



1. Project Data

Project ID P159519	Project Name GY Education Sector Improvement		
Country Guyana	Practice Area(Lead) Education		
L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-60090	Closing Date (Original) 30-Apr-2023	Total Project Cost (USD) 11,019,291.47	
Bank Approval Date 28-Apr-2017	Closing Date (Actual) 30-Apr-2025		
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)	
Original Commitment	13,326,924.00	0.00	
Revised Commitment	11,113,353.98	0.00	
Actual	11,019,291.47	0.00	
Prepared by Koen Martijn Geven	Reviewed by Judyth L. Twigg	ICR Review Coordinator Susan Ann Caceres	Group IEGHC (Unit 2)

2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The original project development objectives (PDOs), as stated in the Financing Agreement (p. 5) and Project Appraisal Document (PAD, p. 15), were to: "(i) improve teaching practices and student achievement in mathematics at the primary level in selected schools; and (ii) strengthen the teaching capacity and improve the learning environment of the University of Guyana Faculty of Health Sciences (UG-FHS)."

For purposes of this review, the original PDO statement is parsed into three objectives: (i) improve teaching practices at the primary level in selected schools; (ii) improve student achievement in mathematics at the



primary level in selected schools; and (iii) strengthen the teaching capacity and improve the learning environment of UG-FHS. For the third objective, both strengthening teaching capacity and improving the learning environment were aimed toward the singular goal of obtaining accreditation for the health sciences program at UG-FHS, situating both aspects within a single results chain and thereby making it appropriate to assess as one objective.

At a June 2022 restructuring, there was a revision of the first part of the PDO statement. The first objective was changed from “improve teaching practices and student achievement in mathematics at the primary level in selected schools” to “improve teaching practices and implement curricular reform at the primary level at selected schools.” As this change represented a reduction of the project's ambition, this review will perform a split rating for that objective.

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

Yes

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

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

Yes

d. Components

Component 1: *Integrated Curriculum Reform (original allocation: US\$6.03 million, actual expenditure: US\$3.81 million).*

This component aimed to enhance student learning outcomes by revising the curriculum and teaching practices across nursery, primary, and lower secondary levels. The revision process would follow a phased approach, starting with a pilot in a nationally representative sample of schools. Insights from the pilot and feedback from beneficiaries would then guide adjustments before scaling up nationwide and/or moving on to the next subject or level. This component included four subcomponents.

Subcomponent 1.1: aimed at ensuring alignment and coherence across subjects and levels by: (i) revising the curriculum framework for nursery, primary, and lower secondary; (ii) training Ministry of Education (MoE) staff on best practices in curriculum writing, teaching methods, and teacher training; (iii) developing teaching guides and course outlines for selected subjects; and (iv) providing an office and training equipment for the National Centre for Educational Resource Distribution.

Subcomponent 1.2: was to support the delivery of training on the new curriculum framework/teaching guides and on student-centered pedagogies to school teachers and principals, master trainers, curriculum officers, and regional and district education officers. Additionally, this subcomponent was to finance classroom observation of selected public-school primary teachers to evaluate the impact of the revised curriculum.



Subcomponent 1.3: was to support capacity building on how to conduct effective student assessments, analyze learning outcomes, and use the findings to inform curriculum and teaching improvements, through activities at the national and school levels.

Subcomponent 1.4: was to finance the development, acquisition, and distribution of teaching and learning materials consistent with the revised curriculum framework for selected subjects at nursery, primary, and lower secondary levels.

Component 2: *Strengthening the Teaching Capacity and Improving the Learning Environment for the University of Guyana (UG) Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) (original allocation: US\$6.94 million, actual expenditure: US\$6.00 million).*

This component was to support UG-FHS in achieving and maintaining regional accreditation. It included two subcomponents:

Subcomponent 2.1: was to provide technical support to FHS lecturers for adapting course structures and contents to align them with international medical education standards, and development of a student performance and evaluation system consistent with the requirements for international accreditation.

Subcomponent 2.2: was to finance construction of a new health sciences education building with modern training and laboratory facilities.

Component 3: *Project Implementation Support (original allocation: US\$1.06 million, actual expenditure: US\$1.21 million).*

This component was to support project implementation, including capacity building activities.

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

Project Cost and Financing. The project was initially to be financed by an International Development Association credit of SDR 9.9 million (US\$13.30 million equivalent). At a 2025 restructuring, a portion of the credit (SDR 1.7 million, US\$2.25 million equivalent) was cancelled due to lower-than-expected construction costs and elimination of planned piloting of the new curriculum for Grades 5-6, as the pilot was no longer a government priority (IEG interview with task team, 11 December 2025). The project disbursed a total of US\$11.02 million.

Borrower Contribution. At approval, the Borrower contribution was projected at US\$700,000, but at closing, counterpart financing for Component 2.2 (rescoping/redesign and supervision costs for the FHS building) amounted to US\$183,460. The planned counterpart financing of other activities was removed during a 2025 restructuring, as it was not deemed necessary following the decision to delay the Grades 5-6 curriculum pilot.

Dates. The project was approved by the Board on 28 April 2017 and became effective on 8 August 2017. A mid-term review was conducted in October of 2020. The project was restructured twice, on 6 June 2022 and 7 April 2025. At the 2022 restructuring, the project was extended by 24 months, with its closing date changed from 30 April 2023 to 30 April 2025. The project closed on 30 April 2025.



First restructuring, 2022. The first restructuring responded to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic that resulted in substantial learning losses, the discontinuation of the national exam at the primary level that would have been used to track one of the project's PDO-level indicators, and delays in procurement. The restructuring included a change in the PDOs (as described in Section 2a) because the objective to improve student achievement in mathematics could no longer be measured adequately with the cancellation of national exams, and because school closures during the pandemic likely led to a decrease in overall learning levels. The restructuring also increased the level of ambition of a PDO-level indicator for the second objective, from a 10 percent increase to a 15 percent increase in the number of teachers meeting minimum standards in student-centered teaching practices, and removed a reference value from the PDO-level indicator for the third objective (number of teachers, contributing to accreditation of the medicine program at UG-FHS), as that sub-target already exceeded the value needed for accreditation purposes. This restructuring also extended the project by two years to ensure the completion of the UG-FHS building, whose construction had faced significant delays during the design phase.

Second restructuring, 2025. The second restructuring responded to project savings due to lower construction costs and to the cancellation of the implementation of curricular reforms for Grades 5 and 6. The restructuring cancelled SDR 1.7 million (US\$2.25 million equivalent) and re-allocated other funding between components.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

The objectives were highly relevant to Guyana's development challenges in the education sector. At the time of project appraisal, Guyana was experiencing low learning outcomes, despite the country having reached almost universal enrollment in primary education. In 2016, only 14 percent of Grade 2 students achieved scores indicating that they had “attained the standard” in literacy and numeracy; 41 percent were “approaching standard,” and 45 percent were “below standard” (PAD, pp. 11-12). Specific constraints to learning included inequalities between coastal and hinterland regions, inadequate teacher practices in the classroom, and an outdated curriculum that had not been systematically reformed since the 1990s. Mathematics (or numeracy) was considered as a particular challenge, given its role as a foundation for performance in other subjects. In higher education, there was a lack of adequate teaching and learning facilities, particularly in the health sciences, for which the University of Guyana was the sole provider. In the absence of UG-FHS accreditation, the health sector lacked a pipeline of doctors and medical specialists that the country urgently needed.

The objectives were also highly responsive to country and Bank strategies at project appraisal through closing. The project's objectives supported the first priority of Guyana's Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2014-2018 (to increase learning outcomes for all levels of education and all sub-groups) and were consistent with the World Bank Group's FY16-18 Country Engagement Note (specifically, its second goal of improving the quality of education). The project's objectives remained relevant to the ESP covering the period 2021-2025, particularly its Objective 2 (improving performance at all levels, and specifically performance in English and mathematics in Grades 2, 4 and 6) and Objective 5 (contributing to lifelong learning and employability by preparing students for new jobs at higher levels of the education system). Additionally, the project contributes to the Bank's current Country Partnership Framework for Guyana, FY23-26, in particular its first of three High Level Outcomes, “Improved Human Capital,” and its objectives



to improve education quality at the nursery and primary levels and to strengthen public health preparedness (which was directly addressed through the strengthening of UG-FHS).

The project's objectives were situated appropriately within the Bank's broader engagement in Guyana's education sector. The Guyana Secondary Education Improvement Project (P147924, US\$ 23.5 million, 2014-2023) supported access and quality improvements in secondary education through improving teacher appraisal and training, piloting the use of technology to support learning, investing in infrastructure in underserved areas, and developing an Education Management Information System. The Guyana Early Childhood Education project (P129555, US\$1.7 million, 2015-2018) supported quality early childhood education provision to all nursery and Grade 1 classes in the hinterland regions. In the higher education sector, the project built on the University of Guyana Science and Technology Support Project (P125288, US\$13.7 million, 2011-2017), which supported upgrades to the learning environment and facilities for four UG faculties (Agriculture and Forestry, Environmental and Earth Sciences, Natural Science, and Technology), while fostering research and curricular improvements and strengthening of UG's institutional capacity.

Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

Improve teaching practices at the primary level in selected schools

Rationale

The theory of change for this objective held that project support for teacher training, including a focus on student-centered learning, coupled with development of a new methodology for classroom observations (using the World Bank-developed TEACH tool for teacher observation and feedback), would improve student-centered teaching practices. The combination of appropriate teacher training, sustained classroom observation, feedback, and follow-up would logically and plausibly lead to an improvement in teaching practices, achieving the objective.

Outputs

- 1,458 teachers were trained on the new curriculum, exceeding the target of 1,417 teachers trained.
- New teaching guides for the core subjects of Grades 1-9 were developed.
- 27,041 students benefited from direct interventions to enhance learning, exceeding the target of 25,367 students.
- The TEACH tool was implemented in primary schools for classroom observation, and later for nursery and secondary schooling as well.



- An impact evaluation of the teacher training was implemented and results were analyzed, as targeted.

Outcomes

Achievement of this objective was to be assessed by measuring the share of teachers meeting standards in student-centered teaching practices, with an original target of a 10 percent increase and revised target of a 15 percent increase. Teaching practices were to be measured on the TEACH classroom observation tool, which rates teacher practices on five key constructs between 0 and 5. However, the ICR (pp. 8-9) reports that project data for this indicator could not be used, as there were fluctuations in the size and composition of the sample as well as the assessment methodology across survey rounds, biasing the results.

The ICR therefore assesses achievement of this objective through the data from the project's impact evaluation (which used the staggered implementation of the curriculum to assign treatment) showing that, by round 2, treatment effects were 0.32 (in instruction), 0.391 (in lesson facilitation), 0.28 (in checking for understanding), 0.255 (in feedback) and 0.352 (in critical thinking) in the short term. Over the longer term (by round 4 of the impact evaluation), there was some fade-out, as the effect sizes were somewhat smaller: 0.121 (in instruction), 0.118 (in lesson facilitation), 0.124 (in checking for understanding), 0.255 (in feedback) and -0.014 (in critical thinking). The effects were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$ or $p < 0.05$), except for the long-term effect on critical thinking.

In addition to the observed fade-out, it is difficult to interpret the size of the treatment effect demonstrated by the impact evaluation. In particular, it is not clear from the evidence presented in the ICR whether the treatment effect was sufficiently large to change the share of teachers meeting the standard of 3.5 on the TEACH score (as intended by the original outcome target).

Additional descriptive evidence (ICR, Annex Table A2, p. 32) showed that at baseline, 20.34 percent of teachers met the standard in student-centered pedagogical practices, with an increase to 39.17 percent by round 2 (an increase of 18.83 percentage points), and then to 50.88 percent by round 3 (an increase of 30.54 percentage points), followed by decline to 21.75 percent by round 4 (an increase of only 1.41 percentage points over baseline). The ICR notes, however, that the scales of these descriptive observations were not comparable over time (pp. 8-9), and therefore no conclusions can be drawn about the project's impact on teaching practices solely from these descriptive data.

Achievement of this objective is therefore rated Modest due to insufficient evidence.

Rating

Modest

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

Improve student achievement in mathematics at the primary level in selected schools (original objective)

Rationale



The theory of change for this objective held that technical assistance for comprehensive curriculum reform, including training for MoE on curriculum writing, the provision of an office and training equipment for the National Centre for Educational Resource Distribution, the provision of new learning materials, and a revised student assessment system, would contribute to increased quality of instruction on four key pillars (content, materials, teaching practices, and assessment). Along with the development of new teacher guides, teacher trainings, and classroom observations (under Objective 1), these interventions were expected to raise learning levels overall, including in mathematics, which was one of the subjects covered under the curriculum reform.

Outputs

- A new curriculum framework was developed for nursery and Grades 1-4, as targeted. The core curriculum includes English, mathematics, science, and social studies. The ICR does not provide detailed substantive information on the changes to the curriculum.
- 445 schools implemented the revised curriculum in the core subjects at the primary level, exceeding the target of 90 schools.
- The National Grade 2 Assessment that was meant to measure achievement of this objective was cancelled indefinitely, as "MoE discontinued the national exam that was used to track student achievement in mathematics at the primary level" (ICR, p. 5).
- 27,041 students benefited from direct interventions to enhance learning, exceeding the target of 25,367 students.
- A survey of teachers' and parents' satisfaction with the new curriculum and teaching methods was conducted, and results were analyzed, achieving the target that a survey be conducted. While the ICR does not present survey results, it notes that scale-up of the curricular reforms was decided upon following "parents' and teachers' satisfaction with the renewed curriculum" (ICR, p. 9).

Outcomes

Achievement of this objective was originally to be measured using the National Grade 2 Assessment. The PDO-level indicator called for improvement in the share of Grade 2 students "approaching standard" or "attaining standard" in numeracy, from 60 percent to 63 percent for girls, and from 51 percent to 54 percent for boys.

With no data from the Grade 2 assessment following MoE's discontinuation of the national exam, the ICR uses the impact evaluation to demonstrate achievement of this objective. The impact evaluation showed that students treated in November 2019 had 4.2 percentage points ($p < 0.01$) higher performance in mathematics relative to students in the control group, and students treated in February 2020 had 3.3 percentage points ($p < 0.05$) higher performance in mathematics. These results were measured for students across Grades 2-4.

Achievement of this original objective is rated Substantial given the increase in learning outcomes observed for mathematics in both treatment rounds, but with caveats related to challenges in interpreting the reported increases in terms of a share of students "approaching standard" or "attaining standard," as intended by the original PDO-level indicator and target.

Rating



Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2 REVISION 1

Revised Objective

Implement curricular reform at the primary level in selected schools (revised objective)

Revised Rationale

The theory of change for this revised and more output-oriented objective held that technical assistance for comprehensive curriculum reform, including training for MoE on curriculum writing, the provision of an office and training equipment for the National Centre for Educational Resource Distribution, the provision of new learning materials, the development of new teacher guides, and teacher trainings, would contribute to MoE's increased capacity to implement curricular reform, achieving the objective.

Outputs

- The new curricular framework was developed, implemented, and scaled nationally, with support to teachers in terms of new materials, teacher trainings, and classroom observations.
- 1,499 teachers were trained (target: 1,477), out of which 1,420 female teachers were trained (target: 1,262).

Outcomes

By project closure, the renewed curriculum had been scaled up nationally for Grades 1 to 4, with 445 schools meeting all implementation criteria, far exceeding the target of 90 schools.

Despite exceeding the target for number of schools implementing the reformed curriculum, achievement of this objective is rated as Substantial. A High rating is not warranted because there is little discussion in the ICR on the specific substantive changes to the curriculum, and limited evidence from which to assess the quality of implementation of the curriculum beyond the general statement on satisfaction of teachers and parents.

Revised Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 3

Objective

Strengthen the teaching capacity and improve the learning environment of the University of Guyana Faculty of Health Sciences (UG-FHS)

Rationale

The theory of change for this objective held that support for the construction of a new health science education building with modern training and laboratory facilities, coupled with financing of technical support for the adaptation of course structures and for the development and implementation of a new student evaluation system, would plausibly and logically lead to strengthened teaching capacity and improved



learning environments. Further down the results chain, these improvements would then contribute to UG-FHS obtaining accreditation so that it can train the health workers that are required in the labor market.

Outputs

- The UG Health Sciences building was constructed, achieving the target. The new building reflected an improved learning environment, having been designed with appropriate laboratories and other clinical and non-clinical infrastructure.
- 41 lecturers at the UG Health Sciences faculty were trained in course delivery, achieving the revised target of 35 lecturers but not the original target of 70 lecturers.
- The blueprint for the student performance assessment system was finalized, with an integrated examination conducted using Examsoft software during the summer of 2022. That assessment system is still in use.
- Baseline and endline beneficiary surveys to UG-FHS Health Sciences faculty, students, lecturers, and administrative staff were conducted and analyzed, achieving the target.
- The project's interventions with UG-FHS directly benefitted 43,968 persons, surpassing the target of 26,854 persons. Of those, 56 percent were female, surpassing the target of 50 percent.

Outcomes

- The medicine program at the University of Guyana met the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and Other Health Professions accreditation criteria for course delivery, student performance assessment, and facilities, and the program therefore received accreditation.

The achievement of this objective is rated as Substantial. Accreditation for UG-FHS was obtained, reflecting successful construction of the new building and improvements to teaching practices and student evaluation.

Rating

Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

Overall efficacy under the original objectives is rated Substantial, with a Modest rating for one of the three objectives reflecting inadequate data to assess achievement of original targets.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial



OVERALL EFFICACY REVISION 1

Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rationale

Overall efficacy under the revised objectives is rated Substantial, with a Modest rating for one of the three objectives reflecting inadequate data to assess achievement of original targets.

Overall Efficacy Revision 1 Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

At appraisal, the economic analysis assumed that curricular reforms would increase the quality of education and therefore raise the share of students reaching Grade 11 and consequently increase tertiary education participation. Assuming that at least 15 cohorts would benefit from the interventions, only a 1 percent increase in 11th graders would produce an internal rate of return (IRR) of 4 percent, with a 5 percent increase in 11th graders producing an IRR of 13 percent. For Component 2, benefits were based on improved health care as a result of a better trained health workforce. To quantify these benefits and calculate a benefit-cost ratio, the PAD used the value of statistical life (VSL) methodology, with the VSL defined as "the amount that people are jointly willing to pay for fatality risk reduction in the expectation of saving one life." The analysis estimated that the investment would be justified if it saved 4,000 statistical lives at the lower bound, and fewer than 3 statistical lives at the upper bound.

The ICR's economic analysis for Component 1 is based on the impact evaluation's assessment that that students in schools whose teachers were trained in the renewed curriculum scored 4.2 percentage points higher in overall numeracy relative to students in the control group, which then translates into 0.2 additional years of education. Given that the impact evaluation shows that there are some fade-out effects in teaching practices, a conservative scenario assumes that the observed impact is sustained across five cohorts, while an optimistic scenario considers that it lasts for ten cohorts (standard economic life of a teacher training program). Under these assumptions, the IRR for Component 1 would range between 6 percent and 8 percent, confirming the PAD's initial expectations. For Component 2, a country-specific VSL of US\$5.41 million was estimated for Guyana, using the "Health Sector Cost-Benefit Analysis Guidance" issued by the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Under this assumption, the investment in Component 2 would be justified if it resulted in the saving of at least two statistical lives, an outcome that represents a more favorable scenario than initially projected.

Significant implementation delays substantially affected implementation efficiency. To complete implementation, a 24-month extension was required. The pandemic caused delays in the piloting of the revised curriculum and the distribution of teaching and learning materials. The pandemic also affected Component 2, as many lecturers in health sciences were occupied on the frontline as medical professionals. Beyond the pandemic, finalizing the building's design took significantly longer than anticipated due to extended review and approval processes. Following March 2020 elections, a new government administration requested revisions to the building's aesthetic, further delaying the finalization of the design. These delays led to price increases due to the high inflation experienced in the construction sector at that time. To mitigate cost overruns, the redesign included a modest reduction in scope while still meeting accreditation requirements. These delays contributed to a downgrading of the procurement rating twice during the project, reaching Moderately Unsatisfactory by July



2024. Finally, staffing constraints—both within the project implementation unit (PIU) and at the MoE—slowed decision making and processing at various points, though capacity gradually improved over the life of the project. While some implementation inefficiencies may have been offset by the modified design of the UG-FHS, which resulted in savings of US\$ 0.9 million, these delays also led to increased project management costs, which rose from 8 percent to 11 percent of the total project cost.

Efficiency Rating

Modest

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	✓	4.00	43.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	6.00	35.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

The project had High relevance and Modest efficiency. Efficacy was Substantial under both the original and revised objectives, with two objectives rated Substantial and one rated Modest. Outcome is rated Moderately Satisfactory under both the original and revised objectives, and therefore Moderately Satisfactory overall.

a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

The risk to the development outcome is moderate. At the technical level, although the activities supporting the curriculum reform were designed to ensure that project achievements would be sustained and could be expanded upon, the implementation of the rollout of the renewed curriculum for Grades 5 and 6 continues to be on hold. On the other hand, it is likely that the achievements with UG-FHS will be sustained over time, as the institution has regained regional accreditation and has developed and adopted a detailed blueprint guiding further reforms aimed at maintaining accreditation standards. The new FHS building has supported the Faculty's expansion, with admissions to the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery programs



nearly doubling (from 74 to 143 students) and total College admissions increasing by 37 percent, from 382 to 525, between the 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 academic years.

There was strong government ownership of the project and its main interventions, as well as from MoE and the University of Guyana, both of which continue to provide institutional support to sustain the project-financed interventions. Economic risk is moderate, with the economy steadily growing but heavily dependent on global market prices for natural resources, as well as ongoing reliance on remittances. Financial risk is low, given the relatively manageable cost to operating the tools implemented in the project. Political risk was present during implementation, with the government change after elections affecting the design of the university building, but the new government is fully on board with the new design. Social and environmental risks are low, given that the project closed with a Satisfactory rating in those areas. However, there is risk to the education sector from disaster exposure, given that Guyana is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and tropical storm risk, with its low-lying agricultural regions and coastal areas below sea level.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

Project design aligned well with government priorities. The project responded to the government's requirements as laid out in the ESP and had a mostly coherent internal logic. The framing of the objectives was somewhat illogical, with the first part of the statement combining both an output (an increase in teaching practices) and an outcome (increases in mathematics achievement). Regardless, the project had an overall straightforward design that was aligned with the objectives. Component 1 covered key drivers of improved learning outcomes (teaching content and materials, teachers' capacity building, and learning assessments). Component 2 addressed the main constraints to regaining regional accreditation for UG-FHS, thereby reducing constraints on training new health workers. Additionally, recognizing the importance of the curricular reform, the project incorporated an impact evaluation to capture lessons learned and guide nationwide scale-up across pre-primary, primary, and lower secondary levels. Including a team member from the health sector to support the design and implementation of Component 2 could have better strengthened cross-sectoral collaboration, but this kind of cross-sectoral collaboration nonetheless occurred informally.

At appraisal, the project had prepared the relevant safeguards documents, including an Indigenous Peoples Plan that dealt extensively with curriculum questions. An implementation team was in place by the time of project launch and had already started working on procurement documents before implementation (PAD, p. 23). The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system was well designed, with clarity running from the PDOs towards results indicators. Institutional and fiduciary arrangements were clear at appraisal and did not change significantly during implementation. However, the project team could have prepared the design and bidding documents for the university construction project by appraisal, given earlier experience with the higher education sector, to mitigate the likelihood of delays in procurement and construction of the health building, which eventually led to an implementation delay of 24 months. The risk assessment was candid, though it did not adequately identify the potential for construction delays during implementation, which are common occurrence in education infrastructure projects.



Quality-at-Entry Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

Supervision was overall streamlined, and the Bank team actively supported implementation. Supervision missions took place approximately every six months and focused on identifying and resolving issues. Implementation Status and Results Reports (ISRs) reported on progress and challenges regularly, engaging candidly with issues faced during implementation. However, project reporting was somewhat technical, without much detail on the overall development impact of the project. The project responded to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and related school closures by streamlining the curriculum, using digital tools to train teachers, and distributing teaching materials to students at home. However, UG-FHS construction faced significant delays throughout project implementation, with designs finalized only by the end of 2019, and Requests for Bids finalized only in early 2021, partially due to a change in government following elections.

During the final phase of project implementation, a full-time education specialist was hired to reside in-country, allowing the Bank to work even more closely with the Borrower. However, challenges with regard to procurement of the construction of the UG-FHS building were identified relatively late in ISRs, and earlier mitigation would likely have been possible with more focused attention. A World Bank civil works consultant assisted the UG and project teams with reviewing the master schedule and sequencing key actions to promote progress in the construction of the new UG-FHS building, and a Bank research economist supported the impact evaluation. The Bank team promptly documented and proposed measures to address implementation challenges. However, despite the October 2020 mid-term review having identified the need for restructuring, that restructuring occurred relatively late (almost two years later, in June 2022), after the majority of Bank funds had been disbursed.

Quality of Supervision Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The project's results framework (RF) was overall logical, featuring three PDO-level indicators that were directly aligned with the PDOs and intermediate results indicators (IRIs) measuring outputs and intermediate outcomes along the results chain. All indicators were well defined, with targets that matched the project's level of ambition and clearly specified methodologies, data sources, collection frequency, and responsibilities. Furthermore, the RF incorporated several IRIs to monitor data collection efforts aimed at assessing the project's impact—both quantitatively, through the impact evaluation, and qualitatively,



through beneficiary surveys—to support the extraction of lessons learned. The RF's one minor shortcoming was the omission of an output indicator to track progress on the implementation of Subcomponent 1.4, provision of teaching and learning materials.

b. M&E Implementation

The quality of the project's M&E was somewhat hindered by inadequate staffing within the PIU. The responsibility for project M&E fell under the MoE's Planning Unit for Component 1 and under UG for Component 2, both of which were supported by the M&E Officer within the PIU. At the end of 2021, the PIU's M&E specialist left the team and was not replaced until mid-2023, when the MoE assigned a part-time M&E Officer. To reflect the absence in this key position, the project's M&E rating was downgraded from Satisfactory to Moderately Satisfactory in June 2022. Despite the eventual staffing of the role, the project continued to face persistent reporting delays, leading to a further downgrade to Moderately Unsatisfactory in July 2024. In the latest ISR, submitted in March 2025, the rating was upgraded back to Moderately Satisfactory following the submission of the outstanding semi-annual reports for December 2023 and June 2024.

Indicators were substantially revised at the 2022 restructuring, given the change in implementation realities and revision to the PDOs. Despite the restructuring, issues still arose with the monitoring of the PDO-level indicator for improved teaching practices and the data collection process for the impact evaluation. When calculating the TEACH endline results for the impact evaluation, it was discovered that the PIU had used a methodology that differed from the one specifically designed for the TEACH tool. Moreover, the PIU's calculations contained errors and did not fully incorporate all available data. As a result, the baseline and historical values for the teaching practices indicator had to be revised in July 2024. Additionally, the data collection process for that indicator deviated from the original design, leading to imbalances between the treatment and control groups at baseline, as well as fluctuations in sample size across survey rounds. To address these issues, the World Bank team engaged an economist from the Development Research Group, who revised those calculations and conducted the final analysis for the impact evaluation.

c. M&E Utilization

The M&E data collected during project implementation played a key role in informing adjustments, particularly under Component 1. Monitoring data reported through the RF supported the first project restructuring by helping ensure that targets were realistic and aligned with implementation progress. Additionally, the training on the revised curriculum for Grades 1 and 2 was delivered in two phases. Initially, the training was piloted in 108 primary schools, enabling the MoE to gather valuable insights through field visits and two teacher surveys (one pre-training and one post-training). Based on the recommendations from this pilot phase, the training program was refined and successfully scaled up nationwide.

Moreover, M&E activities generated valuable knowledge to guide the continuation and improvement of project-supported initiatives after project closure. The findings from the impact evaluation, the 2024 satisfaction surveys to teachers and parents regarding the renewed primary curriculum, and the 2025 beneficiary survey targeting UG-FHS students, lecturers, and administrative staff have provided



important insights and lessons learned. These findings carry the potential to inform future decision-making by the MoE and the government in sustaining and expanding the project's achievements.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified as category B and triggered policies OP/BP 4.01 (Environmental Assessment) and OP/BP 4.09 (Pest Management). The main environmental risks and potential impacts were related to the construction activities planned under Subcomponent 2.2. Overall, these risks and impacts were considered temporary, localized, minor, and manageable through appropriate risk mitigation measures, infrastructure design, World Bank Environmental Health and Safety Guidelines, and Good International Industry Practice.

On the social side, an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) and a corresponding Social Assessment were prepared prior to appraisal since the project would be implemented country-wide, including in Indigenous territories, and therefore triggered OP/BP 4.10 Indigenous Peoples. The IPP was developed through a Free, Prior, and Informed Consultation process, which demonstrated broad support for the project's activities among Indigenous communities. This consultation also led to the identification of twelve key actions aimed at ensuring Indigenous peoples' active participation and the protection of their cultural and linguistic heritage throughout the curriculum reform process.

Across the entire project implementation period, the overall safeguards rating as well as the specific environmental and social safeguards ratings were Satisfactory.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial management. Throughout implementation, financial management was consistently rated Satisfactory. The project maintained sound financial management arrangements, including timely submission of Interim Financial Reports and audited financial statements, all of which were approved by the World Bank. All expenditures from the designated accounts were thoroughly documented and audited. Auditors issued unmodified (clean) opinions, and no significant internal control weaknesses were identified. The project effectively used the World Bank's Client Connection system for recording expenditures from the designated accounts. Financial management supervision missions confirmed the project accountant's effective performance, and budgeting and financial reporting processes remained well aligned with project plans.

Procurement. The last assessment of overall procurement performance under the project was a rating of Satisfactory, reflecting significant progress made by the PIU in the final stages of implementation. Throughout the project's lifecycle, procurement performance was downgraded twice, reaching Moderately Unsatisfactory in July 2024 due to implementation delays, lack of regular updates in the Systematic



Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) system, and the absence of an adequate electronic and physical archiving procedure. Following that downgrade, the PIU made remarkable efforts to address these shortcomings, benefitting from intensive support and hands-on coaching from the Bank team, which enabled PIU members to deepen their understanding of the Bank's regulations. This collaborative approach fostered continuous improvement and capacity building within the PIU. At project closure, the PIU demonstrated strong adherence to Bank procurement procedures and tools, having correctly documented procurement processes in STEP. This experience underscores the importance of ongoing capacity building, regular monitoring, and effective use of Bank tools and systems to ensure transparency, accountability, and efficiency in project procurement activities.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

None noted.

d. Other

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Late restructuring of the project in response to challenges in assessing achievement of two of the project's objectives, as well as delays in addressing obstacles with UG-FHS construction.
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

The ICR (p. 17) offers several insightful lessons, restated here by IEG:

Ensuring adaptability and flexibility in project design is key for successful implementation.

During implementation, there were three unforeseen events that significantly impacted the original project design: disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government's discontinuation of national student assessments, and the reconsideration of the UG building design as a result of the change in government following the March 2020 elections. The capacity to extend timelines, revise



targets, and realign one objective (from focusing on student achievement to prioritizing curriculum reform) proved essential for maintaining project relevance. By prioritizing flexibility and responsiveness, projects can better navigate uncertainties and ensure sustained progress toward development objectives. However, timely response in terms of formal project restructuring is key to maintaining positive project ratings.

A strong PIU is essential to balancing the need for sustained reforms and investments with adaptation to evolving government priorities. The long-term sustainability of reforms and investments depends on consistent political ownership and support. During government transitions, the PIU plays a key role in maintaining institutional memory and supporting continuity by providing technical guidance and facilitating the handover of reform processes and approved investments. In doing so, the PIU helps preserve reform momentum and minimize disruptions. At the same time, PIUs are instrumental in supporting necessary project adjustments to align with shifting policy priorities. To fulfill these roles effectively, PIUs should be adequately staffed throughout project lifecycles and guided by strong leadership.

Strong and long-lasting partnership between government, the education ministry, and the Bank can be central to improving outcomes in the education sector. Sustained engagement in Guyana's education sector has enabled the Bank to take a sector-wide approach, designing operations that are strategically aligned with national priorities and that complement and build upon ongoing initiatives, and thereby maximizing development impact beyond what standalone interventions could achieve. In addition, the project benefited greatly from strong collaboration among the Bank team, the MoE, UG, and other stakeholders. Clear communication channels and a foundation of mutual trust enabled identification and resolution of implementation challenges. The presence of a dedicated education specialist based in-country proved to be valuable, facilitating effective coordination with headquarters, the PIU, and local actors; enhancing information flow; and supporting agile, proactive decision-making. Operations benefit strongly from in-country technical presence, structured communication mechanisms, and the use of complementary financial instruments to support sector-wide reforms and sustain momentum toward long-term development goals.

13. Assessment Recommended?

Yes

Please Explain

Although beyond the scope of any single project, a key element of the Bank's approach in Guyana's education sector has been the ability to combine complementary financing instruments, such as investment project financing (IPF) and development policy financing (DPF). While IPFs have provided a platform for technical assistance across education levels and operational engagements, a DPF supported policy reforms in the sector. A comprehensive assessment of the Bank's support for education in Guyana could produce actionable lessons for other countries and sectors.



14. Comments on Quality of ICR

Overall, this ICR was clear and candid with regard to the challenges faced during project implementation. Evidence was presented relatively clearly, with detailed evidence from the impact evaluation. However, the evidence was a little scattered throughout the report, and most importantly, it was not possible to interpret effect sizes in relation to project indicators and targets. More information could have been presented on the rationale to focus on mathematics achievement (as opposed to other subjects), and on the causal mechanisms linking implementation of the teacher trainings and curricular reforms with their potential impact on mathematics achievement specifically or on learning outcomes in general (e.g. by drawing on the content of these interventions, and links between classroom practices and observed learning outcomes). There were also some missing elements in the description of the risk to development outcome, and the analysis of Bank performance could have been more reflective given the delays and evidence gaps. There were opportunities to draw better lessons from the project (e.g. relating to construction delays, or to the challenges of gathering evidence on complex topics like teaching practices or learning outcomes).

a. Quality of ICR Rating Substantial