



1. Project Data

Project ID P113350	Project Name Sector Support for Education Reform	
Country Kyrgyz Republic	Practice Area(Lead) Education	
L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-52300,IDA-H8360	Closing Date (Original) 16-Jul-2018	Total Project Cost (USD) 15,233,414.74
Bank Approval Date 07-Mar-2013	Closing Date (Actual) 28-Jun-2019	
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	16,500,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	16,500,000.00	0.00
Actual	15,233,414.74	0.00

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

According to the Financing Agreement dated 10/9/13, the objective of the project was to create conditions for improved learning outcomes in basic education. The statements of objectives in the PAD and ICR were consistent with the Financing Agreement.

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



No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

1. Enhanced Learning (Appraisal US\$14.19 million; Actual US\$13.46 million).

The component aimed at improving pedagogical practices and the availability of teaching and learning material in the classroom through the provision of training and technical assistance, goods and educational materials, including the following:

(a) Development and delivery of in-service training program for primary school teachers and pedagogical staff; and provision of teaching materials and strengthening the capacity of the Kyrgyz Academy of Education and Oblast In-service Teacher Training Institutes and Methodological Centers through provision of technical assistance in the form of training, materials and furniture.

(b) Development of new manuscripts and publication of textbooks for relevant target groups; and provision of technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES).

(c) Supporting the piloting and revision process of the revised subject standards.

(d) Assessment of learning system performance and effectiveness of education reforms through surveys and observations.

2. Improved Management and Accountability of School Resources (Appraisal US\$0.89 million; Actual US\$0.67 million).

(a) Provision of technical assistance, training, equipment, furniture and materials for designing and operating an automated monitoring system for school budgets and expenditures; provision of training on the Per Capita Financing (PCF) system in general education; and provision of technical assistance to support key stakeholders in implementing PCF and other improved practices in management and accountability in four selected oblasts.

(b) Provision of training to school leaders and school accountants in school budgeting, development planning and reporting.

3. Communications and Implementation Support (Appraisal US\$1.42 million; Actual US\$1.23 million).

(a) Communications to stakeholders about changes in the education sector.

(b) Provision of implementation support to the project, including incremental operating costs.



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

Cost and Financing. The total cost at appraisal was estimated at US\$16.5 million, consisting of an IDA Credit of US\$9.1 million equivalent and an IDA Grant of US\$7.4 million equivalent. The funds were to be provided under a Specific Investment Loan modality. No direct Recipient contribution was planned. The actual cost was US\$15.36 million, and the discrepancy between the original and actual costs was due to exchange rate variations between SDR and USD (ICR, p. 54).

Dates. Appraisal was finalized on 2/7/13 followed by approval on 3/7/13, but the project became effective after one year on 3/25/14 due to delays in government approval, signing and ratification. A Mid-Term Review was undertaken on 10/12/16. A first restructuring on 5/21/18 extended the project by 5.5 months to allow more implementation time, additional training on pedagogy, and additional digital learning material with associated training for teachers and school principals. A second restructuring on 10/16/18 reallocated funds among disbursement categories. A third restructuring on 12/24/18 extended the closing date by six months to complete three pending contracts for textbook printing and distribution, as these contracts were suspended because of translation errors. The project closed on 6/28/19, one year beyond the original closing date.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

At appraisal, the project objective was consistent with the MOES Medium-Term Education Action Plan, 2012-14, that reflected the Education Sector Strategy, 2012-2020 (PAD, pp. 6-7). At the basic education level, there were four main need clusters: (i) governance, management and accountability; (ii) incentives and opportunities for teachers and school management to improve performance; (iii) educational standards and materials; and (iv) management information systems. The Education Action Plan called for the introduction of PCF methodology, and aimed to improve teacher effectiveness, address gaps in the availability of textbooks, strengthen procedures and capacities for textbook development at the Scientific and Methodological Council, and complete the revision of the basic education curriculum. Within the school environment, ineffective teaching-learning practices, teacher shortages, outdated curricula, and lack of adequate textbooks were salient issues (PAD, pp. 3-4). The project objective was in line with the priorities of the Bank Interim Strategy Note (ISN, FY12–FY13) that called for the formation of human capital through quality and reliable public social services. In addition, the objectives supported the Bank's Education Strategy 2020 that emphasized a systemic approach to improve "learning for all" through improved accountability, incentives, and assessment. A prior and first Bank-supported operation in the education sector in the country, the Rural Education Project, was implemented during the period 2004-2011 for US\$15 million. It aimed primarily at improving learning and provided incentives in primary and secondary education, including in the form of a teacher fellowship program to encourage young teachers to opt for and remain in teaching in rural areas.



At project closing, the development objective remained closely aligned with the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for the period FY19–FY22 under Focus Area 3: "Enhance economic opportunities and resilience" and CPF Objective 7 to develop human capital. The stated intervention logic for CPF Objective 7 is that growth based on productivity gains is constrained by weaknesses in cognitive competencies, skill limitations and low employability, and the CPF is designed to address these deficiencies and to enhance learning outcomes of basic education, integrate digital literacy, and improve the assessment of educational outcomes.

Also, the project objective maintained high relevance to the government's National Development Strategy for 2018–2040 and its Development Program of 2018–2020, that identified multiple education priorities, including (a) improving the quality of education; (b) making the education system more effective in teaching skills required by the modern economy; (c) supplying schools with a broader range of modern teaching and learning materials and innovative technology; and (d) strengthening professional capacities of teachers. In addition, the objective contributed to the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education, Target 4.1: "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes."

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

Create conditions for improved learning outcomes in basic education.

Rationale

Explanation of conditions for improved learning: As the development objective was broadly stated, the ICR (p. 7), building on the PAD, specified the combination of conditions that would be addressed by the project and that would positively influence learning outcomes in basic education. They encompassed improvements in pedagogy, quality aspects, and availability of resources and their efficient use. Specifically, the ICR explained the conditions as follows: (a) effective observation of classroom practices combined with informed training of teachers to enhance both teacher productivity and effectiveness of the professional support system; (b) a competency-based curriculum to foster skills and competencies needed for the modern labor market; (c) availability of textbooks and teacher guides, aligned with the new curricula to make teaching and learning more effective and enable implementation of a new curriculum; (d) systematic measurement of learning achievements to contribute to informed decision making for more targeted interventions; (e) strengthened school leadership and management, along with increased accountability of schools to communities to contribute to more efficient allocation of educational resources; and (f) establishment of conditions for more efficient allocation of educational resources through the expansion of PCF.



The Theory of change was credible and postulated that improved learning outcomes in basic education were hampered by specific barriers related to ineffective pedagogy, outdated curricula, and gaps in the availability of education resources and their efficient use. Hence the project focused on addressing these unfavorable conditions, including by introducing better curricula, improving teaching-learning practices and materials, and equitable use of education resources through the use of PCF. The provision of competency-oriented pedagogical practices and materials in the classroom was expected to provide students with enhanced opportunities to receive a higher quality of education.

The Task Team Leader further explained (5/26/2020) that the education system faced challenges that accumulated under the past political era with declines in quality and capacities. As it was uncertain that learning improvements would quickly materialize, the project objective realistically focused, by design, on selected sector foundations needed to improve learning, such as better teaching-learning conditions that were not in place. This was the reason for not committing the project to ultimate outcomes of improved learning, but rather to deliver proximal outcomes concerning the creation and improvement of favorable conditions that facilitate learning. Nevertheless, the ICR did report on learning outcomes improvement in basic education.

Hence, it was reasonably expected that the following project **activities**:

- design and delivery of in-service teacher training on the new curriculum;
- printing and delivery of textbooks for Grades 3-4;
- design of subject curricula and textbooks for Grades 5-9, and provision of textbooks and teacher guides for Grade 5-9;
- provision of teaching and learning materials to primary schools (packages of essential materials for primary schools typically included posters, charts, flash cards, maps, globes, and visual aids for mathematics and mother tongue languages, according to the ICR, p. 15. Also, supplementary digital e-learning materials in Kyrgyz and Russian languages included illustrations, games, and quizzes that encouraged more interactive teaching practices);
- observation of teacher classroom practices and adaptation of observation tools;
- National Sample-based Assessment (NSBA) in Grade 4;
- stakeholder engagement in project implementation, including under a complementary intervention titled Citizens Engagement for Better Schools that aimed at related capacity building of local communities;
- design and operation of a monitoring system for school budgets and expenditures;
- design and delivery of training and materials on budget formulation and monitoring under PCF to Rayon (district) Education Department and school accountants;
- updating and dissemination of legal and regulatory documentation on PCF;
- design and delivery of training on school leadership and stakeholder engagement with school directors;
- redesign and adoption of school report cards to disclose budgets and performance results to the public, to contribute to transparency, accountability, and better planning;
- training and technical assistance, furniture, equipment and materials needed to design and operationalize an automated monitoring system that incorporates key variables pertaining to school budgets, expenditures and efficiency; and
- financing of operating costs, including translation, supervision, staff salaries and incremental operating costs;



would lead to the following **outputs**:

- in-service teacher training on new pedagogy was provided, and the classroom teaching practice observation tool was applied;
- a revised primary curriculum was introduced that shifts a knowledge-based curriculum to a competency-based learning curriculum;
- Math, Mother-tongue, and Motherland studies textbooks aligned with the new curriculum were made available to Grade 3-4 students;
- 18 new subject standards were made available for Grades 5-6;
- new textbooks for 37 subjects were made available for Grade 5-6;
- digital and paper-based teaching and learning materials were made available for primary schools;
- digital supplementary teaching and learning materials were made available for secondary grades;
- 61 e-libraries were created;
- the results of NSBA in Grade 4 were produced;
- project findings were disseminated;
- key stakeholders were informed about changes in the education sector;
- a monitoring system was designed and made operational, while incorporating key variables on school budgets and expenditures;
- District Education Departments and school accountants were trained on budget formulation and expenditure monitoring;
- schools posted annual reports, including on budgets and expenditures;
- school directors were trained on leadership, school improvement planning and financial management; and
- while no gender-specific interventions were planned under this reform operation, the project introduced educational materials to confront gender biases, and monitored the Gender Parity Index.

The above outputs were reasonably expected to lead to the intermediate results (discussed below) that, in turn, would plausibly result in improved classroom teaching-learning conditions and in improved management and accountability of school resources.

Intermediate results

- The project benefited 467,444 people, exceeding the target of 423,400 people, including teachers, school directors, deputy directors and school accountants, district methodologists and district accountants; Grade 3-4 students; and Grade 5-6 students.
- The number of female beneficiaries who benefited from project interventions reached 69.1%, exceeding the target of 50% (partly explained by the fact that majority of the teacher workforce were females, ICR, p. 34).
- 10,043 primary school teachers were trained and certified, exceeding the target of 9,000 primary school teachers.



- The project trained 1,746 deputy directors, heads of methodological units and District Education Departments (the training of these officials was meant to support primary-level teachers in applying the new curriculum and pedagogy).
- 4.1 million copies of textbooks and teacher guides were developed, printed, and distributed, exceeding the target of 3 million textbooks and teacher guides.
- The project carried out a round of NSBA in 2017.
- All primary schools in the country were supplied with packages of essential teaching-learning materials, including digital content for primary and secondary grades.
- The total number of 5th and 6th grade textbook manuscripts reached 37, exceeding the target of 34 manuscripts.
- Textbooks for Mathematics, Mother-tongue and Motherland Studies for Grades 3, 4, 5, and 6 were provided to all schools.
- The percentage of school directors, Heads of Local Self Governance Bodies, and accountants who were certified as having completed training reached 96.4%, exceeding the target of 90%.
- A total of 2,091 school directors were trained in school leadership, development planning, engaging stakeholders for promoting community participation, budget formulation, expenditure monitoring and reporting under the PCF scheme. Also, 422 district and school accountants, and 85 district specialists, were trained on the concepts of PCF, estimation of school income, and the basics of accounting for schools and expenditures monitoring.
- The ICR (p. 18) stated that, for the first time in the country, the legal regulatory framework and methodologies were developed and introduced to support the testing/approbation of Grade 5–6 subject curriculum, textbooks, and teaching materials.

Outcomes

The reported evidence showed enhancement of classroom teaching-learning aspects. The percentage of training-certified primary grade teachers who followed the revised curriculum and applied improved teaching-learning practices in Mathematics and Mother-tongue Language reached 59% in 2019, exceeding the target of 50%. Data were provided by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) that assessed both qualitative and quantitative aspects. A beneficiary survey on quantitative aspects, conducted by a third party, showed that 69% of certified teachers applied improved teaching-learning skills (ICR, p. 32). The ICR's analysis rightly noted that the attainment of these outcomes was dependent on the fulfillment of the following criteria or conditions: (a) teachers had to be training-certified, (b) teachers had to follow the revised curriculum; and (c) teachers had to apply improved teaching-learning practices.



The percentage of students in grades 3-4 who used a revised textbook for Mother-Tongue Language, Mathematics and Motherland Studies reached 100%, exceeding the target of 85%.

Regarding improved accountability and management of school resources, the ICR noted that, by project closing in June 2019, 95% of schools in the country prepared their budgets in compliance with PCF and produced report cards through the education management information system as ordered by MOES, thus digitally institutionalizing the practice of regular reporting. 78.8% of these schools that operated under PCF posted their annual school budget and expenditures (as part of the digitized School Report Cards), exceeding the target of 75%. The ICR (p. 16) stated that the choice of this indicator was based on literature findings indicating that school autonomy and accountability were important elements that contribute to education quality.

Note on assessment of learning: The project supported a national assessment (NSBA) in Grade 4 in 2017, and its results showed positive changes in all three subject areas: the percentage of students who have not reached the basic level decreased by 8.6% in motherland studies, 5.5% in reading and comprehension, and 3.3% in mathematics, compared to 2014 (ICR, p. 18).

Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

The project created favorable conditions for improved learning in basic education, as it improved pedagogical practices, teacher skills, curricula, availability of textbooks and teaching-learning materials, and applied a Classroom Assessment Scoring System. It established conditions for efficient allocation of resources by supporting a nationwide rollout of Per Capita Financing. It promoted school capacities in budgeting and resource management, and transparent school reporting on performance and expenditures.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

In view of the nature of project activities and expected results focusing on conditions that would facilitate teaching and learning, the PAD did not undertake a cost-benefit analysis, but referred to international literature, including data from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), to argue for potential gains that would result from investing in a better quality environment and teaching practices. The PAD's economic analysis



suggested that improving teacher practices by one standard deviation (measured among OECD countries) was likely to increase the economic growth rate by two percent in the long run, and that an increase of the quality of learning material by one national standard deviation was associated with an additional 0.2 percent of per capita GDP yearly growth (PAD, p. 19). The analysis stated that the PCF modality, that was previously implemented in three oblasts, has proven to be effective in reducing resource allocation disparities across schools and in increasing spending efficiency. Hence, the analysis concluded that the PCF model was likely to bring substantial fiscal savings in the general education sector while improving equity (PAD, p. 20).

The ICR used country-specific literature on economic returns of education (ICR, pp. 47-50) to suggest that the use of project funds was broadly efficient. The ICR argued that the level of education of the head of household was closely linked to the probability of the household being poor. Based on data from the Statistical Digest-Standard of Living in the Kyrgyz Republic 2013–2017, the probability of being poor was 34.9% higher in households whose head had no education compared to other educational levels. The analysis noted that an additional year of schooling brought an increase of about 8% of individual income (World Bank. 2014. Kyrgyz Republic: Public Expenditure Review Policy Notes on Education).

The ICR's economic analysis stated that changes in the child poverty index between 2013 and 2017 showed that the most significant growth was under the sub index "Education and Upbringing" from 29.5% in 2013 to 37.8% in 2017. The analysis indicated that poverty and education remain strongly correlated, and suggested that improving education attendance and education quality in the Kyrgyz Republic remained essential determinants of poverty alleviation and growth of living standards. Since the results of NSBA 2017 demonstrated improved learning achievements in Grade 4 students, the analysis suggested that the project may have long-term impact on future individual earnings, as the literature suggests that students who do better in school, as measured by scores on standardized achievement tests, tend to have higher earning power.

The ICR also highlighted the fact that PCF contributes to making resource allocations more equal, transparent and efficient. According to MOES data on public financing of schools across regions, PCF resulted in fair and proportionate distribution of the budget between schools according to the norm per student. Specifically, there was equal access to financial resources for all schools; school budget autonomy allowed redistribution of resources to finance training expenses and professional development of teachers; and the scheme created economic incentives to improve schooling coverage (ICR, p. 49).

Both positive and negative aspects influenced the efficiency of implementation. Training, capacity building, and textbook provision were implemented at lower unit costs than projected. Operating costs were 27% lower than budgeted, and there was no staff turnover in the Project Implementation Unit during implementation (ICR, p. 19). On the other hand, project implementation was held up for a whole year due to project effectiveness delays that were associated with government approval, signing and parliamentary ratification (ICR, p. 23). There were two extensions of the project's closing date aggregating at one year to allow completion of project activities (ICR, p. 11).

Efficiency Rating

Substantial



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

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

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

Relevance of objectives is rated high, as the objectives were fully aligned at project closing with the Country Partnership Framework FY19–FY22 for developing human capital. Efficacy is rated substantial, consistent with almost fully achieving project objectives. Efficiency is rated substantial, as the project offered good value for money, but with moderate shortcomings in the efficiency of implementation. These findings are consistent with an outcome rating of satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

Political commitment to improving education quality remains strong, as reflected in the government’s Sustainable Development Strategy 2018–2040. Hence, the risk to development outcome at the policy level appears to be limited. But there is a financial sustainability risk, largely related to classroom inputs such as teaching-learning materials and textbooks. The government adopted a Textbook Rental Scheme in 2017 to ensure timely replacement of textbooks for all grades in general basic education, and this initiative may alleviate this risk (ICR, p. 29). Training modules developed under the project were integrated into regular course offerings of the Republican In-service Teacher Training and Retraining Institute. Teacher syllabus guides were also provided to all schools nationwide to enable teachers who did not participate in project training to familiarize themselves with the new approaches, and electronic versions of the training material were posted on MOES website. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System was institutionalized, and MOES mandated that all schools enter data of the School Report Card into the ministry’s management information system, thus institutionalizing the practice of regular reporting on school and student performance as well as budgeting, thus fostering system accountability.

Other institutional strengthening aspects included the implementation of the PCF database to facilitate system efficiency monitoring (ICR, p. 21). The capacities of the National Testing Center and the Republican In-service Teacher Training and Retraining Institute were strengthened in the adaptation and use of classroom observation tools and in identifying training needs of teachers. The project further strengthened the Kyrgyz Academy of Education’s processes in textbook approbation and evaluation through the development and testing of evaluation criteria, feedback provision protocols, and engagement with



publishing houses. Essentially, implementation of technical interventions was mainstreamed, thus enhancing sectoral functions.

A follow-on Bank-supported operation (Learning for the Future Project, P170542, in the amount of US\$50 million) was being prepared at the time of the ICR. The operation is expected to continue building on the institutions and systems that were strengthened under this project (ICR, p. 21). The TTL (5/26/2020) also stated that the follow-on project intends to further strengthen the learning assessment system.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The project was prepared in a collaborative manner with MOES, Ministry of Finance, the Education Committee of Parliament, and civil society organizations, including a round table consultation with 25 civil society organizations and members of the Public Supervisory Board (ICR, p 27). The task team considered the role of other donors and the funding of the Global Partnership for Education to ensure synergy and complementarity. The interventions were technically sound and realistic. Preparation considered lessons learned from education projects and the importance of political economy aspects in education reforms by focusing on non-controversial activities and a wide engagement of stakeholders (PAD, p. 13).

Preparation was grounded in a body of evidence derived from: (a) sector work jointly undertaken by the Bank and OECD, including lessons from PISA published in 2010; (b) pilots related to the Bank-financed Rural Education Project; and (c) findings of the System Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results (SABER) in policy areas of school accountability, student assessment, teacher policy, and early childhood development in the country.

The project design was realistic with a focused package of interventions. Implementation arrangements were well prepared, including fiduciary aspects and M&E. MOES was the main implementing agency, supported by a capable Project Coordination Unit with fiduciary and monitoring responsibilities. The Unit intended to provide selective technical assistance to institutions involved in project implementation, such as the Kyrgyz Academy of Education, Oblast In-service Teacher Training Institutes and Methodological Centers, local bodies, and schools (PAD, p. 15). A Sector-wide Steering Committee, including representatives of development partners, was formed to provide strategic guidance and oversight of the country's broader education efforts, including the project and other investments in the sector (PAD, p. 16). An assessment of financial management and procurement capacity was carried out at entry. The risks were appropriately assessed with adequate mitigation measures. There were minor shortcomings as noted by the ICR (p. 24), such as the need for stronger oversight in textbook reviews before printing to avoid translation errors.

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Satisfactory



b. Quality of supervision

Supervision and implementation support were led by a TTL based at Headquarters and a co-TTL based in Bishkek. The TTLs provided continuity and were involved in both preparation and supervision. The Bank's fiduciary team provided regular support and training to the national team dealing with financial management and procurement, and provided guidance to MOES when the ministry established its own procurement unit in 2018.

Implementation support was reportedly continuous (ICR, p. 28), including formal supervision missions and regular dialogue with the Government. The task team initially focused on supporting MOES in compensating for the delays in project effectiveness and approval of the government Basic Learning Plan, and in ensuring project compliance with Bank fiduciary requirements. The ICR noted that reporting was of good quality with detailed Aide Memoires and ISRs addressing technical and operational issues, and with clear delineation of next steps and follow-up actions that were agreed with counterparts. The team was proactive and responsive to government needs, including through the timely processing of three restructurings. The team showed flexibility in reallocating resources to digital tools for teaching and learning (ICR, p. 24). According to the ICR, the team was also active in addressing the complaint received on textbooks (see Section 2e). The team facilitated the preparation of a follow-on project (see Section 7).

Quality of Supervision Rating

Highly Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

As noted in Section 4, the objective was broadly stated (create conditions for improved learning outcomes), but these were explained and specified by the ICR based on the PAD's information. The theory of change adequately illustrated the results chain from activities to outputs, and from intermediate results to outcomes. The results framework and its indicators were relevant to the objective, as stated. Data collection methodologies were sound and built further on existing arrangements. During preparation, M&E capacities were assessed, and technical assistance was planned for further strengthening data collection mechanisms. M&E arrangements and the Project Operations Manual were comprehensive with detailed arrangements for M&E activities and reporting. The project planned for an impact evaluation on the effectiveness of teacher training in terms of classroom teaching methodologies.

b. M&E Implementation



Implementation was carried out as planned. Progress reports were prepared by the Project Coordination Unit and submitted to MOES and the Bank on a regular basis. The Project Coordination Unit also monitored training quality, on a sample basis.

c. M&E Utilization

In addition to the utilization of M&E findings in routine project monitoring, the results of NSBA 2017 were used to inform the development of the new Education Sector Strategy 2030 and its accompanying Action Plan 2021–2023. The PCF database helped to ascertain how well the PCF reform was being implemented, and how effective it was in promoting the efficient use of education resources (ICR, p. 26). The two modules on school budgets and School Report Cards were integrated into the MOES automated education database, promoting transparency. Classroom observations helped in further identifying teacher development needs and in informing and refining training modules (ICR, p. 26). M&E findings were also used to inform the follow-on project, Learning for the Future (P170542), as noted in Section 7.

M&E Quality Rating

High

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified under Environmental Assessment Category C, as no adverse environmental impact was expected. The project did not raise social concerns.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

During the life of the project, no issues were observed in fiduciary compliance, and both financial management and procurement were consistently rated as satisfactory by the task team.

Financial management. Related arrangements and performance were deemed to be satisfactory and acceptable to the Bank throughout implementation, including for planning and budgeting, accounting, financial reporting, internal controls, and external audits. The project was compliant with the financial covenants of the Financing Agreement, including timely submission of the interim financial reports in format and content satisfactory to the Bank. Audits were unqualified (ICR, p. 27).

Procurement. Procurement of all goods and technical assistance services adhered to Bank Procurement Guidelines (ICR, p. 27). Procurement followed approved plans that were updated and published



regularly. Procurement performance was deemed to be satisfactory by the task team through the process cycle, including for contract monitoring and timeliness of payments.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

The ICR (p. 22) reported on positive unintended impacts, including the following:

Upon release of NSBA 2017 results, the government developed a Concept Paper on Assessment in School Education, that envisioned carrying out the National Sample-based Assessment Survey on a regular basis. According to the ICR, this could be considered a significant impact, as it demonstrated the credibility of the tool and the political will to regularly assess system performance and effectiveness of education reforms.

Under the technical assistance provided to support the system-wide implementation of PCF, the funding formula considered the higher costs associated with educating children with special needs, thus motivating schools to accept children with disabilities.

d. Other

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11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Substantial	High	The M&E system as designed and implemented was more than sufficient to assess the achievement of objectives and to test the links in the results chain. Also, M&E findings were used to inform the direction of the project, the new Education Sector Strategy 2030 and its



accompanying Action Plan 2021–2023, and the follow-on Bank-supported project “Learning for the Future”.

Quality of ICR --- High

12. Lessons

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

Projects that are closely aligned with education sector priorities and programs have a greater likelihood of advancing further educational improvements and reforms. The project was fully aligned with elements of the national strategy, and such alignment reinforced commitment and facilitated implementation and institutionalization of improved practices.

Institutionalization of new teaching-learning practices is facilitated by proper sequencing of project/program activities. Under the project, input provision such as textbooks, teaching-learning material, and digital learning material was well sequenced with the introduction of innovative approaches such as classroom observation tools and competency-based curricula, concurrently supported by a training and capacity building program. Implementation schedules also ensured that classroom inputs were available for teachers when they completed their training, thus enabling the application of new skills and assessment of training impact.

Standardized classroom observation tools, such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, provide an opportunity to holistically measure what happens in the classroom and help understand what drives better learning. Under the project, the assessment tool also helped in identifying teachers’ professional development needs, informing in-service teacher training programs, and providing feedback to teachers to become more effective.

Policies granting greater school autonomy are reinforced by added interventions to build capacities at the school level for planning, budgeting, and quality aspects, and to empower local communities and parents to engage with school management, as undertaken by the project. Also, communications and outreach efforts helped stakeholders to be informed and engaged in school affairs, and contributed to generate further support from teachers, school administrators, parents and communities.



In addition, IEG identified the following lesson:

Advancements in education sector reforms can be achieved with minimum funding. The project focused on influencing sector conditions and practices that foster improved learning outcomes in basic education, at a relatively small cost of US\$15.2 million.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR was clearly written, results-oriented, and candid. It adequately illustrated the theory of change that was aligned to the stated objective. The ICR was consistent, both internally and with guidelines. The evidence was credible, appropriately referenced, and in line with the ICR's narrative. The analysis was thorough, notably for efficacy, where some results were triangulated. The performance storyline was complete and tightly presented. Reporting on fiduciary compliance was thorough. Important lessons on the institutionalization of new practices and linking capacity building with increased autonomy were derived from project experience, and they should be useful for future reform operations in the education sector.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

High