventions.
24. ***Sub-component 2.2: Teacher training (estimated cost: USD11.0 million; actual cost: USD11.3 million).*** This sub-component aimed to finance more and better teacher pre-service and in-service training, including for contractual teachers so that all teachers acquire fundamental teaching skills and practices. The target was to reach 3,500 contractual teachers with in-service training provided by 800 teacher trainers. The project would also expand capacity for pre-service training through the construction and equipment of three new primary teacher training schools (*Ecoles Normales d'Instituteurs - ENIs*) in the Maradi, Dosso, and Zinder regions. Training modules and teacher guides for trainers and teachers would be improved and studies on teacher competencies, teacher training, and teacher management would be undertaken to inform pre-service and in-service training that is more hands on, practical and classroom-oriented.



25. ***Sub-component 2.3: Measurement of learning outcomes (estimated cost: USD4.0 million; actual cost: USD3.8 million).*** This sub-component would support higher quality teaching and learning through better tools for the measurement and improvement of learning outcomes, with a focus on literacy in primary education. This would include support to: (i) improve the national student learning assessment system for better monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes; and (ii) develop and implement early grade reading interventions in the first three grades.

Component 3: Strengthening management capacity (estimated cost: USD18.0 million; actual cost: USD16.1 million)

26. This last component aimed to support more efficient use of resources for improved access and quality through the development of management and institutional capacity and better incentives at the central, district, school and project levels in several critical areas.

27. ***Sub-component 3.1: Capacity enhancement of the ministries in charge of basic education (estimated cost: USD6.0 million; actual cost: USD5.4 million).*** This sub-component aimed to enhance the capacity of the MEP and MES to manage and coordinate the two levels of basic education more effectively. Having completed an organizational review in 2013, MEP would receive comprehensive support to strengthen capacity and performance, including through professional development for key personnel and the development of a human resource management strategy. The approach would be similar for MES, with funding for an organizational review during the first year of project implementation. Both Ministries would also benefit from the provision of equipment.

28. ***Sub-component 3.2: Central and decentralized education system management (estimated cost: USD10.0 million; actual cost: USD6.8 million).*** This sub-component aimed to support the following activities at the primary level: (i) education sector planning and management (e.g., for effective teacher deployment); (ii) training for school staff and CGDES; (iii) School Improvement Grants (SIGs) in some eligible schools; (iv) support to the Education Management Information System (EMIS); and (v) studies related to education system planning, management, and financing. At the lower secondary level, support would focus on: (i) education sector planning and management; (ii) school planning and management, including CGDES training; and (iii) support to the EMIS, including data collection and school surveys. The sub-component would help set up a system of school level planning and monitoring of quality, attendance and attainment with participating schools required to carry out self-evaluations and school development plans. The school-level SIGs could be used for non-recurrent expenditures, including supporting in-service training to teachers and staff upon approval from CGDES.

29. ***Sub-component 3.3: Project management and coordination (estimated cost: USD2.0 million; actual cost: USD3.9 million).*** This sub-component aimed to support project coordination through efficient coordination mechanisms, proper FM and procurement practices, and effective M&E of project outcomes at the national and sub-national levels. Funding would be used for consultants' services, operating costs, equipment, and training. For MEP this would include support for the project's Steering Committee and annual sector reviews, technical and financial audits, the recruitment of project staff, training of stakeholders involved in implementation, and operating costs. For MES this would cover technical and financial audits, the recruitment



of project staff for project coordination, finance and procurement, and training of project stakeholders involved in implementation.

B. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES DURING IMPLEMENTATION (IF APPLICABLE)**Revised PDOs and Outcome Targets**

No revisions were made in the PDO.

Revised PDO Indicators

No revisions were made in the PDO indicators.

Project Extension and Revised Funding Allocations

30. The project was extended from September 30, 2018 to June 30, 2019, to allow for more time to complete key planned activities, including: (i) enabling the Government to complete the construction program of primary and secondary schools; (ii) extending the provision of grants to girls in lower secondary school for an additional year (so that they could complete the basic education cycle in June 2019); (iii) supporting the experimentation of the revised Grade 2 curriculum during the 2017-2018 academic year and its extension during 2018-2019; and (iv) developing a national system for large-scale standardized student assessments. The extension originally requested by the World Bank was for 12 months. This was the time deemed necessary to complete all activities, especially the remaining school construction. However, some development partners and the Ministry of Finance preferred to grant an extension of nine months only, so as to avoid having multiple pooled funds potentially operating at the same time. This shorter extension made it more difficult to complete all activities, and as a result, a few of the classrooms that were planned were not built. Insecurity in parts of the country also played a role as did delays in school construction for not building all the classrooms initially planned. Under the extension, the objectives, activities, and components of the project did not change, but budget reallocations were made between components. In total, USD9.5 million (11 percent of the initial grant) in GPE financing was reallocated. Due to surpluses coming from initial overestimates of costs and savings from simplified project management for school construction, funds from sub-component 1.1 were reallocated to sub-component 1.3 and to component 2, in the latter case to support the provision of pedagogical input, the delivery of teacher training, and the extension of the curriculum reform as well as the PMAQ initiative and improvements to the national assessment system. Additional funding was also allocated to project management given the extension of the project by 9 months, and to continue to support capacity enhancement activities for both Ministries. Finally, funds from the contingency were allocated to Components 2 and 3. Table 4 provides the details of the various reallocations.

**Table 4: Initial and Revised Budget Allocations by Source of Funds (USD millions)**

	Initial	New	AFD & CS	GPE	AFD & CS	GPE
Component 1	57.8	53.2	10.5	9.7	47.3	43.5
Sub-component 1.1: Education infrastructure	43.6	38.2	7.9	7.0	35.7	31.3
Sub-component 1.2: Girls' access to education	6.8	6.0	1.2	1.1	5.5	4.9
Sub-component 1.3: School feeding and student health	7.4	8.9	1.3	1.6	6.0	7.3
Component 2	22.8	30.2	4.1	5.5	18.6	24.7
Sub-component 2.1: Pedagogical inputs	9.6	13.0	1.8	2.4	7.9	10.6
Sub-component 2.2: Teacher training.	9.9	13.4	1.8	2.4	8.1	10.9
Sub-component 2.3: Student assessments	3.3	3.9	0.6	0.7	2.7	3.2
Component 3	19.1	19.5	3.5	3.6	15.6	16.0
Sub-component 3.1: Capacity building – central	6.2	7.0	1.1	1.3	5.0	5.7
Sub-component 3.2: Capacity building – local	10.5	8.3	1.9	1.5	8.6	6.8
Sub-component 3.3: Project management/coordination	2.5	4.2	0.4	0.8	2.0	3.4
Not allocated	3.3	0.0	0.6	0.0	2.7	0.0
Total	102.9	102.9	18.7	18.7	84.2	84.2

Other Changes

Not applicable.

Rationale for Changes and Their Implication on the Original Theory of Change

Not applicable.

II. OUTCOME**A. RELEVANCE OF PDOs****Assessment of Relevance of PDOs and Rating**Rating: **Substantial**

31. The objectives of the project were highly relevant as they addressed key issues and challenges facing the basic education sector in Niger at the time of appraisal. These included: a lack of school infrastructure with a large number of students in both primary and secondary schools attending school in "paillette" classrooms; a substantial number of out-of-school children, especially in the case of adolescent girls; poor performance of students on student assessments as evidenced by Niger's scores on the 2014 PASEC international student assessment; limited access to in-service training and low quality pre-service training for many teachers, especially among contractual teachers; and overall weak capacity for planning and implementation in the two Ministries benefiting from the project, and especially in MEP.
32. The Project's objectives were aligned with the Government's strategic agenda as outlined in its education sector plan (*Programme Sectoriel de l'Education et de la Formation 2014-2024*). The objectives of the Project were also consistent with the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Niger for the period FY13-FY16 which underscored the importance of improved education and employment skills for youth in order to reduce vulnerability and aimed



to mainstream gender and strengthen governance and capacity for public service delivery. The original objectives of the project were not revised under the Level II restructuring which was approved in February 2018, nor were the various indicators used to assess the impact of the project. But changes were adopted in funding allocations for various sub-components. Although the project was approved before the new CPF(FY18-22), many of the core components of the project are also in line with the current CPF, which argues that “business as usual” is no longer an option for Niger. According to the CPF, shifting Niger’s trajectory will require refocusing on: (i) the role of women and girls; and (ii) addressing near term risks of conflict and fragility. The overarching goal of the CPF is to help Niger’s economic and social development by tackling growth constraints, unsustainable population growth, and other fundamental drivers of fragility. The CPF comprises nine objectives, clustered in three focus areas: (i) increased rural productivity and incomes; (ii) improved human capital and social protection and (iii) better governance for jobs, service delivery and growth. The Niger CPF also has a spatial focus in four main regions with the highest levels of poverty and fragility. Tillabery and Diffa are already home to over 300,000 displaced persons and face increasing risks from regional conflicts, while many of Niger’s poor live in the Maradi and Zinder regions. Through its focus human capital, gender, and disadvantaged regions, PAEQ has contributed to the CPF.

33. The project supported both MEP and MES (which was created a year before the approval of the project). Most funds were allocated to the Ministry of Primary Education, which is also where the needs are especially large, particularly for construction and teacher training. Focusing on primary as opposed to secondary education is also beneficial from an equity point of view as enabling all children to complete at least their primary education should be a key (long-term) target. The design of the project was informed by lessons learned from other operations in the sector and analytical work, including the latest available RESEN at the time. As a result, the components of the project made sense given the needs of the sector. In some ways, the project was very ambitious since it tackled virtually all aspects of basic education in Niger, but the targets were achievable, and indeed were achieved.
34. The design of the first component (expanding access and retention) was fundamentally sound. The focus on classroom construction, incentives for girls to remain in school, and the provision of school lunches in targeted areas was warranted. Conditions for learning in “paillette” classrooms were sub-optimal, and the classrooms had limited capacity in terms of how many students they could absorb. The construction of classrooms was meant to improve learning conditions while also expanding capacity. In addition, while both boys and girls benefit from better educational opportunities in terms of future expected earnings, the benefits from girls’ education in Niger are especially important because of the connection between educational attainment, child marriage, and early childbearing. Educating girls helps in reducing fertility and thereby population growth, preventing child marriages and early childbearing, and improving child health (the children born of very young mothers have higher risks of under-five mortality and stunting). It also helps to reduce under-five mortality and stunting, and to improve women’s agency in various ways. Broadly speaking, educating girls is one of the smartest investments that the country can make for long term sustainable development (Wodon et al., 2018).
35. With regards the second component, which aimed to improve teaching and learning, the need for interventions was demonstrated by the fact that of all countries participating in PASEC, Niger performs poorly for reading and mathematics in both grades 2 and grade 6. While teacher training and better measurement of learning outcomes are needed, a caveat is needed though for the pedagogical inputs (first sub-component). Given commitments made by the Government towards instruction in national languages (see Box 1), substantial efforts were dedicated to curriculum reform with the aim of teaching the first cycle of primary education (from



CI to CE2) in national languages instead of French. This decision had been made by the Government before the start of the project, and the project aimed to support those efforts. However, curriculum reforms are a daunting task in countries with multiple national languages and limited implementation capacity as well as financing. A number of important steps were completed under the project. A curriculum and textbook review were carried out, focusing on developing better programs and teaching methodologies for math and language (reading and writing) and the development of transversal skills. The review built on some of the early lessons from early grade reading interventions, which focus on appropriate practices for teaching early grade reading in local languages, and drew on experiences, materials and tools developed under other reading pilots in and outside the country. While the objective of improving the quality of teaching and learning was sound, the focus on curriculum reform in multiple languages in a country such as Niger with limited capacity was, in hindsight, quite ambitious.

Box 2: The Challenge of Curriculum Reform in National Languages

A complex curriculum reform in national languages has been under way for more than a decade. Planned in 2004 and launched in 2009, MEP officially started its experimentation in 2012. The curriculum reform was subsequently rolled up in Grade 1 with five national languages in 500 pilot schools in 2015 and extended to 5,000 schools in 2017 for Grade 1, 2 and 3. This reform faces challenges especially in terms of planning, resource mobilization and execution. Since 2015, the reform was almost exclusively funded under this project. In the face of budgetary uncertainty and the many implementation challenges, the Government of Niger and the DP's Local Education Group (LEG) have agreed to put the reform on hold and carry out an external evaluation to assess the technical viability and financial sustainability of the reform and propose potential solutions for a more rigorous budgeting and programming of subsequent phases. Meanwhile, MEP revised the 1988 version of the primary school curriculum to provide a simplified program to allow teachers to teach to the level of their students. Under this new program finalized in September 2019, MEP plans to develop basic scripted lessons and exercises to provide teachers with detailed guidance through structured and effective pedagogy.

36. As for the third component - strengthening management capacity, this was also clearly needed at both the central and local levels. The challenges faced by Niger to improve its education systems are massive, and gains will not be achieved without strong capacity at both the central and local levels. At the central level, the project identified two priority needs: (1) ensuring proper management of human resources – especially teachers who account for the overwhelming majority of public spending for education; (2) ensuring that the functioning of the Ministries was appropriate, and that regular review of the education sector would be carried out so as to provide strategic guidance. Training was needed not only for teachers (component 2), but also for other staff under this component. At the local level, school management committees (CGDES) play an essential role, and much of the capacity building component focused on strengthening them, including for the management of small grants for schools. Training of the school committees linked to the school grants intervention under the project benefited from technical support on the ground from Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) project in Niger, which also provided the training modules. This intervention was built on a long-standing collaboration between the World Bank and JICA in the country, starting with the establishment of school management committees and the piloting of school grants under previous World Bank-supported projects. This collaboration will continue into the next World Bank project now being prepared. Strategically, the project



touched on the key potential drivers of success.

37. In addition, implementation capacity benefited greatly from a team of international experts (*Appui à Maitrise d'Ouvrage* or AMO) hired to help the two Ministries manage the project. This was necessary precisely given the limited capacity of both Ministries, and especially MEP, for managing such a large and complex project. This implementation arrangement was different from the typical set-up for many World Bank-supported projects in the region, including in Niger, which tended to rely on project implementation units. The idea for this project was recognize the willingness of the Ministries to try something new whereby implementation would rely more on ministry staff but with extensive technical assistance. In addition to the main technical assistance team supporting the ministries' procurement, financial management, M&E, and human resource management functions for the project but also more generally for the Ministries, a separate contract was provided in support of school construction (*Bureau d'Ingénieur Conseil* or BIC). Both contracts – the AMO and the BIC, provided residential technical assistance to the ministries to support the project's implementation and build the ministries' capacities.
38. Broadly speaking, the approach worked. At the same time, especially for the Ministry of Primary Education, management capacity continues to be hampered by the fact that 21 different Directorates have substantial autonomy to implement their own programs without following a clear roadmap for the Ministry as a whole. This situation was outside of the control of the project, but it did affect the project's activities. The objective of strengthening management capacity was also somewhat weakened by high turnover in key positions, especially in the Ministry of Primary Education. Possibly, apart from aiming to build capacity at all levels, from central Ministries to local CGDES, the project could have focused more on key strategic objectives and institutional reforms needed to achieve coherence across programs, although one also could argue that such reforms may be beyond the scope of a lending instrument such as Investment Project Financing, and should rather be carried out through a Development Policy Operations lending modality.
39. Based on the assessment above, the rating for the relevance of PDO is **Substantial**.

B. ACHIEVEMENT OF PDOs (EFFICACY)

Assessment of Achievement of Each Objective/Outcome

Rating: **Substantial**

40. Overall, the project has been successful in achieving its PDO. Six of the seven PDO-level indicators were met. The only indicator not met was the share of beneficiaries of the project who were girls, but the target was almost met (45.4 percent versus a target of 47 percent). In addition, virtually all intermediate indicators (13 out of 14) were also achieved. The only intermediate indicator not achieved relates to the number of primary classrooms constructed, and that indicator was 95 percentachieved (1,187 classrooms built versus a target of 1,250). Annex 1 summarizes the key achievements of the projects in comparison to the initial targets.

Outcome 1: Expanding access and retention

41. Three main types of activities were carried to achieve this first outcome: (1) classroom construction; (2) efforts to improve girls' education; and (3) school lunches and hygiene. Each of the three activities are reviewed below.



42. **PDO-level indicators:** Three indicators were used to assess the level of achievement for Outcome 1 of the project. The first indicator or target was to increase the primary completion rate from 54.6 percent to 58.6 percent. The estimate from MEP at project completion is 64.4 percent. A separate estimate for 2016-17 available in the RESEN suggests a completion rate of 60 percent, which is also above the target for the project. The second indicator was to increase the gender parity index by 0.03 points for both primary and secondary education in the areas targeted by the project. This was achieved as well, in primary education with a gain of 0.028 points (rounded up to 0.03), and in secondary education with a larger gain of 0.09 points according to estimates by MEP and MES.
43. **Classroom construction.** The project aimed to build 1,250 primary school classrooms. This called for the construction of 345 additional classrooms (195 + 150 alternative rural schools or ERA) in phase 2 on top of the 905 classrooms built in phase 1. Due to procurement delays and insecurity in parts of the country, as well as an extension of only nine months instead of the 12 months requested, not all ERA classrooms were built. However, approximately 95% of the overall target for classroom construction was achieved (1,187 classrooms built by the end of the project), and the full contingent of 330 classrooms for secondary schools were built. The newly built classrooms were equipped with basic furniture (typically 25 tables and benches for students, a desk for the teacher and two chairs, as well as a metal cabinet). For ERAs, equipment consisted of forty tables and stools, one desk for the teacher, two chairs and three metal cabinets. Classroom construction helped improve conditions for learning while also contributing to larger enrollment especially in primary schools as the capacity of the classrooms being built was larger than that of the *paillettes* that they replaced (Box 3). Classroom construction thus contributed to the achievement of the first three PDO-level indicators' targets. However, one weakness in construction is the fact that while some efforts were made to make the classrooms accessible to children with disabilities, these efforts were not sufficient to ensure accessibility (e.g., inadequate ramps for wheelchairs to classrooms and lack of space in latrines to be used for children with a wheelchair).

**Box 3: Learning Conditions in “Paillottes” Classrooms**

There is no doubt that classroom construction helped improve learning conditions for students apart from increasing capacity. Below are two pictures of “*paillottes*” showing how learning conditions were sub-optimal in those classrooms, often with no chairs or desks for children and the teacher, as well as poor lightning which can cause difficulties for children with even mild visual impairment to be able to see what is written on the blackboard. Estimates from PASEC suggest that better school infrastructure may contribute to better learning.



Source: Report on school construction from UNICEF Niger.

44. **Girls' education.** The first intermediate indicator related to girls' education was to reach 100,000 girls under the project's sub-component 1.2. The target was significantly exceeded with 351,978 girls benefitting from the project. An important subset of girls benefitting from the project was the 700 girls in 39 lower secondary schools who received grants to attend secondary schools. This program was implemented with strong results in terms of retention (68 percent of beneficiary girls were still enrolled after four years versus one-fifth of other girls in the same schools). This activity related to the provision of scholarships to girls living far from secondary schools does not seem to have encountered major implementation issues and data are available to assess potential impacts. For other activities, including communication campaigns, the materials that were created were of quality (see Box 4) and by all counts were well-implemented, though there was no systematic assessment on their specific impact.

**Box 4: Materials for Communications on Girls' Education**

Various materials were prepared for the information campaigns on girls' education, including laminated booklets that could be shown in discussion groups in villages. Three such booklets were designed on the gender gap in education, the benefits from girls' education, and the consequences of child marriages. Each booklet included visuals showing practical examples that could be easily understood, as well as on the backside guidance on the message to be delivered. These materials were produced in several languages. As an example of illustration, the picture below shows a situation in which a woman must rely on another person to read her a letter because she is illiterate.



Source: Materials Developed by MEP.

45. **School lunches and hygiene.** The school lunches were implemented in coordination with WFP. The project aimed to reach at least 90,000 children. According to Ministry data, this target was achieved, with estimates suggesting that 99,577 children benefited from the program. Latrines were built as part of school construction (see above) and information campaigns to improve hygiene were conducted with the CGDES. Given community involvement to date in their maintenance, school latrines are expected to remain functional.

46. Based on the assessments above, the achievement of outcome 1 is rated **Substantial**.



Outcome 2: Improving teaching and learning

47. Three main types of activities were carried to achieve this second outcome: (1) provision of new textbooks and teacher guides in national languages to improve pedagogy in the classroom; (2) various types of teacher training; and (3) investments in student assessments to better measure learning. Each of the three activities are reviewed below.
48. **PDO-level indicators:** Three indicators were used to assess the level of achievement for Outcome 2 of the project: (1) whether a system for learning assessment was built at the primary level; (2) the utility of the learning assessment system; and (3) whether appropriate tools and materials for improving reading in the early grades were adopted by MEP. All three indicators' targets were met, with more details provided below for the intermediate results indicators.
49. **Improving pedagogy:** Textbooks and teacher guides were developed for grades 1 to 3 in six national languages and distributed on a pilot basis for grades 1 and 2 to a large number of schools. Approximately one-third of all primary schools (for Grades 1 and 2) participated in the pilot. The project's indicators targets were met, in that the curriculum review for first cycle of primary school was completed. Overall, the project did contribute substantially to the curriculum reform, an idea that had been under discussion for decades in the country with various pilots conducted at different times but not at scale. At the same time, as mentioned earlier (Box 1), the education system is at a crossroad in terms of the future of the curriculum reform. Results from the national assessment conducted under the project suggest that students in schools that participated in the reform performed better on mathematics but less well on the reading assessment than students in schools that did not yet participate. While substantial resources have been allocated to the reform under the project in an effort to support government policy, the funding that may be needed to complete the reform is likely to be significant. An assessment of progress towards the reform to-date is being prepared which will inform potential next steps.
50. **Teacher training.** The targets of the three intermediate results indicators related to teacher training were met: (1) Contract teachers were trained as a result of the project (target: 3,500 teachers trained; Actual: 8,160 teacher trained); (2) Share of grade 1-3 teachers trained for teaching early grade reading and simple classroom assessment (target: 75 percent; Actual: 84.1 percent); and (3) Teacher trainers, inspectors and pedagogical advisors trained through the project (Target: 800; Actual: 6,145). The end-of-project targets (in terms of reach) for a wide range of activities implemented for training teachers and principals were either met or exceeded. The 2019 PASEC assessment data (to become available in 2020) will be useful in further assessing potential gains in student learning outcomes. While many trainings may have been valuable, they were not based on a clear and comprehensive strategy at the level of the Ministries, especially for primary education. To the credit of the Ministry of Primary Education, an important initiative was to test subject knowledge for all contractual teachers, not renew contracts for teacher performing below a (very low) minimum threshold and provide remedial education for teachers performing at low levels but above the required minimum threshold. Four in five contractual teachers in this remedial education program passed the exam at the end of the training, suggesting stronger mastery of the material they need to teach. The project also financed the construction of three teacher training colleges that have been completed. The



three training colleges were located in Dogondoutchi, Tessaoua and Magaria and provided training to 1,674 teachers, including 929 women. The three training centers each include an administrative block, a store, a computer room, an infirmary, a library and a micro-teaching room and housing for the Director and supervisors.

51. **Student assessments:** The target of the intermediate results indicator on student assessment – conducting an assessment of reading fluency for grades 2 and 3—was met. The project financed the implementation of a national assessment in primary schools and the country’s participation in the regional mathematics and science initiative MS4SSA, for which Niger has been competitively selected as one of the regional nodes. The national assessment revealed, among others, that some gains were achieved in mathematics in the schools that participated in the curriculum reform in comparison to other schools, but the schools that participated in the curriculum reform had lower performance in reading. Importantly, the Government also signed an agreement with PASEC for participation in the 2019 assessment and data collection has been conducted with funding from the project. This represents an important achievement. At the same time, the student assessment system remains relatively weak, and additional efforts will need to be put forth in the future to ensure more widespread use of data in guiding policy and program design.
52. Based on the assessments above, the achievement of outcome 2 is rated **High**.

Outcome 3: Strengthening management capacity

53. While this outcome is not specifically included in the PDO working it is essential for the future of Niger’s education system and it was a key component of the project. Therefore, analysis for this outcome is also included in this ICR. Three main types of activities were carried to achieve this third outcome: (1) building capacity at the central level; (2) building capacity at the local level; and (3) supporting project implementation. Each of the three activities are reviewed below.
54. **Capacity at the central level:** The three intermediate indicators related to capacity at the central level were met: (1) Human resource management strategy developed and implemented; (2) MES organizational review completed; and (3) Regular education sector reviews held during project implementation (Target: 4; Actual: 4). The two ministries developed human resource management strategies that have been validated. In addition, the Ministry of Secondary Education conducted an organizational review. Trainings for a large number of staff at the central and regional levels were carried out by both Ministries and the project supported the regular organization of Sector Reviews as well as the dissemination of the Country Education Status Report (RESEN 2019) prepared with assistance from Pole de Dakar. At the same time, a core issue in the Ministry of Primary Education – the fact that Directorates tend to have so much autonomy that coordination between activities may not be optimal – appears to remain. For both Ministries, however, high turnover of key high-level staff (a situation not under the control of the project) has led to some lack of continuity and may have weakened capacity enhancement. At the central level, support was provided to HR Departments of both Ministries for stronger coordination of Ministry activities, including for teacher management and training. Many initiatives were successfully implemented, including testing subject knowledge among contractual teachers and providing remedial training for teachers scoring low, though the



HR Department would benefit from continued capacity building, as well as support to strengthen synergies across activities supported by various Directorates.

55. ***Capacity at the local level:*** The targets of the intermediate results indicators related to capacity at the local level, related to the number of school management committees (CGDES) strengthened through the project, was exceeded (Target: 2,800; Actual: 6,966). The focus for strengthening the CGDES was on primary schools. Training has been provided to CGDES, and grants have been given to selected schools to enable them to cover expenditures approved by the CGDES. Specifically, the number of CGDES that benefitted from grants increased rapidly from 1,039 in 2015 to 6,966 in 2018. While the rationale for providing trainings and grants was strong, in the future it would be beneficial to collect additional data—for example, through focus group discussions—to further assess the impact of these activities on targeted beneficiaries. Grants were systematically delivered to targeted schools, though initially with some delay. This initial delay was due, in part, to the multiple layers of approval needed and a slow process of disbursement even when approval was obtained. Nonetheless, grants were provided regularly and on an annual basis.
56. ***Project coordination and implementation:*** The support provided by the team of international experts (AMO) has greatly facilitated project implementation. About a year and a half after the start of the project, a team of four international experts was brought in to support implementation in both Ministries. The team has been highly successful in its support for project implementation, including handling procurement (*passation des marchés*) for a large number of contracts for multiple aspects of the project.
57. Based on the assessments above, the achievement of outcome 3 is rated **Substantial**.

Overall number of beneficiaries

58. ***PDO-level indicators:*** An additional overall indicator for the project was the number of beneficiaries, and within that number the number of beneficiaries who were girls. The target for the project was to benefit 2.1 million children. The estimated number of beneficiaries from the two Ministries lead to 3.0 million children being reached. The only indicator for which the target not met was the share of beneficiaries of the project who were girls, although the target was almost met (45.4 percent versus a target of 47 percent).
59. ***Intermediate results indicators:*** The target was for the project to contribute to total enrollment in primary schools, with target of 2.4 million children enrolled. This target was achieved with 2.6 million children enrolled in 2019.



Justification of Overall Efficacy Rating

60. Substantial achievements can be credited to the project, including in terms of expanding access and retention to primary and secondary education, improving conditions for teaching and learning, and strengthening management capacity. Given the above ratings for the three outcomes – two objectives rated Substantial and one objective rated High, the overall rating for efficacy is Substantial. The main challenge under the project was carrying out the curriculum reform as it was overly ambitious and is likely to be too costly moving forward. An evaluation of the reform is being planned to inform future steps in this area. Nonetheless, in sum, six of the seven PDO-level indicators' targets and all but one of the 14 intermediate results indicators' targets were achieved, suggesting substantial efficacy.

C. EFFICIENCY

Assessment of Efficiency and Rating

Rating: **Modest**

61. The project included a basic cost-benefit analysis (CBA), the conclusions of which are reproduced below. The idea for the CBA was to simulate potential benefits under scenarios considering both gains in educational attainment (completion rates) and gains in learning, both of which would result in higher earnings in adulthood. No wage regressions were estimated and the impact of learning on potential wages was also not computed, but simple assumptions of potential gains were used to assess the net present value (NPV) of the project. The focus was on component 1, and especially the construction of classrooms. Table 5 shows the NPV of component 1 under different scenarios. The NPV of the different scenarios ranged from USD46.8 million to USD241.4 million, and the internal rate of return (IRR) ranged from 11 percent to 12 percent showing a consistent positive payoff from investment in all scenarios. While the analysis relied on many assumptions and no actual estimations, it seems reasonable.

Table 5: NPV of project dependent on completion rate and wage (million USD 2012-prices)

	Completion rate Wage scenarios	5% discount rate			8% discount rate		
		Actual	+ 5%	+ 10%	Actual	+ 5%	+ 10%
5 % wage decrease	177.7	192.4	207.2	46.8	53.6	60.4	
Actual	193.2	208.7	224.3	54.0	61.1	68.2	
5% wage increase	208.7	225.0	241.4	61.1	68.6	76.0	

Note: Actual refers to parameters based on most recent data, which are used in the base scenario.

Source: Author's calculations.

62. In terms of disbursements, due in part to delays in the implementation of multiple activities and despite the extension of the closing date from September 2018 to June 2019, the final disbursement rate was at just below 87 percent for the pooled fund. However, the PAEQ was funded by both a GPE grant in the amount of USD84.2 million for which the World Bank was the Grant Agent, and funding from AFD in the amount of Euro



12 million. In addition, in January 2017, an additional grant from the Swiss Cooperation in the amount of FCFA 2.65 billion was provided, amounting to a total financing of USD102.5 million. The disbursement rate for the GPE Trust Fund (TF016565) at the closing date was at 95.1 percent (USD80.05 million out of the original USD84.2 million in GPE financing).

63. While several factors contributed to the fact that not all funds were disbursed, two important factors that were not under the control of the World Bank team are worth mentioning. First, after approval of the project, the exchange rate between the Franc CFA and the US dollar changed. The exchange rate in the first half of 2014 was of the order of FCFA 480 per 1 US dollar. Subsequently, rates fluctuated at a value of close to FCFA 600 per 1 US dollar for most of the duration of the project. This implied that the resources available were higher than anticipated. The project team and the Ministries made efforts to use the additional resources wisely by programming additional activities in annual work plans. Second, the mid-term review examined the project's progress and the time needed to complete activities. At the time, MEP, MES and the World Bank team found that an extension of at least twelve months would be needed. However, the Local Education Group in consultation with the Prime Minister's office found that the extension should not be too long, to avoid overlap with the sector pooled fund under development. The compromise was, therefore, to extend the project's closing date by nine months, which proved to be insufficient to use all the committed funds. In addition, as noted above, funds from the Swiss Cooperation were added to the pool two years into implementation. The funds were disbursed directly to the project's pooled accounts in the two ministries to co-finance the same annual work plans, and the Swiss Cooperation generally also participated in the joint implementation support missions. Again, this generated more resources. Table 6 provides data on the disbursement rates for the various components and sub-components (not including funding from the Swiss Cooperation). The lowest disbursement rates were observed for the sub-components on student assessments and on capacity building at the central level. The highest disbursement rates were observed for the sub-components on school feeding and student health and for project management and coordination.

Table 6: Disbursement by Component and sub-Component (USD millions. GPE and AFD funding)

	Allocated (after Level 2 restructuration)	Disbursed	Share disbursed
Component 1	52.0	45.0	87.7%
Sub-component 1.1: Education infrastructure	37.0	31.4	85.0%
Sub-component 1.2: Girls' access to education	5.8	5.0	86.7%
Sub-component 1.3: School feeding and student health	8.6	8.6	99.8%
Component 2	29.2	25.5	87.2%
Sub-component 2.1: Pedagogical inputs	12.6	10.4	82.8%
Sub-component 2.2: Teacher training.	12.9	11.3	87.2%
Sub-component 2.3: Student assessments	5.4	3.8	70.9%
Component 3	18.8	16.1	85.7%
Sub-component 3.1: Capacity building – central	6.8	5.4	80.0%
Sub-component 3.2: Capacity building – local	8.0	6.8	85.3%
Sub-component 3.3: Project management and coordination	4.1	3.9	96.3%
TOTAL	100.0	86.7	86.7%



64. A more detailed analysis of the economic benefits of the project is provided in Annex 4. It confirms that the project is likely to have generated substantial benefits and is also likely to have had reasonably high rates of return. The internal rates of return are however likely to be much more substantial for component 1 (especially the classroom construction and the promotion of girls' education), than for components 2 and 3 where benefits are harder to demonstrate. This suggests overall a modest rating for efficiency. More details on some aspects of efficiency for all three components are provide below.

Component 1: Improving equitable access and retention

65. ***Classroom construction:*** Simple wage regressions for Niger suggest that as is the case elsewhere, higher educational attainment leads to higher earnings in adulthood. Under such conditions, as long as the unit cost of construction are not too high (analysis suggests that the cost per square meter of the classrooms built was fairly reasonable), since classroom construction expands the capacity of the education system and thus the number of students who can complete their primary or secondary education, investments in classroom often have a high IRR. These conditions seem to have been met in Niger. In particular, unit costs for classroom construction were reasonable overall based on international comparators. The PSEF specifically planned to use various school construction management modalities for its implementation, as a step towards building greater capacity for school construction and identifying the best ways of managing school construction at scale in Niger. This was the reason for including several modalities for construction management, MOA and MOD, in the project, so that these could be adequately tested. It turned out that the MOD modality helped in avoiding delays, while also reducing (supervision) costs. Importantly, for the project's development objectives, while classroom construction was used to upgrade facilities from *paillettes* and therefore may not lead to a much larger number of classrooms nationally, the capacity of each new classroom in terms of the number of students who can be accommodated is about twice the capacity of a *paillette*. Therefore, classroom construction has led to additional capacity, which given the benefits of higher educational attainment (including in terms of higher private earnings) generates substantial IRRs.
66. ***Girls' education:*** While multiple activities were conducted under this sub-component, the focus for the CBA is on the stipends for secondary education. The unit cost per adolescent girl benefitting from a scholarship was at FCFA 20,000 per month, of which FCFA 15,000 were for the host family, and FCFA 5,000 were for the girls themselves. This is a substantial cost, and additional costs were incurred for project management. But because educating girls generates large benefits not only in terms of future earnings, but also in terms of reduced fertility and improved health for the girls and their children, these investments also tend to have substantial rates of return. The efficiency of other programs under this component is more difficult to assess given lack of detailed M&E data.
67. ***School lunches and hygiene:*** In principle, school lunches should improve attendance, and they may also contribute to better learning while in school. School lunches may also generate gains in enrollment among children in catchment areas, although some of these gains may simply reflect transfers from schools without lunches to schools with lunches. Unfortunately, data are lacking on potential impacts. Latrines and hygiene may also be beneficial for enrollment and attendance especially when separate latrines are provided for girls, but data again seem to be lacking to assess potential impacts.

**Component 2: Improving teaching and learning**

68. **Improving pedagogy:** The assessment of the results under this sub-component are mixed. Approximately FCFA 4 billion for curriculum reform were provided under the project out of an initial allocation of about FCFA 8 billion. Disbursements were lower than anticipated due in part to delays in producing textbooks and other pedagogical resources. The reform was motivated in part by a desire to ensure that instruction could be provided in all major languages, but the more languages were included, the more difficult it became to implement the reform successfully due to a wide range of constraints. In the case of Niger, the Government decided to implement the policy using ten national languages (see Box 2 for the details). The reform is currently on hold pending an assessment of the efforts to-date.
69. In addition to the proposed curriculum reform, data were collected on how well one specific activity supported by the project was implemented, namely the distribution of textbooks to schools. The methodology used for data collection is discussed in the M&E section of this ICR, where more details on the findings from the data collection are also provided. The main findings are as follows. Among the schools that responded to the survey, 92 percent had received the textbooks or instructional guides at the time of the survey. The survey suggests that the provision of textbooks and teaching guides was completed to a large extent, although there were some initial delays as a majority of schools receiving the textbooks more than six months after the start of the school year and it also took some time for the schools (on average about 50 days) to distribute the textbooks to students. Long term, those delays were not too consequential since the textbooks did successfully reach the schools, but the delays may have reduced benefits from the textbooks in the first year. Another finding from the data is that 83 percent of school principals felt that they had enough teachers to teach in the national languages used in the textbooks. Some schools stated that the quantities of textbooks received were insufficient when compared to their needs. Overall, school principals were satisfied with the quality of the textbooks they received and indicated their willingness to participate in future project activities.
70. **Teacher training:** International experience suggests that unless training is of high quality with substantial follow up engagement to ensure that teacher practices improve after the training, potential impacts on pedagogy in the classroom tend to be limited. The cost of trainings can be substantial especially when done in residence due to the need to provide per diems and housing allocations. As a result, the impact of teacher training on student learning may be limited, which in turn would generate low rates of return for this sub-component. However, thanks to the project, more detailed data should become available soon under Niger's participation in the 2019 PASEC student assessment – analyzing those data will be essential to guide future projects.
71. **Student assessments:** The cost of implementing student assessment is low in comparison to the overall cost of education systems, making this an essential investment that is necessary to guide policy decisions. The project successfully established a system for learning assessment at the primary level and the utility of the system was rated favorably, achieving its end-of-project target of "3".

Component 3: Strengthening management capacity

72. While it is extremely difficult to estimate IRRs for components aiming to build capacity, the costs for the activities implemented under this component were relatively modest, so that if gains have been achieved, efficiency is likely to be substantial. This holds for the efforts to strengthen capacity at both the central and



local levels. In terms of project coordination, given the beneficial impact of the team of international experts that was brought in to support project implementation after a year and a half, this component is likely to have been highly cost effective. Thanks to the AMO, performance in achieving indicators related to the project's development objectives was strong, and the risk of poor governance in procurement and implementation was reduced substantially.

D. JUSTIFICATION OF OVERALL OUTCOME RATING

73. In terms of the relevance of PDO, the project is rated Substantial since its objectives were relevant at appraisal and continue to remain so today, directly responding to the key issues and challenges facing Niger's basic education sector including: low and completion rates due in part to lack of adequate school infrastructure; low levels of learning in school due in part to low qualification and preparedness of teachers; gender gaps in enrollment and completion rates especially in secondary education; and limited capacity for the management of the education sector at both the central and local levels. The project was in line with the country's priorities as articulated in education sector planning documents. It was also in line with the World Bank's CAS for the country, especially with regards to reducing vulnerability in poor areas and improving outcomes related to human development.
74. In terms of efficacy, the project is also rated Substantial because six of the seven PDO-level indicators' targets were achieved, and 13 out of 14 intermediate results indicators' targets were also achieved. The sole indicator that was not achieved relates to the number of classrooms constructed at the primary level, but 95 percent of the planned classrooms were built (1,187 classrooms built in comparison to an initial target of 1,245). While the ultimate impact of some of the interventions – such as teacher training or pedagogical materials, is hard to fully assess, the project did achieve virtually all of the targets that had been agreed upon.
75. In terms of efficiency, the project rating is Modest. There is no doubt that many of the activities generated a high NPV as well as substantial internal rates of return. This is due essentially to the fact that investments in basic education generate substantial earnings gains in adulthood through higher levels of educational attainment for beneficiaries. In several areas, activities were cost effective. For example, given international experience, the cost of classroom construction was fairly reasonable for a country such as Niger. While initially the cost of textbooks was high, a shift to international procurement helped generate much lower unit costs for contracts for which international bidding could be done. The stipends provided to girls for secondary education were also relatively low-cost in comparison to other types of interventions. At the same time, it is less clear that the cost of teacher and other types of trainings was optimal given reliance in many cases on residential training modalities implying hotel and per diem costs. However, not all teacher training was residential. For example, the project financed a cohort of students under the IFADEM program, which is an existing distance-learning teacher training program. Not all funds allocated to the project were disbursed, but this was explained by several factors outside of the control of the World Bank, including a change in the exchange rate after approval that led to larger resources for the project. Due to this and other factors (contribution from the Swiss Cooperation and a shorter extension than initially considered at restructuring), as well as some delays in the implementation of activities under several sub-components and especially school construction, the disbursement rate was at 87 percent.



76. The overall outcome rating of the project is **Moderately Satisfactory** based on Substantial relevance, Substantial efficacy, and Modest efficiency, as discussed above and provided in Table 7.

Table 7. Overall Outcome Rating

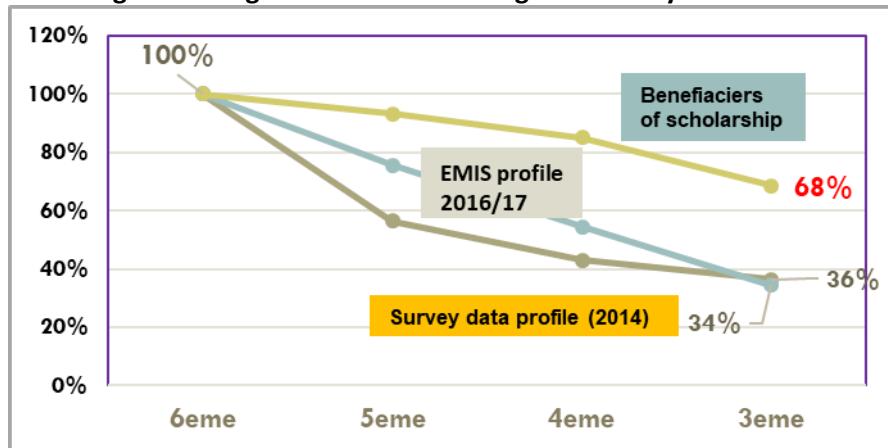
Rating	Relevance	Efficacy	Efficiency	Overall
	Substantial	Substantial	Modest	Moderately Satisfactory

E. OTHER OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS (IF ANY)

Gender

77. Multiple activities under the project aimed to contribute to closing the gender gap in educational outcomes. This included awareness-raising campaigns mobilizing education officials, opinion leaders, traditional leaders, religious leaders and other stakeholders at the departmental and local levels. At the secondary level where gender gaps are larger, a promising intervention was the granting for a period of four years of 700 scholarships to vulnerable girls in 39 rural areas in Maradi, Tahoua and Tillaberi. The scholarship was worth FCFA 20,000 per month, of which FCFA 5,000 was for the girl and FCFA 15,000 CFA was for the host family given that girls' families typically lived far away from secondary schools. At the start of the 2018-19 school year, the retention rate for beneficiaries was 68.4 percent from the first to the fourth year of high school, versus about a third for girls who did not benefit from a scholarship (See Figure 4). While part of the gap between girls who benefitted from the scholarships and other girls may be due to the fact that beneficiary girls were selected in part on the basis of their strong academic potential, the data nevertheless suggest positive impacts since many beneficiary girls would not have been able to afford secondary school without the scholarships. The scholarships clearly contributed to keeping girls in school, with many of them on track to graduate. There may also have been benefits from the intervention in terms of strengthening the CGDES (given their role in the selection of beneficiaries) and supporting the fight against child marriages at the local level (given the demonstrative effect that a higher proportion of girls completing their secondary education may have). In the areas targeted by this pilot program, teachers received training related to the program as well as about gender-sensitive approaches.

Figure 4: Progression of Girls through Secondary School



Source: PAEQ data as of June 2019.



78. Another interesting initiative was the implementation of a program aiming to ensure that mothers of adolescent girls would achieve functional literacy. The program included a component to raise women's awareness of the importance of educating girls while also building their income-generating skills so that the need for the mothers to keep their daughters working at home would be reduced. The program operated in 199 centers (out of a target of 200) in 32 municipalities in Priority Intervention Zones spread over six regions. Data from the program suggest that functional literacy increased for program participants, although no impact evaluation is available to assess whether controlling for sample selection, the program had a statistically significant impact on their daughters' education.

Institutional Strengthening

79. The PAD for the PAEQ noted that Niger's low performance in terms of educational indicators was symptomatic of the country's weak institutional capacity as evidenced by limited capacity for personnel planning and management, lack of supervision of teachers, as lack of monitoring and evaluation. The PAD also noted that roles, functions, and responsibilities were not well balanced among the central, regional, and local levels, and that the sector lacked high-level managerial and technical capacity to provide strategic and operational guidance. There was also a lack of physical resources ranging from buildings and facilities to furniture, office equipment, and communications equipment. For these reasons, a strong emphasis was placed on institutional strengthening under the project since component 3 focused on capacity building for both MEP and MES and at the local level.
80. Several activities undertaken under component 3 are likely to have had positive impacts, although additional data would be needed to further gauge all of the positive gains resulting from these activities. Moreover, the recruitment of the AMO (*Agence de Maîtrise d'Ouvrage*) has been essential to handle multiple implementation functions including procurement, financial and accounting management, programming, monitoring and evaluation, and management of human resources related to the project. As an example, as the AMO became operational, performance in terms of implementing the classroom construction component improved substantially by shifting from a MOD (*Maîtrise d'Ouvrage Délégée*) to MOA (*Maîtrise d'Ouvrage Assumée*) approach. This reduced delays in construction as well as costs. For example, for classrooms for secondary schools, cost savings generated by the MOA reached an estimated FCFA 2.0 million (about USD3,200) per classroom in comparison to costs observed under the MOD approach.
81. While PAEQ provided support in many different areas for capacity building, a special note should be made of the contribution to the RESEN, a comprehensive diagnostic of the entire Nigerian education system. The report was produced with the assistance of a national technical team composed mostly of executives of the education system. The report includes 10 chapters covering a wide range of topics and should be very valuable for planning purposes. Another important achievement was the creation of linguistic maps of the different languages in the different regions of the country as part of the preparation of the curriculum reform. The atlas of national languages spoken in different areas will be beneficial for the curriculum reform, but it



could also potentially be used in other ways in future programs and policies related to national languages outside of the education sector.

Mobilizing Private Sector Financing

Not applicable.

Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity

82. As shown in the Annexes, educational attainment is fundamental for poverty reduction and shared prosperity in Niger, not only because of the expected impact of educational attainment and learning on future earnings for workers, but also because of the positive effect that educational attainment has for a wide range of other indicators. For girls, and as a result for the country as a whole, the benefits from higher educational attainment include reduced fertility and thereby reduced population growth, better maternal and child health (including a potential reduction in rates of under-five mortality and stunting), a reduction in the prevalence of child marriage and early childbearing, gains towards the reduction of intimate partner violence, and more agency/decision-making for women in the household.

Other Unintended Outcomes and Impacts

Not applicable.

III. KEY FACTORS THAT Affected IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME

A. KEY FACTORS DURING PREPARATION

83. The PAEQ design and preparation process provided a sound foundation for the project. The project was aligned with the country's development agenda, and in particular, it benefited from the findings of the latest available Country Status Report (RESEN 2010) as well as study on skills for growth. Just before the start of the project, as noted in the PAD, the Government endorsed a new, comprehensive education and sector plan for 2014-2024 (Sector Program for Education and Training or *Programme Sectoriel de l'Education et de la Formation – PSEF*). The objectives of the PSEF included: (1) improving access to basic education through increased supply of educational services yielding greater geographic coverage of educational services; (2) improving the quality of teaching; and (3) improving sub-sector governance. The World Bank team had supported the development of the PSEF through the Local Education Group.
84. Donor coordination was also a strength of the project. Both the *Agence Française de Développement* and the Swiss Cooperation contributed funding to the project. AFD, in particular, participated in supervision missions, which helped for broader coordination of donor support to Niger in the sector. As noted in the PAD, during project preparation, the Project Concept Note (PCN) and the draft PAD were discussed extensively with partners, including at three special LEG meetings held on June 26, 2012, April 26, 2013 and June 28, 2013. The meetings endorsed the orientation and approach of the project. A Partnership Framework between the Government and Development Partners was validated and signed on July 19, 2013. It included the organization of annual joint sector reviews and a common supervision and resources management system in line with GPE guidelines and World Bank rules.



85. Analysis at appraisal was conducted to estimate funding needs for the PSEF for the period 2014-2017, suggesting that PAEQ funding (GPE and AFD allocations) would cover about half of the financing gap at the primary education level, with estimated contributions from other donors over the same period covering about half of the remaining gap, which was encouraging as the Government also committed to raising the education expenditures share of the budget from 21.7 percent to 28 percent by 2016. As discussed earlier, the project was also aligned with Niger's new Poverty Reduction Strategy - the Plan for Economic and Social Development (PDES, 2012-2015) and the World Bank's CAS (2013-2016).
86. Attention was also given to targeting of key beneficiary groups and geographic areas. The project targeted primarily primary education, which was appropriate given large remaining gaps in enrollment and attainment. The focus on girls' education including through scholarships at the secondary level was appropriate given the higher risks for girls of dropping out of school. The combination of capacity building at the central and local levels was also appropriate to strengthen service delivery both in terms of central planning and local implementation. For many activities, especially under the first component of the project, purposeful targeting areas with worse educational outcomes, was also appropriate.
87. Lessons from previous projects, including the Niger Basic Education Project (2004) and the Niger Social and Policy Reform 1 (2006), were taken into account in the design of the project. These lessons included: (1) paying attention to the sustainability of interventions by ensuring that sufficient allocations would be made to the education sector in the Government budget; (2) strengthening in-service as well as pre-service teacher training while also improving management of the teacher force; (3) focusing selected interventions on girls to address social constraints as well as the lack of basic infrastructure; (4) ensuring effective donor coordination; (5) mainstreaming project implementation arrangements in existing government structures to strengthen capacity of executing ministries; (6) involving communities in particular through the CGDES; (7) optimizing procurement to ensure that when feasible lower cost international contracts for textbooks can be used and to avoid textbooks remaining in warehouses for substantial periods of time; and (8) relying on output rather than outcome indicators to assess implementation success given the long time necessary to change outcomes such as learning.
88. For implementation oversight, a project Steering Committee was created and it was agreed to support it through hiring of two full-time Project Coordinators recruited by MEP and MES, respectively. The Coordinators would be placed under the supervision of the Secretary Generals of MEP and MES. The project's activities would be monitored and reported on in National Education Sector Annual Reviews. Indicators would be tracked regularly by the Departments of Planning and Statistics of the two Ministries. Finally, the risk assessment at appraisal mentioned: (1) weak financial sustainability in the education sector, (2) inadequate implementation capacity; and (3) risk in delivery monitoring. The Operational Risk Assessment rating was Substantial, but risks were considered manageable and mitigation measures were put in place. The main risk was that of slow implementation, which was mitigated through the ability to hire a technical assistance firm and the Project Coordinators with additional TA for school construction activities as needed. In practice, slow implementation was indeed observed, but the design of the project (component 3) was such that solutions could be found through technical assistance.

. KEY FACTORS DURING IMPLEMENTATION



89. The project was completed after an extension of nine months. As of June 30, 2019, disbursement stands at USD86.7 million, representing 86.7 percent of the USD100 million funding provided by GPE and AFD. While the portion of funds not disbursed is substantial, by and large, implementation was successful, as demonstrated by the fact that all PDO-level indicators' targets were met, and 13 of the 14 intermediate results indicators' targets were also met (one indicator was met at only 95 percent of the target). Three main concerns, however, emerged during implementation: (1) delays and costs in the initial phase of classroom construction under the MOD approach; (2) complexity of the curriculum reform; and (3) lack of sufficient data to assess the impact of some of the training and capacity building programs implemented. On point (3), it should be noted that it is often difficult within the life of a project to properly evaluate at the national level the potential impact of teacher training on student learning. One of the reasons is that some of the best instruments to do so are complex and implemented only every few years. For example, the last available PASEC student assessment was implemented in 2014, and the new assessment implemented in 2019 with funding from the project will not be available for analysis right away.
90. **Delays and costs during the initial phase of school construction.** Classroom construction requires expertise that may not always be available in central Ministries; therefore, in this project, the Government contracted out the work in what is often referred to as a *Maîtrise d'Ouvrage Délégée* (MOD) approach. This led to delays in construction, concerns about the quality of construction in some sites, and higher unit costs due to the higher overhead and supervision costs included in MOD contracts. About a year and a half into the project, after a team of international experts (AMO or *Appui à Maîtrise d'Ouvrage*) was hired to support implementation by both Ministries, the project shifted to an assisted project management approach or *Maîtrise d'Ouvrage Assumée* (MOA) whereby the two Ministries directly supervised implementation with technical assistance from the team of international experts. As a result of this shift, unit costs per classrooms were reduced, as were delays, enabling both Ministries to essentially achieve the construction targets set in the project, even if the number of primary classrooms built was slightly lower than the target (95 percent of the target achieved). The shift also demonstrated that with appropriate technical assistance from an AMO, the Ministries were able to manage school construction effectively.
91. **Complexity of the curriculum reform.** A key objective of the curriculum reform supported by the project was to make appropriate tools and materials available for improving reading in the early grades. Substantial funding was allocated to the creation and printing of manuals in national languages for the first cycle of primary school as part of a broader curriculum reform. Niger has ten national languages according to Law No. 2001-037: Arabic, Budurna, Fulfulde, Gulmancema, Hausa, Kanuri, Sonay-zarma, Tamajaq, Tassawaq and Tubu. The law also states that in principle, in the education sector, the use and teaching of national languages is compulsory.
92. The implementation of the curriculum reform was piloted in 5,000 primary schools, which is a substantial achievement. Delays were encountered in delivering manuals, in some cases with implications for the teaching and learning taking place in schools piloted for the curriculum reform. For example, some students in second grade (CP) had to repeat a full year of materials taught in first grade (CI) because manuals in national languages for second grade did not arrive in time. However, overall principals were satisfied with the quality of the materials that they received. The project supported an ambitious reform that had long been desired by the Government. An assessment of progress made towards the curriculum reform is underway and should provide guidance for how to proceed in the future. One important and positive initiative taken by the project was to



open contracts for printing textbooks that were above a certain threshold to international competition. This helped reduce delays and dramatically cut unit costs. National firms had much higher costs than international firms possibly in part because of a lack of competition on the national market.

93. **Limited information on the impact of training programs and capacity building.** A wide range of teacher training activities were implemented by both Ministries. While some activities appear to have been successful, adequate metrics for measuring benefits are not available in most cases, in part because measuring the effect of teacher training on student learning takes time and requires complex data collection.
94. **Other factors affecting implementation.** Substantial turnover was observed for key staff and officials in charge of the project in both Ministries, but especially in MEP. For example, over the duration of the project, the MEP had four different Secretary Generals, and several key Directions had three of four different directors. This high turnover may have affected consistency in implementation in some cases and may have reduced the ability to achieve synergies between various types of activities. In addition, Niger's security situation worsened in recent years, especially in the regions of Diffa, Tahoua and Tillabery, with detrimental effects for attainment and achievement in those parts of the country.

IV. BANK PERFORMANCE, COMPLIANCE ISSUES, AND RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

A. QUALITY OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

M&E Design

95. The links between activities, outputs, and outcomes and the PDOs outlined in the implicit theory of change reconstructed in Table 2 were essentially sound. At appraisal, lack of capacity for M&E was identified as a potential risk for implementation. Under the third component of the project, substantial support was provided for annual sector reviews to assess overall progress in the education sector, and various audits that served an M&E function. In addition, the sub-component on project management and coordination devoted significant attention to M&E, especially for assessing project outcomes at the national and sub-national levels. The AMO structure put in place after a year and a half included an M&E specialist who helped generate bi-yearly reports with detailed information based on administrative data on progress made towards PDO-level and intermediate results indicators' targets.
96. In terms of the PDO-level and intermediate results indicators, it is worth noting that all indicators could be measured using administrative data. This had both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, this reduced the need for M&E related to the project to rely on indicators from non-administrative sources, including household surveys. From the point of view of the project, this was a very sound decision in that household surveys tend to be implemented only every few years in Niger. For instance, the latest RESEN completed in 2019 relies, for disaggregated analysis, on data from an integrated multi-purpose household survey implemented 2014. In addition, household surveys in Niger, while mostly sound, are in some cases not of high enough quality for specific analysis. On the negative side, lack of reliance on other sources of data apart from administrative sources has limited the ability to measure more finely the impact that the project may have



had on various types of beneficiaries, such as children from poor households versus children from other households.

97. It should also be noted that some of the project's results indicators for component 1 (especially for intermediate results indicators) represented major gains versus historical standards. For example, few schools had been constructed in the years preceding the project, so that the classrooms that were built represented a major improvement. However, some indicators' targets were in line with historical trends. For example, under the project, the primary completion rate was expected to increase by 4.2 percentage points over four years, while the trend in the previous decade was an even larger gain according the World Development indicators. Similarly, the expected increase in the primary and secondary education gender parity indices in areas targeted by the project was expected to be at 3 percentage point over the four years of the project, which was not very large by historical standards. The decision to establish more conservative targets for some indicators reflected the team's consideration that historical trends may be more difficult to maintain in light of the fragile context that prevailed in Niger at the time.

M&E Implementation

98. The project's basic M&E system worked reasonably well during project implementation. Bi-annual reports provided detailed and reliable data on PDO-level and intermediate indicators, although one of the indicators – the completion rate for primary, was revised when the RESEN analysis became available and previous estimates had been too optimistic. At the same time, while data on core indicators were regularly collected, and while a wide range of activities were implemented under the project by both Ministries, adequate metrics for measuring benefits from some activities were not always available. Nonetheless, the M&E system established under the project was overall sufficiently sound to track the main outcomes and outputs achieved under the operation. Moreover, capacity for M&E was strengthened at both the central and local levels. For example, at the local level, schools eligible to receive grants had to carry out self-evaluations and school development plans on a regular basis.
99. For several activities, additional M&E data were collected that proved useful for assessing implementation. One example is a survey implemented to assess the distribution and use of new textbooks under the curriculum reform whereby topics in the early grades would be taught in national languages. Data were collected in 458 primary schools located in all regions of the country. For each school, basic information such as the municipality, the school inspectorate, the name of the school and its director and the phone number of the school were available. Interviews were conducted by phone between March 14 and April 29, 2019. For each school, data collection provided information on the quantities of each type of textbook and teaching guide received, so that an assessment could be made of whether the quantities received were sufficient. Data were also available on whether the textbooks received by schools were actually given to students, and whether delays were observed (i.e., did the students received the books at the beginning of the school year as should have been the case). Perceptions among school principals about the project and the quality of the textbooks and teacher guides were also collected. Finally, information was collected as to whether the schools had enough teachers to teach in local languages.



M&E Utilization

100. The availability of data on all PDO-level and intermediate results indicators on a regular basis was important to track progress and ensure that where delays were observed, additional efforts could be made to make sure that activities would be implemented and targets would be achieved. For example, when delays were observed in school construction, a shift in approach helped accelerate procurement while also reducing costs. The RESEN analysis funded under the project will help inform education sector policies for years to come. The project also funded Niger's national student assessment in primary schools, for both general and Franco-Arabic education. Results have been disseminated at the regional level and among policy-makers and workshops have been organized to build capacities of education staff at the central level on tools for learning assessment and on data processing and analysis. The project also funded the country's participation in the 2019 round of PASEC, which should provide up-to-date information on student performance in grades 2 and 6 and should allow for thorough analysis related to identifying factors associated with improved student performance. In various ways, the project thus contributed to data collection and analysis, and built capacity at the central and local level in both data collection and analysis to inform the sector's strategy.

Justification of Overall Rating of Quality of M&E

101. The M&E design, implementation, and its utilization allowed for adequate tracking of progress made under the project. The project collected a significant amount of data and capacity was built within the two ministries since the project's M&E was based for the most part on administrative data. The national student assessment funded by the project and the participation of Niger in PASEC are both essential for guiding policy and measuring performance. On the other hand, many activities were implemented without sufficient assessments of potential impacts, at times because follow up studies were not accepted by Government. Even though this is not an easy task, more could have been done to assess if various types of teacher training as well as capacity building activities. In sum, though some shortcomings were observed, the M&E system established under the project was generally robust enough to report on the various outcomes and outputs achieved under the operation. Thus, the overall rating of quality of M&E is **Substantial**.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND FIDUCIARY COMPLIANCE

102. **Safeguards.** At appraisal, the project was classified as Environmental Category B given that the impacts associated with the proposed activities were considered likely to be small-scale, reversible and manageable through minimum anticipatory mitigation measures. Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01), Physical Cultural Resources (OP/BP 4.11), and Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12) were triggered under the project. An Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and a Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) were prepared, reviewed, and approved during project preparation and disclosed on time as required. During implementation, the MEP periodically carried out assessments to ensure that environmental and social safeguard standards and norms were being complied with. The Bank team also provided strong oversight and support in this area. Findings from these assessments revealed strong safeguard compliance, especially with regards to the civil work activities supported under the project. As such, safeguards compliance was rated Satisfactory throughout the life of the project.



103. **Procurement.** Procurement performance is rated Moderately Satisfactory. Procurement under the project was supported by the AMO which included an experienced international procurement expert and a national procurement specialist. A large number of contracts had to be processed especially for school construction when the decision was made to shift from the MOD to the MOA approach, but overall the shift helped accelerate and improve implementation. Procurement followed the Bank's procurement procedures, but the processing of files was somewhat delayed throughout project implementation due to a shortage of experienced financial controllers and difficulties in obtaining clearances for contracts by the national authorities.
104. **Financial Management.** Financial Management (FM) is rated Moderately Satisfactory. A total of five external audits were undertaken during the life of the project, of which four were of unqualified opinion and revealed no irregularities. The only exception was the external audit commissioned in 2016 which issued a qualified opinion due to poor financial bookkeeping during the period covered by the audit. Following these findings, the Bank team worked closely with the Government to further strengthen the FM system under the project. In addition, IFRs were generally submitted on time and have been of acceptable quality. FM staff had relevant and adequate experience to carry out their fiduciary responsibilities. At the same time, there have been issues in documentation for certain expenditures at the MEP that required reimbursement (unjustified advances). About one month before project closure, unjustified advances were still at CFAF 1.9 billion despite several warning letters and grace periods granted. This included CFAF 227 million for funds transferred by the project to the microfinance company ASUSU SA, whose services were used as part of the primary school grant activity. Yet the firm's activity was suspended by the Government, which required continued monitoring by the Ministry of Finance to guarantee the repayment of funds to the project which were blocked within ASUSU SA. Efforts by the Government after the closing of the project to solve these issues are commended, and the amount related to the ASUSU contract has been reimbursed in full.
105. **Project Management.** This aspect is rated Moderately Satisfactory, with stronger performance observed for MES than that of MEP. The performance of the team of international experts hired under the AMO was strong across the life of the project and was helpful for overall project management. However, knowledge and know-how transfer from international experts to national staff was somewhat constrained due to high staff turnover and inadequacy between profiles and positions in both Ministries. Gaps in coordination and monitoring by the AMO also led to some deficiencies in appropriately recording documentation of expenditures. Notwithstanding these challenges, overall project management remained relatively strong throughout the implementation of the project.

C. BANK PERFORMANCE

Rating: **Moderately Satisfactory.**

Quality at Entry

106. The project objectives were aligned with the Government's development priorities and the World Bank's CAS. The PDO was highly relevant and remained so throughout the life of the project. The preparation of the project was consultative, engaging key education stakeholders as well as development partners (two of which co-funded the project), and the design of the project was based on robust analysis carried out by the Bank and incorporating lessons learned from previous World Bank engagements in Niger and from similar projects in



other countries. The activities and outputs supported by the project were logically linked to the PDO. Working closely with the Government and the LEG, the World Bank education task team led the project preparation process and the design of the project fully complied with the World Bank's and GPE's operational policies and procedures. Sufficient attention was given to implementation arrangements and related institutional strengthening, and the use of existing structures was meant to build Government internal capacity and ownership of the project. All potential risks were identified, and mitigation measures developed subsequently. The task team used the available data at the time of preparation. As mentioned previously, important, was more while there is clear evidence that learning in the language spoken at homes leads to better learning especially in the first few years of primary schooling, the scope of the curriculum reform supported by the project was more complex and more costly than initially anticipated. Given limited capacity in Niger to implement such a complex reform in multiple national languages, perhaps a more cautious approach could have been undertaken. Currently, an assessment is planned to assess progress under the reform and next steps.

107. The Bank rating for Quality at Entry is **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Quality of Supervision

108. The World Bank had a (Senior) Education Specialist on the ground in Niger for most of the preparation and implementation of the project. Although limited Bank Budget resources were provided to the project team for supervision, the project was adequately supervised and monitored. Supervision missions were undertaken regularly to review progress and identify any areas for improvement. The missions were well planned and served as a platform for the Government and donors to discuss project progress. ISRs and Aide Memoires were prepared regularly and effectively alerted the Government and Bank management on project implementation issues requiring special attention. The ISRs provided management with a transparent assessment of the project's achievements and challenges. The results framework was not revised at the time of restructuring, but funding allocations to different components of the project were modified thanks in part to savings in construction budgets versus initial estimates. The project contributed to substantial data collection for assessing learning outcomes. The efforts that the World Bank task team put forth were appropriate and the World Bank team effectively engaged with other DPs to ensure continued collaboration and coordination – especially in the case of AFD and the Swiss Cooperation which co-funded the project. While more attention could have been given to assessing systematically the impact of activities implemented under components 2 and 3, this was more of a design than an implementation issue, and some of the M&E activities suggested by the Bank team were not approved by the Government. It should be noted that the Bank team did not receive additional funding for supervision after the inclusion for the project of funding from AFD and the Swiss Corporation, as would normally have been the case. Finally, an important aspect of supervision is that the Bank and AFD teams met weekly during the last nine months of the project in order to ensure that indicators' targets and the PDOs would be met.

109. The Bank rating for Supervision is **Satisfactory**.



Justification of Overall Rating of Bank Performance

110. Based on the assessments above, the Bank Performance is rated **Moderately Satisfactory**.

D. RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

111. Many of the interventions implemented under the project are expected to benefit future cohorts of students and teachers. The schools that were built are expected to benefit multiple cohorts of students, as will the training received by teachers and the capacity building efforts to strengthen management of the sector at the central level and management of the schools at the local level. The project was implemented in a context of strong commitment of the Government to the education sector, especially in terms of the share of the budget allocated to the sector. Macroeconomic projections for Niger tend to be positive, with higher expected growth rates in coming years, with a strong pick up starting in 2022 thanks to oil production. Debt distress is rated as moderate according to a recent World Bank-IMF analysis, and Niger should be able to maintain WAEMU convergence criterion (fiscal deficit as a share of GDP) from 2020 onwards.
112. Donors are committed to the education sector, which should help for the sustainability of activities and broader efforts undertaken under the project. The next project funded by GPE will be led by AFD, with a planned allocation of Euro 77.3 million. In addition, an IDA operation of up to USD100 million is under preparation, with the aim of enhancing teacher effectiveness and the instructional conditions in basic education. These resources are large by historical standards for Niger and should provide room for improvements in the education sector. The IDA-funded project will particularly focus on: (i) demand-side constraints by improving the quality of education and therefore enhancing the population's perception of the public school; (ii) remedying school discontinuity through a multigrade classroom policy; and (iii) building the evidence base and developing an alternative offer of quality education for out-of-school children which represent 50 percent of children age 7-12. Given strong Government support, as well as GPE, IDA, and other donor support, resources should be available to build on achievements under the project. In the area of curriculum reform, however, it remains to be seen whether efforts supported by the project will bear fruits and will be continued. As mentioned earlier, an assessment of progress to-date is being prepared to draw the lessons of the efforts engaged so far.
113. One major risk factor for sustainability is Niger's security situation, which has become more challenging in recent years, thereby complicating the delivery of basic education services in certain areas. As mentioned earlier, the regions of Diffa, Tahoua and Tillabery are particularly affected, with attacks by armed groups and extremists as well as inter-ethnic violence resulting in displacement of populations. For the academic year 2018-19, more than a hundred schools have been closed due to terrorist threats on teachers and population and burning of classrooms. Since October 2018, 30 schools have been closed in the Diffa region due to insecurity, preventing 114,300 children from attending school. With the recent deterioration of the situation along the border with Burkina Faso, 51 schools have suspended their activities in the Tillabery region including 33 in the Torodi district, due to attacks targeting security forces and the civilian population. These school closures are likely to affect both



educational attainment and achievement in substantial parts of the country.

V. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 114. Lesson 1: Extensive technical assistance was needed to enable the Ministries of Primary and Secondary Education to build classrooms, but once support was provided targets were achieved.** The importance of technical assistance can be illustrated in the case of school construction. There is indeed an implicit trade-off between a MOD and a MOA approach to school construction. The MOD approach shifts most tasks to firms hired to manage the construction process – from the design of the school construction plans and choice of sites in various location to procurement to local firms and execution. The MOD approach therefore reduces drastically the workload for the Ministries, but it does not help in building capacity. In addition, depending on the quality of the firm hired to manage the process and their own cost structure, the MOD approach can lead to delays and higher overall costs per classroom built, as observed under the project for the construction of secondary schools. The MOA alternative approach gives control back to the Ministries, but at a substantial potential cost in terms of the expertise needed to manage school construction, and with the risk of poor execution if capacity is weak. But when adequate expertise is provided, the MOA approach is probably preferable to a traditional project implementation unit because it can help build longer term capacity in the Ministries that benefit from the technical assistance.
- 115. Lesson 2: The option chosen to provide technical assistance to the Ministries through an AMO was beneficial.** The solution adopted under the project to provide assistance for implementation was to staff an AMO with knowledgeable experts (among others for procurement, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation) so that it could manage the complex tasks required, including building classrooms in Niger's vast territory but also implementing the curriculum reform in 5,000 schools and many other activities that required extensive expertise. This approach was effective in reducing both delays and costs in the case of school construction, while also building capacity in the two Ministries. This solution requires some work, but it could potentially be considered in future projects as well given its benefits.
- 116. Lesson 3: The pilot program for girls' education at the secondary level appears to have worked well and seems to be cost-effective.** When girls live a long distance from secondary school, it is very difficult for parents to send their daughters to the schools given the costs involved. One alternative is to build boarding school, but this is typically expensive, and therefore not financially sustainable. The alternative used by the project to provide scholarships – with FCFA 15,000 per month allocated to host families and FCFA 5,000 allocated to girls, proved effective since the retention rate for the girls was much higher than for other girls enrolled in participating secondary schools. The cost of the intervention – at USD32 per month, is far from negligible, but it is not substantially higher than other programs, and is cheaper than the cost of boarding schools or the cost of providing daily transport to schools. This pilot program which reached 700 girls can thus be considered as a success and could possibly be scaled up. In the future, building on this success, it may also be advisable to provide a broader package of interventions in support of girls' education that would also emphasize life and social skills, while also providing remediation support to girls who may have difficulties remaining in school.
- 117. Lesson 4: Curriculum reforms for teaching in the early years in national languages must be carefully considered in terms of their financial sustainability and the ability of Ministries to implement them.** In



principle, teaching in the early years in national languages is a good idea since the literature suggests that learning in one's native language is easier for children. Once they master reading and numeracy in their own language, they can in principle shift to another language such as French progressively. Yet, in the case of Niger, given the co-existence of 10 different national languages, the task of implementing such a curriculum reform was massive. Estimates of the potential costs of the reform were higher than the resources available under the project. As a result, only 5,000 primary schools benefitted from the reform with limited results. To its credit, the Bank team suggested several times to the Government to conduct an evaluation of the reform, but this was not approved on the Government side under the project. After the project's closing however, an assessment of the reform has been planned.

- 118. Lesson 5: The establishment of a robust M&E system is important to assess whether investments in pedagogy, capacity building, or other areas are indeed working.** The M&E system established under the project was generally sound and provided the necessary information to measure progress towards achievement of the PDO. However, were feasible some additional data would have been useful in obtaining a more granular understanding of the impact of some project-supported activities. For instance, the impact of the school feeding component of the project could not be assessed (the Bank team proposed to conduct such an evaluation, but this was not approved on the Government side). Some of the trainings provided to the teachers and the support provided to Ministries also were not fully assessed. This is an issue common to many projects, but it should nevertheless be considered in the future. Acknowledging the project's efforts at generating data and assessing some of the project's activities, the establishment of an even more comprehensive M&E system should be prioritized in the future. In sum, notwithstanding some shortcomings, the M&E system established under the project was sufficiently sound to track all of the main outcomes and outputs realized under the operation.
- 119. Lesson 6: Less staff turnover, or at least stronger mechanisms for reducing the potentially negative effect of staff transitions, is critical for success and ownership.** The project was complex, and the fact that two different Ministries were in charge of different activities added to this complexity. At various stages of implementation, the project was hampered by high staff turnover, especially in the Ministry of Primary Education. This made it more difficult to achieve both ownership and strategic vision, and to ensure continuity and synergies between the various activities being implemented. Lack of strong leadership may also have made it difficult to avoid that funding for various activities would be used for fulfilling the multiple priorities of the many Directions in the Ministry, as opposed to the Ministry's overall priorities in tackling key challenges and opportunities. These factors, and especially high turnover in implementing Ministries are beyond the control of the World Bank, but they do have an impact on the quality and impact of the activities funded by projects.
- 120. Lesson 7: Some issues that were not considered at the time of the project have become prominent and could be considered in the future – this is the case, for example, for the role of technology.** At the time of project preparation, the role that technology could play in improving learning outcomes – for example through scripted lessons and coaching, was not yet widely recognized. Similarly, the potential benefits of using technology for more systematic and rapid monitoring and evaluation were also not yet widely recognized. This has changed, and future projects in Niger could place a stronger emphasis on how to use technology to improve educational outcomes as well as the projects' monitoring and evaluation.



- 121. Lesson 8: Lessons learned from previous operations should guide the design and choice of interventions supported under follow on projects.** A new project, the Niger Learning Improvement for Results in Education Project of LIRE (P168779) is being prepared with IDA funding. As highlighted in the 2018 World Development Report, schooling is necessarily equal learning. The project will contribute to eliminate Niger's learning poverty through the development and implementation of a new policy package with interventions focusing on the key determinants of learning, with an emphasis on the acquisition of reading proficiency in basic education. Component 1 will support improved teaching pedagogy in the classroom, while Component 2 will support direct interventions to enhance learning for all children and remedy the most critical learning deficits. Component 3 will strengthen the overall management of the education system, including through increased efforts for the monitoring and assessment of education processes and outcomes. Lessons learned especially from component 2 of the PAEQ should inform LIRE – including in terms of the complexity of curriculum reforms, and the need to implement more systematic M&E, in order to be able to correct implementation as needed.
- 122. Lesson 9: Particular attention needs to be paid to issues arising from fragility and conflict.** The context of fragility and conflict in Niger has deteriorated substantially over the last few years. This had implications for the PAEQ and may also have implications for future support to the education system in Niger. One issue for the PAEQ related to the construction costs for classrooms, which were higher in Diffa in part due to lack of security. While LIRE will not include a school construction component, the potential for higher cost for some of the planned activities in more fragile regions will need to be considered. Some planned interventions – including around technology, may help in case some schools need to be closed due to attacks. Interventions for girls' education away from home may be needed in case girls cannot go safely to schools in parts of the country – the pilot successfully tested under PAEQ with adolescent girls living in host families away from their village may be a promising solution. More generally, LIRE will need to have built-in flexibility to be able to respond to changes in conditions on the ground.

**ANNEX 1. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND KEY OUTPUTS****A. RESULTS INDICATORS****A.1 PDO Indicators****Objective/Outcome:** To improve access to schooling

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Increase in primary education gender parity index in areas targeted by the project (average)	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	0.03 30-Jun-2019		0.03 30-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):

Target met. The indicator was defined at appraisal as the ratio of the female to male values of the gross enrollment rate in lower secondary education in the areas targeted by the girls' education interventions financed by the project. The historical average gain in the gender parity index for secondary (gross) enrollment in Niger nationally was at percentage point per year over the preceding decade from 2004 to 2014. The gains towards parity were smaller than the historical average over the period possibly because once parity is in sight, gains tend to be more difficult to reach.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
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Increase in lower secondary education gender parity index in areas targeted by the project (average)	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	0.09 30-Jun-2019		0.09 30-Jun-2019
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Comments (achievements against targets):

Target exceeded. The indicator was defined at appraisal as the ratio of the female to male values of the gross enrollment rate in primary education in the areas targeted by the girls' education interventions financed by the project. The historical average gain in the gender parity index for primary (gross) enrollment in Niger nationally was at 1.2 percentage point per year over the preceding decade from 2004 to 2014. The gains achieved over the project were thus substantially larger than the historical trend thanks to interventions targeting girls.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Direct project beneficiaries	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	2100000.00 30-Jun-2019		3033915.00 30-Jun-2019
Female beneficiaries	Percentage	45.00	47.00 01-Nov-2017		45.40

Comments (achievements against targets):

Target exceeded. At appraisal, direct beneficiaries were defined as people or groups who directly derive benefits from the project's interventions.



Direct beneficiaries include primary and lower secondary school pupils and teachers, staff from the MEP and MES at the central and decentralized levels, as well as parents. As of June 30, 2019, the number of beneficiaries was estimated at 3,033,915.

Note on female beneficiaries: Target almost met. The percentage of female beneficiaries is based on an assessment of project beneficiaries by gender. The indicator at the end of the project was at 97 percent of the target value, but did not improve substantially from the baseline.

Objective/Outcome: Increase retention of students in school

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Primary completion rate	Percentage	54.60 01-Apr-2014	58.60 30-Jun-2019		60.00 30-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):

Target exceeded. The indicator was defined at appraisal based on enrollment in the last grade (grade 6) of primary education net of repeaters divided by the population of relevant age for that grade (age 11) – based on population data revised after 2012 census. End values are based on the RESEN. The primary completion rate was expected to increase by 4.2 percentage points over four years, but the trend in the previous decade was a gain of 2.7 to 3.1 points per year according the World Development indicators depending on the period (2003 to 2013, or 2004 to 2014). The target was exceeded substantially, confirming the historical trend towards gains in enrollment and completion rates over time.



Objective/Outcome: Improve the quality of the teaching and learning environment at the basic education level

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
System for learning assessment at the primary level	Yes/No	N 01-Apr-2014	Y 30-Jun-2019		Y 30-Jun-2019
Utility of the learning assessment system	Number	2.00	3.00 01-Jun-2017		3.00

Comments (achievements against targets):

Target met. This indicator was meant to measure whether the basic elements of a learning assessment system exist at the primary level, and the degree to which that assessment is able to provide useful information for education policy and practice. The MEP benefited from the support of CONFEMEN / PASEC for the establishment of the National Evaluation System (NES). PASEC support helped record the following progress in implementing the NES: (1) Ministerial Order setting up the NES' list of names signed by the MEP (Order No. 000137/MEP/A/PLN/EC/SG/ DGEP/PLN/DES/CP of 14 February 2018). The decree defines the mission of the NSE and the profile of its members; (2) Two capacity-building workshops for NSE members were organized, the first on the design of learning assessment tools and the second on processing and analysis data. The members of the NSE continue to strengthen the capacities of NSE divisions at the regional level.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Appropriate tools and materials for improving reading in the early grades are adopted by MEP	Yes/No	N 01-Apr-2014	Y 30-Jun-2019		Y 30-Jun-2019

**Comments (achievements against targets):**

Target met. At appraisal, this was defined as national reading improvement tools using national languages developed for grade 1 (basic reading), grade 2 (consolidation of reading skills), and grade 3 (comprehensive reading) and validated through pilot implementation in schools and teacher training. To improve the level of reading students in the early grades of primary school, tools and materials were indeed developed by MEP as planned. Textbooks and guides were developed as part of the Curriculum Reform for the first three grades and validated by in 500 pilot schools. The broader status of the curriculum reform is however not clear given implementation and financial challenges for scaling up.

A.2 Intermediate Results Indicators**Component:** Expanding equitable access to schooling and retention of students in school

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Number of additional classrooms built or rehabilitated at the primary level resulting from project interventions.	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	1245.00 28-Jun-2019		1187.00 28-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):

Target almost met. MEP built 1,187 classrooms versus for a target of 1,245. Given delays in implementation but also Niger's geography, and insecurity and/or remoteness of several areas, all planned classrooms for the 2nd Phase of the infrastructure component were not built. The ERA component (Rural Alternatives) experienced significant difficulties in the implementation which required the abandonment of 58 classrooms. Still, the classrooms built made it possible to improve learning conditions for nearly 60 000 students (at an average rate of 50 pupils per classroom built).



Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Number of classrooms built at the lower secondary level resulting from project interventions	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	330.00 30-Jun-2019		330.00 30-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):
Target met. All 330 classrooms and corresponding latrines were built, with equipment for the classrooms provided as well.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Total enrollments in primary education (all schools)	Number	2050656.00 01-Apr-2014	2400000.00 21-Dec-2018		2599390.00 21-Dec-2018

Comments (achievements against targets):
Target met. Primary school enrollment stood at 2.6 million at the end of the project.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised	Actual Achieved at
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				Target	Completion
Students reached through school feeding programs	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	90000.00 28-Jun-2019		99577.00 28-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):

Target exceeded. The program involved 559 schools. Despite delays in starting the program (it started in 2016 instead of 2015), results were considered satisfactory. A total of 99,577 students, including 48,237 girls, benefited from food rations.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Girls, boys, parents and teachers reached through subcomponent 1(B) on promoting girls' education	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	100000.00 28-Jun-2019		351978.00 28-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):

Target exceeded. A total of 351,978 girls, boys, parents and teachers were reached, 55 percent of whom were women. Of these beneficiaries, 322,176 were for primary schools and 29,802 for secondary schools. In addition, 700 girls received scholarships at the secondary level, with 479 still enrolled (68 percent of retention, well above the figure for girls not receiving the scholarships in the same schools).

Component: Improving the quality of teaching and learning



Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Curriculum review for first cycle of primary school completed	Yes/No	N 01-Apr-2014	Y 30-Jun-2019		Y 30-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):

Target met. As part of the curriculum review, curricula were revised and new materials were developed in accordance with curriculum guidelines. The programs were adapted into national languages and manuals, guides and charts were produced accordingly.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Contract teachers trained as a result of the project	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	3500.00 28-Jun-2019		8160.00 28-Jun-2019
Primary	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2016	2500.00 28-Jun-2019		5500.00 28-Jun-2019
Lower secondary	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2016	1500.00 28-Jun-2019		2660.00 28-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):



Target exceeded. Some 572 contractual teachers were trained in 2015, 2,469 in 2016 and 7,160 in 2017 against respective targets of 800, 1600 and 2500. In addition, the cohort of the last 1,000 IFADEM teachers benefited from training, increasing the total to 8,160 teachers.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Share of grade 1-3 teachers trained for teaching early grade reading and simple classroom assessment	Percentage	0.00 01-Apr-2014	75.00 28-Jun-2019		84.10 28-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):

Target exceeded. MEP has trained 20,350 teachers in grades 1-3, yielding the percentage of teachers trained of 84.1 percent.

Component: Strengthening management capacity

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Teacher trainers, inspectors and pedagogical advisors trained through the project	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	800.00 28-Jun-2019		6145.00 28-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):



Target exceeded. The indicators were exceeded for trained teacher educators, inspectors and pedagogical advisers.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Assessment of reading fluency conducted for grade 2 and 3 and results shared widely	Yes/No	N 01-Apr-2014	Y 30-Jun-2019		Y 30-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):

Target met. A national student assessment was implemented with the report shared.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Human resource management strategy developed and implemented	Yes/No	N 01-Apr-2014	Y 30-Jun-2019		Y 30-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):

Target met. An HR management strategy has been developed and implemented by MEP.



Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Number of school management committees (CGDES) strengthened through the project	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	2800.00 28-Jun-2019		6966.00 28-Jun-2019
Primary	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	2000.00 28-Jun-2019		6584.00 28-Jun-2019
Lower secondary	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	800.00 28-Jun-2019		382.00 28-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):
Target exceeded. The number of CGDES strengthened was at 1,039 in 2015, 4,576 in 2016, 5,901 in 2017 and ultimately 6,966 in 2018 against respective targets of 1,000, 2,000, and 2,800.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
MES organizational review	Yes/No	N	Y		Y



completed		01-Apr-2014	30-Jun-2019		30-Jun-2019
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Comments (achievements against targets):

Target met. An institutional review was developed and validated in April 2018 during a workshop bringing together stakeholders.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Regular education sector reviews held during project implementation	Number	0.00 01-Apr-2014	4.00 30-Jun-2019		4.00 30-Jun-2019

Comments (achievements against targets):

Target met. Four annual sectoral reviews were carried out during implementation

**B. KEY OUTPUTS BY COMPONENT**

Objective/Outcome 1:	
Outcome Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Primary completion rate2. Increase in primary education gender parity index in areas targeted by the project (average)3. Increase in lower secondary education gender parity index in areas targeted by the project (average)4. Direct project beneficiaries5. Female beneficiaries
Intermediate Results Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Number of additional classrooms built or rehabilitated at the primary level resulting from project interventions2. Number of classrooms built at the lower secondary level resulting from project interventions3. Total enrollments in primary education (all schools)4. Girls, boys, parents and teachers reached through sub-component 1.2 on promoting girls' education5. Students reached through school feeding programs
Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 1)	
<u>Sub-component 1: Classroom construction.</u> The project aimed to build 1,250 primary school classrooms. This called for the construction of 345 additional classrooms (195 + 150 alternative rural schools or ERA) in phase 2 on top of the 905 classrooms built in phase 1. Due to procurement delays, not all ERA classrooms were built. However, approximately 95% of the overall target for classroom construction was achieved (1,187 classrooms built by the end of the project), and the full contingent of 330 classrooms for secondary schools were built. The newly built classrooms were equipped with basic furniture (typically 25 tables and benches for students, a desk for the teacher and two chairs, as well as a metal cabinet). For Alternative Rural Schools (ERA), equipment consisted of forty tables and stools, one desk for the teacher, two chairs and three metal cabinets. Classroom construction helped improve conditions for learning while also contributing to larger enrollment especially in primary schools as the capacity of the	



classrooms being built was larger than that of the *paillettes* that they replaced. Classroom construction thus contributed to the first three indicators for the project's development objectives.

Sub-component 1: Girls' education.

The project aimed to reach 100,000 girls. The target was significantly exceeded with 351,978 girls benefitting from the project. An important subset of girls benefitting from the project consists of the 700 girls in 39 lower secondary schools who received grants to attend secondary schools. This program was implemented with strong results in terms of retention (68 percent of beneficiary girls were still enrolled after four years versus one fifth for other girls in the same schools). This activity related to the provision of scholarships to girls living far from secondary schools does not seem to have encountered major implementation issues and data are available to assess potential impacts. For other activities, including communication campaigns, the materials that were created were of quality and by all counts were well-implemented, though there was no systematic assessment of their specific impact.

Sub-component 3: School lunches and hygiene.

School lunches were implemented with the World Food Program. The target was to reach at least 90,000 children. According to Ministry data, this target was achieved, with estimates suggesting that 99,577 children benefited from the program. Latrines were built as part of school construction (see above) and information campaigns to improve hygiene were conducted with the CGDES. Given community involvement to date in their maintenance, school latrines are expected to remain functional.

Objective/Outcome 2

Outcome Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. System for learning assessment at the primary level2. Utility of the learning assessment system3. Appropriate tools and materials for improving reading in the early grades are adopted by MEP
Intermediate Results Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Curriculum review for first cycle of primary school completed2. Contract teachers trained as a result of the project3. Share of grade 1-3 teachers trained for teaching early grade reading and simple classroom assessment4. Teacher trainers, inspectors and pedagogical advisors trained through the project



- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">5. Assessment of reading fluency conducted for grade 2 and 3 and results shared widely6. Human resource management strategy developed and implemented7. Number of school management committees (CGDES) strengthened through the project8. MES organizational review completed9. Regular education sector reviews held during project implementation |
|--|---|

Key Outputs by Component

(linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 2)

Sub-component 1: Improving pedagogy

Textbooks and teacher guides were developed for grades 1 to 3 in six national languages and distributed on a pilot basis for grades 1 and 2 to a large number of primary schools. Approximately one-third of all primary schools (or Grades 1 and 2) participated in the pilot. The project's indicators targets were met, in that the curriculum review for first cycle of primary school was completed. Overall, the project did contribute substantially to the curriculum reform, an idea that had been under discussion for decades in the country with various pilots conducted at different times but not at scale. At the same time, the education system is at a crossroad in terms of the future of the curriculum reform.

Results from the national assessment conducted under the project suggest that students in schools that participated in the reform performed better on mathematics but less well on the reading assessment than students in schools that did not yet participate. While substantial resources have been allocated to the reform under the project in an effort to support the Government policy, funding that may be needed to complete the reform is likely to be significant. An assessment of progress towards the reform to-date is being prepared which will inform potential next steps.

Sub-component 2: Teacher training

The targets of the three intermediate results indicators related to teacher training were met: (1) Contract teachers were trained as a result of the project (target: 3,500 teachers trained; actual: 8,160 teacher trained); (2) Share of grade 1-3 teachers trained for teaching early grade reading and simple classroom assessment (target: 75 percent; actual: 84.1 percent); and (3) Teacher trainers, inspectors and pedagogical advisors trained through the project (target: 800; actual: 6,145). The end-of-project targets (in terms of reach) for a wide range of activities implemented for training teachers and principals were either met or exceeded. , The 2019 PASEC assessment data (to become available in 2020) will be useful in further assessing potential in student learning outcomes . While many trainings may have been valuable, they were not



based on a clear and comprehensive strategy at the level of the Ministries, especially for primary education. To the credit of the Ministry of Primary Education, an important initiative was to test subject knowledge for all contractual teachers, not renew contracts for teacher performing below a (very low) minimum threshold and provide remedial education for teachers performing at low levels but above the required minimum threshold. Four in five contractual teachers in this remedial education program passed the exam at the end of the training, suggesting stronger mastery of the material they need to teach. The project also financed the construction of three teacher training colleges that have been completed. The three training colleges were located in Dogondoutchi, Tessaoua and Magaria and provided training to 1,674 teachers including 929 women. The three training centers each include an administrative block, a store, a computer room, an infirmary, a library and a micro-teaching room and housing for the Director and supervisors.

Sub-component 3: Student assessments

The target of the intermediate results indicator on student assessment – conducting an assessment of reading fluency for grades 2 and 3—was met. The project indeed financed the implementation of a national assessment in primary schools and the country's participation in the regional mathematics and science initiative MS4SSA, for which Niger has been competitively selected as one of the regional nodes. The national assessment revealed among others that some gains were achieved in mathematics in the schools that participated in the curriculum reform in comparison to other schools, but the schools that participated in the curriculum reform had lower performance in reading. Importantly, the Government also signed an agreement with PASEC for participation in the 2019 assessment and data collection has been conducted with funding from the project. This represents an important achievement. At the same time, the student assessment system remains relatively weak, and additional efforts will need to be put forth to ensure more widespread use of the data in guiding policy and program design.



C. DETAILED RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND MAIN CHANGES

Since there were no changes in PDO-level indicators and intermediate indicators at restructuring, the information is the same as in Annex 1 above.

**ANNEX 2. BANK LENDING AND IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT/SUPERVISION****A. TASK TEAM MEMBERS**

Name	Role
Preparation	
Kirsten Majgaard, Adama Ouedraogo	Task Team Leader(s)
Ibrah Rahamane Sanoussi	Procurement Specialist(s)
Josue Akre	Financial Management Specialist
Souleymane Zerbo	Team Member
Emanuela Di Gropello	Team Member
Andy Chi Tembon	Team Member
Jean Charles Amon Kra	Team Member
Ruxandra Costache	Counsel
Medou Lo	Social Specialist
Celestin Adjalou Niamien	Team Member
Andre Zombre	Team Member
Ibrahim Salaou Barmou	Team Member
Supervision/ICR	
Pamela Mulet	Task Team Leader(s)
Mahamadou Bambo Sissoko, Prosper Nindorera, Harouna Djibrilla Djimba	Procurement Specialist(s)
Josue Akre	Financial Management Specialist
Kabirou Souleymane Ali Sale	Team Member
Emelyne Calimoutou	Counsel
Lea Jeanne Marie Iungmann	Team Member
Salimata Bessim Dera	Team Member
Bougadare Kone	Environmental Specialist



Stanislas Honkuy	Team Member
Khady Fall Lo	Team Member
Lalaina Noelinirina Rasoloharison	Team Member
George Ferreira Da Silva	Team Member
Adama Ouedraogo	Team Member
Mamadou Aliou Sow	Team Member
Aissatou Diallo	Team Member
Cheikh A. T. Sagna	Social Specialist
Andy Chi Tembon	Team Member
Bolong Landing Sonko	Social Specialist
Bernardo da Cruz Vasconcellos	Team Member
Souleymane Zerbo	Team Member
Quentin T. Wodon	ICR Author

A. STAFF TIME AND COST

Stage of Project Cycle	Staff Time and Cost	
	No. of staff weeks	US\$ (including travel and consultant costs)
Preparation		
FY13	20.879	147,012.40
FY14	13.025	104,492.23
FY15	.450	485.82
Total	34.35	251,990.45
Supervision/ICR		
FY14	21.100	152,755.88
FY15	30.638	198,055.16
FY16	27.260	207,490.06
FY17	34.675	243,468.94
FY18	25.899	216,591.99



FY19	19.436	209,280.63
FY20	7.723	58,106.43
Total	166.73	1,285,749.09

ANNEX 3. PROJECT COST BY COMPONENT

Components	Amount at Approval (USDM)	Actual at Project Closing (USDM)	Percentage of Approval (USDM)
Expanding equitable access to schooling and retention of students in school	55	45	81.8%
Improving the quality of teaching and learning	23	25.5	110.9%
Strengthening management capacity	18	16.1	89.4%
Contingencies	4	0	0.0%
Total	100.0	86.6	86.6%

**ANNEX 4. EFFICIENCY ANALYSIS****Analysis of rates of return implemented at appraisal**

1. Based on earnings data from a 2010 study, the PAD included an economic analysis that suggested a positive NPV for the main components of the project, namely the construction and replacement of classrooms. The assumption was that gains in the quality of the learning environment would result in higher completion rates and possibly also higher productivity and earnings for students graduating. This was modeled as a 5 percent increase in real wages and a 5 to 10 percent increase in completion rates. However, to include the possibility of adverse economic development a scenario with a corresponding wage decrease was also included. Table A1 below shows the NPV of this project sub-component under the various scenarios. The NPV ranged from USD46.8 million to USD241.4 million, and the IRR ranged from 11 to 12 percent showing a consistent positive payoff from investment in all scenarios. Sufficient details on how exactly the analysis was conducted and the assumptions involved are not available to replicate estimations, but the IRR are in the range of what one might expect for a project of this nature.

Table A1: NPV of project dependent on completion rate and wage (million USD 2012-prices)

Completion rate Wage scenarios	5% discount rate			8% discount rate		
	Actual	+ 5%	+ 10%	Actual	+ 5%	+ 10%
5 % wage decrease	177.7	192.4	207.2	46.8	53.6	60.4
Baseline	193.2	208.7	224.3	54.0	61.1	68.2
5% wage increase	208.7	225.0	241.4	61.1	68.6	76.0

Note: Actual refers to parameters based on most recent data, which are used in the base scenario.

Source: Author's calculations.

Analysis of the benefits from education for ICR

2. While no new cost-benefit analysis was conducted for the ICR, a range of estimates of the benefits from education were developed, and an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of school construction was conducted. The results are provided in this section and the next, suggesting efficiency.
3. The cost-benefit analysis at appraisal seems to have been based on the assumption that gains in the quality of the learning environment – both through classroom construction and through better pedagogy and resources in schools, would increase completion rates as well as learning. In practice, it is unclear whether gains in the quality of the learning environment (proper classrooms with latrines and equipment as opposed to paillettes) would generate large gains in completion rates and better learning that would result in higher wages, but some gains could be expected. However, the construction of the classrooms should have enabled more students to be in school, since the capacity of the new classrooms was estimated to be at twice that of the paillettes (50 students in new classrooms versus about 25 students in paillettes). In turn, a higher capacity for the education system would lead to a larger number of students completing primary or lower secondary education. In addition, some of the interventions for girls – especially the scholarships at the lower secondary level, enabled beneficiaries to pursue their education at the secondary level. In order to suggest the benefits from higher educational attainment from the project, this annex outlines some of the benefits from higher educational



attainment that have been measured using a wide range of surveys for Niger. In addition, in a few cases, comparisons are provided for the benefits of enrolling in the formal education system as compared to Koranic schools in order to show the benefits from a formal education.

Labor Market Earnings and Consumption per Capita

4. To measure the benefits from educational attainment, analysis is performed using data from the 2011 and 2014 ECVM/A surveys, noting that data from the 2011 survey tend to be more reliable, hence the most reliable results are those observed with the 2011 survey or the pooled dataset (the 2014 dataset has fewer observations). Results are provided in Table A2. The first part of the Table provides statistical estimates of earnings by level of education, while the second part documents results from regressions in terms of the marginal impact of a higher education level on expected earnings (in logarithm).
5. As expected, there is clear indication that in both surveys, individuals with formal education tend to have higher expected labour market earnings than those with no education at all or those with a Koranic education. This is the case whether one considers hourly or monthly earnings. In addition, a higher level of educational attainment is associated with higher earnings. This can be seen when comparing individuals with secondary or higher education to those with primary education. It should be noted however that the gains are not large by international standards. Using the pooled estimates for monthly earnings, individuals with a primary education may expect to earn only 12.2 percent more than those without any education, and for secondary education the gain is estimated at 51.6 percent versus no education. These returns to education are lower than in many other countries, possibly because of limited employment opportunities for those completing cycles especially in rural areas.

Table A2: Type of Education and Labor Market Earnings

	2011 ECVM/A		2014 ECVM/A		Pooled data	
	Hourly	Monthly	Hourly	Monthly	Hourly	Monthly
Basic statistics (FCFA)						
No education	249.6	50,546.7	358.2	70,414.8	-	-
Koranic	307.1	66,352.8	313.7	54,622.5	-	-
Primary	320.7	63,354.5	413.4	97,068.0	-	-
Secondary	562.6	113,327.0	878.2	158,795.9	-	-
Higher	1,279.7	225,992.1	1,515.4	217,330.3	-	-
Total	316.9	64,599.0	536.9	105,215.5	-	-
Marginal effects vs. no education for the logarithm of earnings (dF/dX)						
Koranic	-0.063	NS	0.903	0.716	NS	NS
Primary	NS	NS	1.083	0.947	0.077	0.122
Secondary	0.484	0.471	1.230	1.210	0.530	0.516
Higher	1.449	1.273	0.996	0.954	1.451	1.280

Source: Authors' estimation.

Note: NS = not statistically significant at least at the 10 percent level.

6. A similar analysis is conducted for the correlates of household per capita consumption (in logarithm as done for wages), household assets (based on an index), subjective perceptions of poverty, and feelings of food insecurity. For simplicity and space reasons, only the results from the regression analysis are reported in Table



A3. All regressions are estimated at the level of households, with the education of the household head as well as that of the spouse being part of the set of independent variables. The results for formal education are again encouraging. As expected, households with a head or spouse with formal education tend to have higher levels of household consumption per capita, higher levels of assets or wealth, lower subjective perceptions of poverty, and lower feelings of food insecurity than households where the head or spouse has no education at all. The benefits are typically larger when the household head or spouse has a higher level of education. In general, results from the 2011 survey suggest larger gains than those with the 2014 survey, but that survey in general is overall less reliable.

Table A3: Type of Education, Household Consumption, Assets, and Perceptions of Well-Being

	2011 ECVM/A				2014 ECVM/A			
	Log Cons.	Assets	Subj. Pov.	Food Ins.	Log Cons.	Assets	Subj. Pov.	Food Ins.
Marginal effects vs. no education (coefficient or dF/dX)								
Head								
Koranic	0.044	-0.696	NS	-0.039	NS	-3.971	-	0.090
Primary	0.098	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	-	0.078
Secondary	0.244	5.975	-0.201	-0.090	0.081	NS	-	NS
Spouse								
Koranic	0.072	NS	0.044	NS	0.108	NS	-	NS
Primary	0.119	1.977	NS	NS	NS	NS	-	NS
Secondary	0.364	7.132	-0.087	NS	0.188	NS	-	NS

Source: Authors' estimation.

Note: NS = not statistically significant at least at the 10 percent level.

Intergenerational Effects - Education

7. Parents who have been educated are more likely to send their children to those schools and help those children graduate. Table A4 provides with the 2011 ECVM/A estimates of the marginal impact of parental education on their children. Five different outcomes are considered: (1) whether a child has enrolled in primary school (sample of children aged 6-12); (2) whether a child has completed primary school (children aged 13-17); (2) whether a child has enrolled in secondary school (children aged 13-17); (4) whether a child has completed secondary school (children aged 17-23); and finally (5) whether a child has Koranic education instead of a formal education, whether at the primary or secondary level. The effects associated with educational attainment are positive throughout especially for formal education, once again as expected. When parents are better educated, and controlling for a wide range of other factors that may affect a child's education, the child also tends to be better educated.

Table A4: Marginal Effect of the Education of the Household Head and Spouse on Children (dF/dX)

	Child Primary Enrolled 6-12	Child Primary Completed 13-17	Child Secondary Enrolled 13-17	Child Secondary Completed 17-23	Child Koranic Enrolled 17-23
	2011 ECVM/A				
Household Head					
Koranic	NS	NS	NS	NS	0.127



Primary	0.136	NS	NS	NS	0.044
Secondary/higher	0.228	0.245	0.221	NS	NS
Household Spouse					
Koranic	NS	NS	NS	NS	0.372
Primary	0.069	0.138	0.100	NS	NS
Secondary/higher	NS	0.247	0.219	NS	NS
2014 ECVMA					
Household Head					
Koranic	NS	NS	NS	NS	0.179
Primary	0.080	NS	NS	NS	NS
Secondary/higher	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Household Spouse					
Koranic	NS	NS	NS	NS	0.345
Primary	0.123	NS	NS	0.552	NS
Secondary/higher	0.140	0.090	0.050	0.394	NS

Source: Authors' estimation.

Note: NS = not statistically significant at least at the 10 percent level.

Intergenerational Effects - Infant Mortality Using Census Data

- Census data can be used to look at the correlates of infant mortality, the probability that a child may die before reach one year of age. The dependent variable is whether a child does die, and the independent variables include a wide range of factors that may affect survival, including the type of education that a mother has. Because the census data include many observations, the analysis is split into three strata for the capital city of Niamey, other urban areas, and rural areas. One would expect a higher level of educational attainment for the mother to be associated with a lower risk of infant mortality for children. This is indeed observed, especially when mothers have at least a secondary education.

Table A5: Type of Education for Mothers and Risk of Infant Mortality, Census Data

	Niamey	Other urban	Rural
	Marginal effects vs. no education (dF/dX)		
Koranic	-0.058	NS	NS
Primary	NS	-0.051	NS
Post-primary	-0.114	-0.145	-0.078

Source: Authors' estimation.

Note: NS = not statistically significant at least at the 10 percent level.

Type of Education, Literacy, and Numeracy

- All children should learn how to read and write, and how to count, whatever school they attend, but educational attainment helps. In order to look at the potential impact of the type of school attended by children on literacy and numeracy controlling for other characteristics, we can rely on subjectively declared perceptions of literacy and numeracy in the 2011 and 2014 ECVMA surveys. The analysis is conducted among children aged 13-18, since at that age, children are expected to have completed primary school (if they went to formal school) and therefore to at least be literate and able to perform simple calculations. The data are far from perfect since literacy and numeracy are subjectively declared by parents, as opposed to actually tested,



for example by asking children to read a simple sentence. As shown in Table A6, basic literacy and numeracy rates (top part of the Table) are highest among individuals with at least some primary and especially secondary schooling, and lowest among those with no education. The regression analysis suggests gains from educational attainment, as expected.

Table A6: Type of Education, Literacy, and Numeracy among Children Aged 13-18

	2011 ECVM/A			2014 ECVM/A		
	Reading	Writing	Calculating	Reading	Writing	Calculating
	Basic statistics (%)					
No education	1.1	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.4
Koranic	21.3	17.2	13.3	34.2	31.8	26.2
Primary	74.7	67.9	72.0	61.2	58.8	58.5
Secondary/higher	97.4	94.9	97.3	98.2	98.2	97.7
All	55.4	52.1	53.1	38.7	37.6	36.5
Marginal effects vs. no education (dF/dX)						
Koranic	0.503	0.507	0.449	0.747	0.745	0.681
Primary	0.751	0.682	0.728	0.836	0.821	0.826
Secondary/higher	0.852	0.904	0.922	0.932	0.941	0.950

Source: Authors' estimation.

Note: NS = not statistically significant at least at the 10 percent level.

Additional Benefits from Reducing Child Marriage and Early Childbearing

10. In addition to the above benefits, as a higher level of educational attainment helps in reducing the risks of child marriage and early childbearing, a wide range of other benefits are expected from educating girls. This section summarizes findings from a recent study on the economic costs of child marriage in Niger.
11. **Relationship between Child Marriage and Educational Attainment.** Child marriage has a large negative effect on educational attainment for girls, and conversely, educating girls helps reduce the risk of child marriage. Various approaches have been used to assess the relationships between child marriage and educational attainment for girls. A first approach consists of asking parents in household surveys why their daughters dropped out of school. According to parents in Niger, marriage is the reason for dropping out of secondary school for 23 percent of girls who completed primary education (but not secondary education probably because so few girls reach that level). This is confirmed by the fact that the choice for (or given to) girls in Niger is often to either be married or be in school. Indeed, girls out of school almost always marry (in household surveys, very few girls between 17 and 19 years of age who are out of school are not married). By contrast, pregnancies account for less than one percent of the girls dropping out. Another approach consists of estimating the impact of child marriage on educational attainment econometrically, and vice versa. Estimates for Niger suggest a statistically significant impact of child marriage on primary education completion, but again not secondary education completion. Conversely, each year of secondary education may reduce the likelihood of marrying as a child by up to 10 percentage points in Niger. In other words, investments in educational attainment can have a large positive effect towards ending child marriage for girls. The fact that education is key to reduce the risk of child marriage (and early childbearing) is confirmed by a review of the experimental literature.



12. **Fertility and Population Growth.** Total fertility is defined as the number of live births that women are (statistically) expected to have over their lifetime under current conditions. Controlling for other factors affecting total fertility, in Niger, on average, a girl marrying at 14 will have 28 percent more children over her lifetime than if she had married at 18 or later. If a girl marries at 17, she would still have on average 14 percent more children versus marrying at 18 or later. Considering the rate of child marriage in the country and the characteristics of the girls who marry early, ending child marriage would reduce the national rate of total fertility by 15 percent, a rather large effect. A large part of the impact of child marriage on total fertility comes from the fact that women marrying earlier tend to have children earlier. In Niger, child marriage is likely to be the cause of early childbirths for at least 70 percent of the girls who have their first child before the age of 18. Marrying very early (at age 14 or earlier) also has a small negative impact on modern contraceptive use later in life, but ending child marriage without any associated changes in programs or policies would not, in itself, have a large effect on contraceptive use nationally. Finally, ending child marriage and early childbirths could reduce population growth in Niger by almost 0.4 percentage points, which is again a large effect, as was observed with total fertility. All these results suggest a large impact of education through child marriage on fertility rates and population growth. But in addition, the direct effect of educational attainment on fertility rates and population growth is even larger. Overall, fertility rates and population growth could be reduced by about a third if all girls were to complete their secondary education, which would also virtually eliminate child marriage.
13. **Health, Nutrition, and Intimate Partner Violence.** Child marriage is the likely cause of more than three in four children being born of mothers younger than 18 in Niger. In turn, when a child is born of a young mother, this increases at the margin (controlling for other factors) the risk for the child of dying by age 5, as well as the risk of stunting. Through early childbirths, child marriage also has some impact on maternal mortality ratios since the literature suggests that adolescent girls have in many countries a higher level of maternal morbidity and mortality than women ages 20-24. Finally, the literature suggests linkages between intimate partner violence (IPV) and marrying at a very early age, although these linkages appear weaker in Niger, possibly because of very low levels of IPV measured in DHS surveys. Overall, both through a reduction in child marriage and directly, educational attainment leads to improvements in health.
14. **Women's Agency.** Educating girls and ending child marriage in Niger would also have benefits for women's agency. Various (imperfect) measures of agency can be considered, including decision-making within the household, land ownership, feelings of self-worth, knowledge of HIV and AIDS, and birth registrations. In virtually all cases, either educational attainment or child marriage have positive effects.

Cost of School Infrastructure Investments Under PAEQ

15. The above analysis suggests that the benefits from education, especially for girls, are both large and widespread in terms of the domains affected. The next question is whether investments made under PAEQ were cost-effective in order to achieve gains in educational attainment and learning. While data are lacking to conduct such an assessment for all activities, for some of the most important interventions, the activities appear to have been implemented in a cost-effective way. The best illustration relates to school infrastructure, and especially the construction of classrooms. Therefore this is the focus in this section.



16. The architectural plans for the blocs of classrooms that were built by the two Ministries are simple but effective, fairly low cost, and well adapted to country conditions. The plans are essentially the same as those used in previous operations that benefitted from IDA funding, although the length of the classrooms was increased from 8.7 meter to 9.0 meter, which provides more space for learners. A few other changes were also made. For example, previous models had a false ceiling that has been removed, which is a good thing because the space above may be colonized by lizards or bats. The use of previous plans was helpful because it ensures confidence in the Ministries and among donors as well as builders in the ability to implement the design since it has been tested before.
17. A detailed analysis of the unit cost of the classrooms is provided in Theunynck and Wodon (2020a). Using data for three regions, estimates of unit costs per classrooms as well as per square meter leads to the estimates in Table A7 for blocs of three and two classrooms (both were used). The difference in cost depending on the number of classrooms built, at about 11% of the base cost for three classrooms, is explained by the economy of a wall and a foundation when three instead of two classrooms are built. These costs are similar to those observed in previous operations in Niger after adjusting for inflation.

Table A7: Unit costs for classrooms

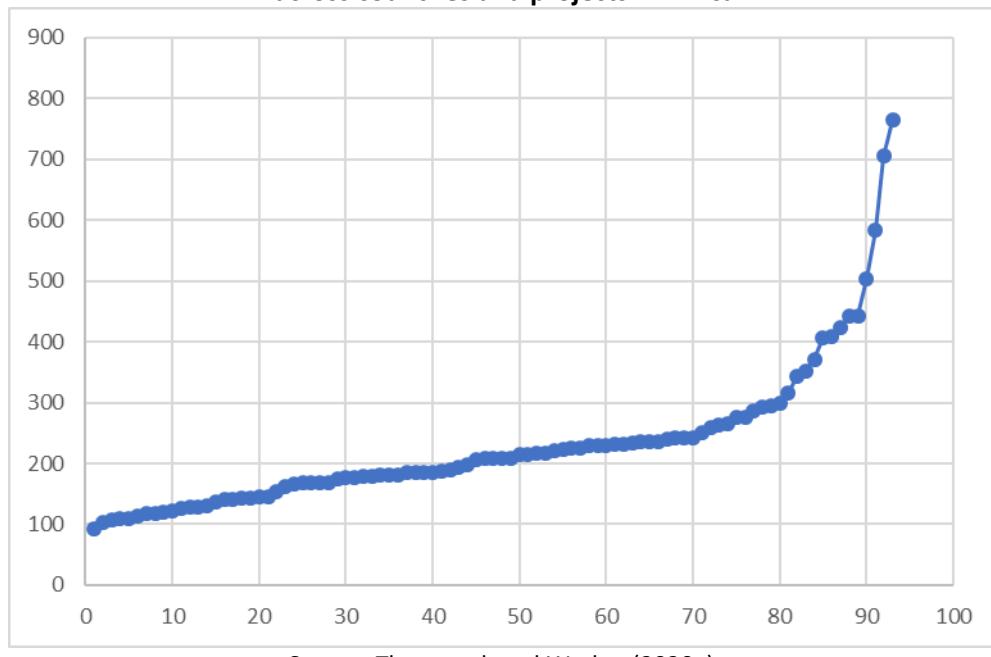
	Cost/classroom	Cost/m ²
Bloc of 2 classrooms	14,172 USD	210 USD
Bloc of 3 classrooms	12,716 USD	189 USD

Source: Theunynck and Wodon (2020a).

18. It is also feasible to make cost comparisons with other countries. Figure A1 shows the unit price distribution for classroom costs observed in sub-Saharan Africa for multiple projects and countries in 2017 values for comparison with PAEQ. The vertical axis represents the unit price per m² in US dollars, while the horizontal axis is the proportion of projects with a lower unit cost (for projects with several architectural models, the different models are included in the analysis). About two out of five projects have unit costs of less than USD 200/m². Since Niger is a landlocked country, relatively high unit costs are expected, among others given the need to transport materials for construction such as cement. As a result, the unit costs observed with PAEQ in Table A7 appear fairly reasonable.



Figure A1: Distribution of unit construction costs across countries and projects in Africa



Source: Theunynck and Wodon (2020a).

Iterative Beneficiaries Monitoring for Textbook Distribution

19. Iterative Beneficiaries Monitoring (IBM) is a rapid and low-cost device for monitoring projects. Through iterative and frequent data collections it can be helpful to improve results by quickly identifying potential weaknesses in the implementation of project activities. As part of M&E activities under PAEQ, an IBM assessment was carried in a sample of primary schools that received the textbooks and teaching guides under the curriculum reform in national languages. While more than one in four school principals could not be reached by telephone for the assessment, this could be due to teacher turnover or changes in cellphone, but overall the results from the survey appear robust.
20. The main results were as follows (Savadogo et al., 2020):
 1. Overall the schools (teachers/principals) are highly satisfied with the quality of the textbooks received. This suggest that the materials produced were of high quality.
 2. Most schools did receive the textbooks and teaching guides that were assigned to them. However, some shortcomings in the distribution were observed:
 - a. Just under one in ten schools (8%) had not yet received textbooks and teaching guides at the time of the survey.
 - b. The provision of schools with textbooks and teaching guides was delayed. The majority of schools did not receive textbooks until at least six months after the start of the school year. In addition, many schools were also slow in the distribution of textbooks to students. This delay is estimated on average at around 50 days.
 - c. Quantities received were considered insufficient in relation to the needs of the schools.

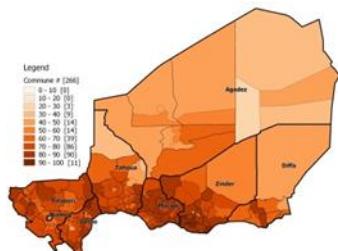


3. Principals also criticize a lack of communication on project activities and the fact that they were not involved in project activities.
21. The IBM assessment suggests both strengths and weaknesses in the production and distribution of textbooks to schools, with useful lessons for future projects. This is a great example of M&E activities conducted under the project.

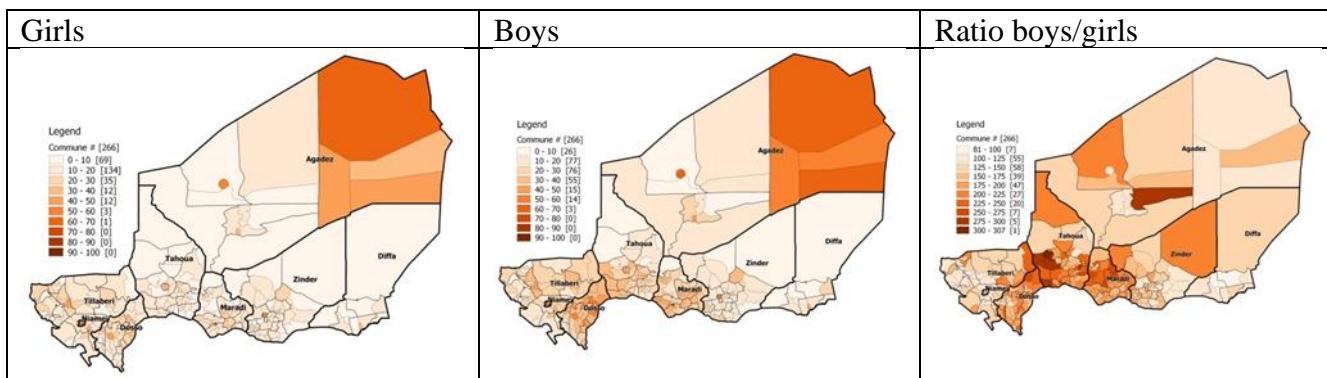
Potential for Targeting Interventions

22. Many interventions under the project targeted disadvantaged areas. This was the case for school feeding, as well as scholarship for girls. In addition, classrooms were built at the primary level in areas underserved, which is also why no classrooms were built in the capital city of Niamey. Targeting matters for efficiency, as it helps reduce inequalities in education by serving areas where demand has not been met by public schools. For future projects such as LIRE, it may be useful to use data from the latest census to target some interventions. How this can be done is illustrated below with a number of maps for child marriage (among girls age 17), as well as primary and secondary completion rates (for age groups slightly older than normal age at completion in order to allow for late start and repetitions). This type of maps can be drawn at a low level of disaggregation (municipalities) using census data, and may be a useful complement to administrative data for targeting interventions.

1. Map of child marriage rate, girls aged 17.

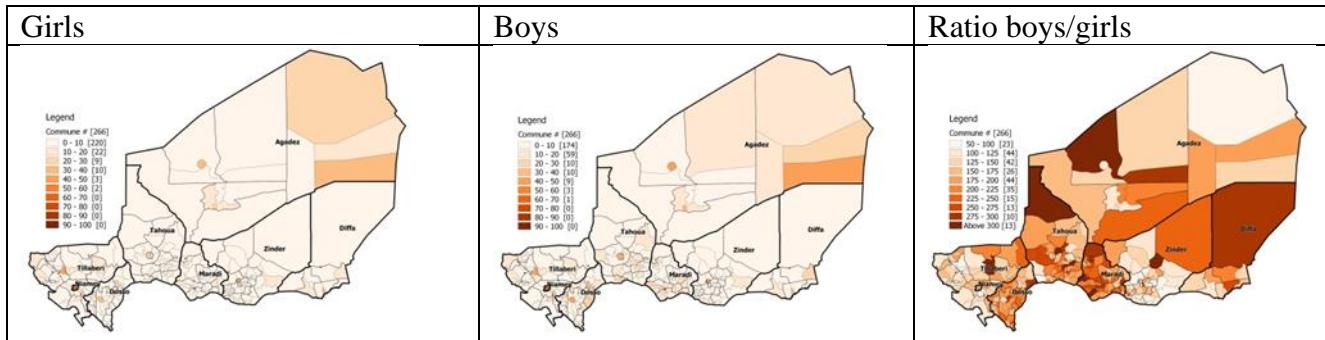


2. Maps of primary completion rates, boys and girls aged 15-18





3. Maps of secondary completion rates, boys and girls aged 22-24



**ANNEX 5. BORROWER, CO-FINANCIER AND OTHER PARTNER/STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS**

The government completion report was submitted to the World Bank on August 2, 2019. The full report has been archived n WBDocs.

**ANNEX 6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

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