Report Number: ICRR0023723

1. Project Data

Project ID	Project Name
P159771	Providing Quality Education in Uruguay
Country	**Practice Area(Lead)**
Uruguay	Education

L/C/TF Number(s)	Closing Date (Original)	Total Project Cost (USD)
IBRD-86750	31-May-2022	40,000,000.00
Bank Approval Date	**Closing Date (Actual)**	
16-Dec-2016	28-Feb-2023	

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	40,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	40,000,000.00	0.00
Actual	40,000,000.00	0.00

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The objectives of the project were to improve the teaching practices and the learning environment in early and primary education, as well as the internal efficiency in primary education, all in Full-Time Schools, and to strengthen the evaluation capacity of the education system (Loan Agreement dated March 22, 2017, p. 5).

During implementation, a Level-2 restructuring on December 3, 2019 marginally reduced the outcome target for improving teaching practices in conjunction with baseline changes, and both original and revised targets were not achieved. Another outcome target on evaluation capacity was reduced, but both original and revised

targets were exceeded. Therefore, this ICR Review does not apply a split rating evaluation because it would be inconsequential to the assessment of efficacy and in deriving the project's overall outcome rating.

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

Yes

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

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

I. Early Education (Appraisal: US$5.53 million; Actual: US$5.53 million). Note: Costs reflect IBRD funding.

The component aimed at providing support to increase access and improve the quality of early education. It was expected to foster school readiness and to reduce early grade failure, thus improving internal efficiency.

Subcomponent 1.1: Access to Early Education: Provision of support to increase access to early education through the construction and/or rehabilitation of new classrooms in Full-Tine Schools (FTS) for 3-year-old students, including the acquisition of equipment. New classrooms had updated specifications with capacity for 25 students per classroom.

Note on FTS: In Uruguay, the FTS model consisted of extending the school day from 4 to 7.5 hours, improving educational infrastructure and environment, teacher development, and the quality of learning.

Subcomponent 1.2: Quality Improvements in Early Education: Provision of support for:

- Educational Materials in Early Education. In FTS schools with a classroom for 3-year-olds, the project would provide a mobile shelf space that allows the transportation of this library across classrooms, alleviating space constraints, and would acquire didactic games and toys.
- Expansion of the Evaluation Capacity in Early Education (EIT) to assess students across a number of key dimensions such as self-awareness, familiarity with school environment, social abilities, language, communication, and motor skills. The scale up of EIT would contribute to an eventual universal use in the country (PAD, p. 15). The sub-component would include the development of a local version of EIT, suitable for the country context and carrying out activities to use EIT information, integrate it into the platform of Information and Registries Unified Management (GURI), and the development of student reports.
- Initiation of in-service training for teachers in Early Education, including the use of ICT tools.

Component I also included six DLIs aiming at stimulating performance. A total disbursement amount of US$3 million (about 8 percent of the loan) was linked to the achievement of predefined targets for six DLIs at stipulated times (ICR, p. 10). The six DLIs consisted of the following:

- DLI 1: Early Childhood Development (ECD) assessment results integrated into GURI's database.
- DLI 2: Guidelines for ECD teaching practices revised and published by the Project Implementing Entity.
- DLI 3: 60 percent of ECD teachers of FTS which have installed a mobile library use such libraries at least once a week during 10 consecutive months prior to January 1, 2019.
- DLI 4: 60 percent of ECD teachers of FTS (operating as of January 1, 2019) apply protocols for at-risk students.
- DLI 5: 60 percent of first grade teachers of FTS (operating as of January 1, 2020) have digital access to students´ ECD assessment results.
- DLI 6: Local ECD assessment is developed and approved by the Project Implementing Entity.

II. Primary education (Appraisal: US$27 million; Actual: US$27 million).

Sub-component 2.1: Infrastructure in Primary Education, including the construction and/or rehabilitation of selected primary FTS, acquisition of school equipment, preventive maintenance, and technical assistance to school management committees to manage preventive maintenance.

School selection was based on criteria stated in the Operations Manual and include: (a) the availability of land; (b) assessment of infrastructure needs of schools; (c) demonstrated community endorsement; and (d) consultation with teachers, directors and students. At least 75 percent of all infrastructure and equipment would be allocated to schools of quintiles 1 and 2 in an effort to guarantee the targeting of students from underprivileged socioeconomic backgrounds.

Subcomponent 2.2: Quality Improvements in Primary Education, including:

- Strengthening the Pedagogical and Institutional Management: preparation of guidelines and provision of training to both supervisors and school principals in classroom management, periodic evaluations of learning, learning planning, allocation of teacher's time, with a focus on (i) supporting students lagging behind, (ii) aligning pedagogies with the development of competencies across grades, (iii) encouraging the development of socioemotional skills, (iv) use of information from student assessments.
- In-service Training in Primary Education for teachers: Adjustment of existing in-service training programs to foster modern pedagogies adapted to the special needs and bottlenecks of the Uruguayan system; acquisition of goods; and provision of technical assistance and operational support to the Preschool and Primary Education Council (CEIP) teacher training institute.

III. Transition between Primary and Secondary Education (Appraisal: US$1.09 million; Actual: US$1.0 million).

This component aimed at improving internal efficiency in the short term by supporting at-risk students in their transition to lower secondary education and by helping institutions in primary and secondary education through intra-level school partnerships.

Subcomponent 3.1: Strengthening the Second Cycle of Primary Education:

- In-service Training for Successful Transitions that would include in-service training for sixth grade teachers in FTS to strengthen their ability to provide remedial support for students most at-risk in the transition to secondary education. The courses would be expected to improve teaching methodologies conducive to instilling skills needed for success in secondary education.
- Remedial Course for Successful Transitions: A pilot program for 6th graders in 30-50 schools would focus on providing at-risk students the tools needed to succeed in their transition to secondary education. The remedial course would be structured around small study groups with intense personalized attention focused on reinforcing key competencies in mathematics, Spanish, and study strategies.

Subcomponent 3.2: Pilot Alliances between Primary and Secondary Schools: Pilot alliances were to be set up in several schools to support primary education graduates sustain their accomplishments in their trajectory to secondary education by fostering student exchanges to help primary students gather information and align expectations; and carrying out seminars between teachers of primary and secondary educations.

IV. Monitoring and Evaluation System (Appraisal: US$6.39 million; Actual: US$6.39 million).

Subcomponent 4.1: Strengthen the Evaluation Capacity of the Borrower's Educational System. The subcomponent includes: (a) carrying out standardized learning evaluations to identify learning gaps and students at-risk by evaluating the learning achievements of students at the end of 2nd grade: (b) enhancement of GURI's functioning through the provision of support for improving its interactive web platforms, and the incorporation of new data fields in the system; (c) design and maintenance of an early warning system to target at risk students with specific programs; (d) carrying out of at least two impact evaluations to understand the impact of key components of the project and/or identify promising low-cost innovations that could be easily scaled-up; (e) carrying out of a nationwide diagnosis of gender equality for the education sector; and (f) provision of technical support for carrying out other studies, evaluations and assessments on early and primary education activities to develop education policies.

Subcomponent 4.2: Project administration: Provision of support for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project, including the provision of technical assistance to enhance the project's communication strategy.

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

Cost and financing: At appraisal the project cost was estimated at US$59 million comprising of a World Bank Loan of US$40 million and US$19 million in counterpart funding. The project was conceived under an Investment Project Financing instrument, while also using performance-based conditions (DLIs) in one of its components on early education. According to the PAD (p. 22), the main expected counterpart contribution

was intended for Component II on Primary Education infrastructure and maintenance. The actual World Bank cost was US$40 million, reflecting full disbursement of the Loan.

Dates: The project was approved on December 16, 2016 and became effective on May 8, 2017. A Mid-Term Review was carried out on October 11, 2019. The original closing date of May 31, 2022 was extended by nine months through a restructuring on April 11, 2022. The project closed on February 28, 2023.

Restructurings: The project had two Level-2 restructurings:

- On December 3, 2019: The first restructuring introduced changes to the results framework for both outcome-level indicators and intermediate results indicators. The increase in teaching practices score in FTS based on class observation was reduced from 2.99 percent to 2.91 percent: The original target envisioned an increase of 15 percent from the baseline, which was expected to be collected by 2017 but was carried out one year later than originally planned. The baseline was replaced with the observed data for 2018, and the end target was revised downwards to 2.91 which was equivalent to the baseline plus 12 percent, to reflect the shorter timeline. The definition and description of the indicator on the number of students enrolled in schools that meet required quality standards were revised to clarify that the indicator included non-FTS under rehabilitation/conversion to FTS.

- On April 11, 2022: The second restructuring extended the original closing date by nine months from May 31, 2022, to February 28, 2023. The restructuring was meant to allow the completion of infrastructure-related activities, including the completion of construction of four additional schools, continued provision of funding for maintenance, provision of physical and educational equipment; and adaptation of existing infrastructure to COVID-19 sanitation measures. The four additional schools were located in areas with vulnerable populations marked by increased poverty and higher levels of learning loss due to the pandemic. The extension also aimed at reinforcing support and training to teachers to help them address the challenges caused by the pandemic (Project Restructuring Paper, April 11, 2022, pp. 3-4).

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

At the time of project appraisal, the early and primary education system in Uruguay included different service delivery modalities for education provision. Education policy implementation was fragmented across institutions and education levels, and with overlapping responsibilities and influences across the system, including limited systemic approaches to the education trajectories of students across levels (ICR, pp. 5-6).

The primary education sector exhibited poor learning outcomes and low internal efficiency. In the latest 2012 round of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) available by appraisal, Uruguay scored below the OECD average and showed a deterioration in both performance and equity compared to

2003. Learning gaps began early and between 25 and 40 percent of 4 to 6-year-olds exhibited low levels of development. The system also exhibited high repetition, dropout, and overage rates throughout basic education, with a strong socioeconomic gradient. Transitions from initial to primary and from primary to secondary education represented especially critical bottlenecks, with higher repetition rates than the rest of the grades. Repetition was also more predominant for male students in primary and secondary.

The project was the fourth in a series of education operations in Uruguay. The government was committed to the extension of the FTS model, which was launched in the mid-1990s and had been supported by the Bank since then. The model extended the number of class hours, and the additional class time was expected to contribute to improving the learning environment by allowing for time to consolidate learning and non-cognitive abilities, and to support students at risk of grade failure. An FTS evaluation showed considerable learning gains from the FTS model in the country, equivalent to almost an additional year of schooling. FTS also supported proper nutrition through school feeding programs and allowed parents, especially mothers, to work. These advantages made the FTS model popular in the country and led the government to make its expansion a policy priority, resulting in a multiparty agreement that aimed to reach 300 schools by 2019. The FTS model also tackled inequity, with about half of FTS students coming from households in the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution (ICR, p. 6).

Early child education faced challenges in both coverage and quality. Key bottlenecks included (i) low coverage for 3-year-olds due to limited supply (below 60 percent for children in the poorest quintile); (ii) absence of in-service training for Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers; (iii) inadequate didactic materials; and (iv) insufficient assessment capacity and use of results to close detected gaps. There were no learning standards for early education.

Outdated teaching practices remained prominent and the transition to competence-based learning was not happening inside the classroom (ICR, p. 6). Most Uruguayan teachers used outdated pedagogic methodologies that emphasized rote learning rather than focusing on skills and competencies. Socioemotional and non-cognitive skills were not adequately included in learning development goals, which was particularly detrimental to vulnerable and at-risk students. There was limited identification and support to at-risk students and lack of articulation across education levels, all contributing to high repetition rates in the transition to secondary education. The system lacked the tools to act preventively to identify and support students at risk. The additional class time of FTS did not include guidance on the use of this additional time and teachers lacked training on how to support at-risk students, often leading to misusing the additional class time. Furthermore, the multiplicity of competing actors in basic education was not conducive to systemic approaches.

Importantly, the ICR (p. 7) reported that Uruguay's education evaluation system lagged in comparison with peer countries. While peers like Chile had 20-years of census-level assessments for basic education, Uruguay lacked standardized learning data on primary and secondary education, as well as early childhood assessments. The use of available data was limited and there was no culture of active use of data. Even the limited existing information was not systemically shared with parents, teachers, or school directors to improve teaching and learning.

Hence, the project aimed at addressing some of the above development challenges by tackling teaching practices and the learning environment in early and primary education, improving internal efficiency in primary education, and strengthening the evaluation capacity of the education system.

Project objectives were relevant at appraisal and continued to be relevant at completion. At entry, objectives were aligned with the second pillar on “rebalancing the social compact” under the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for the period FY16-FY20. The expansion towards initial education was aligned with the CPF objective to “promote early childhood development of the bottom 40 percent,” especially with respect to supporting the enrollment growth of 3-year-olds. The focus on vulnerable schools was aligned with the objective of “strengthening the quality of and access to education to prepare the B-40 to acquire marketable labor skills,” as the expansion of the FTS model aimed to lead to improvements in access to higher quality education and help address Uruguay’s demographic window of opportunity by investing in the human capital of children before the country’s demographic peak. The CPF for the period FY23-FY27 highlights Uruguay’s need to reduce inequalities in education and improve learning outcomes, building on the government’s commitment to boost the education agenda. The project focused on increasing human capital by providing targeted infrastructure investment, with 75 percent focused on schools in socioeconomic quintiles 1 and 2 (ICR, p. 20). CPF Objective 3 (Enhance opportunities for improving foundational and technical skills) builds on the government’s commitment to boost the education agenda and seeks to raise the quality of primary and secondary education (ICR p. 13).

Rating
High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective
Improve the teaching practices in early and primary education in Full-Time Schools

Rationale
The theory of change held that in-service training for teachers, managers and supervisors, and the provision of teacher guidelines and learning material would result in updated in-service training programs, along with the introduction of the class observation tool for teaching practices, all of which would plausibly contribute to better pedagogical feedback and application of training by teachers combined with monitoring by school managers and supervisors to improve teaching practices. Implicit within the activities was also a focus on use of information from student assessment by school-level staff. The results chain for this objective missed connecting other activities required to change teachers’ practices.

The intended outcome would be measured by teaching practices score that assess teaching practices through classroom-observations, with a supplementary indicator based on self-reporting. The score covered key dimensions of the training, including instructional and socioemotional support, active teaching techniques, and class-organization.

Outputs and intermediate results

The classroom observation instrument was successfully implemented in the country in three consecutive rounds: 2018, 2019, and 2021. The ICR noted this this data was used to refine subsequent teacher training.

The project developed and implemented an in-service teacher training program for early education. A total of 1,098 teacher received training certifications for ECD against a target of 350 accredited teachers.

At the primary level, the project revised the in-service training courses to focus on competency-based teaching and subject-specific training in reading and writing. Under the revised training program, the project certified 3,805 teachers, principals and inspectors against a target of 2,400 professionals.

The average weekly use of mobile libraries in ECD FTS reached 76 percent against a target of 70 percent.

ECD teachers were provided with information on student development levels to facilitate the identification of at-risk students. ECD teachers who applied protocols for at-risk students reached 61.7 percent, short of the target of 70 percent.

Risk identification of students was expected to increase in the share of 5-year-olds in FTS with expected development levels; however, pandemic hindered these gains. Consequently, the indicator grew by 0.94 percent by the end of the Project (missing the 1.5).

The ICR did not discuss the implementation of the observational tool, nor broader activities to support teachers, also needed to improve teaching practices, beyond the provision of training.

Outcomes

The increase in the teaching practices score in FTS based on class observation was measured at 2.7 percent in 2021 as compared with a baseline of 2.6 percent in 2018, short of both the original target of 2.99 percent and the revised target of 2.91 percent.

This reflected limited progress, and the achievement remained close to the baseline related to the shortened time period between training and the observational tool, as well as the need for further support to teachers after training that were not discussed in the ICR. The ICR (para. 29) estimated that the improvement in teaching practices would be equivalent to 0.2 s.d. improvement in learning outcomes (estimation from TEACH).

Similarly, a sub-PDO indicator on the increase in the teaching practices score in FTS based in self-reports reached 71.7 percent, short of the target of 80.4 percent, and remained close to the baseline of 69.9 percent.

Rating
Modest

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

Improve the learning environment in early and primary education in Full-Time Schools

Rationale

The theory of change envisaged that activities to expand and improve physical infrastructure, provision of school equipment, and preventive maintenance would result in the construction and renovation FTS schools, and conversion of non-FTS schools into FTS schools. Outputs related to improved physical environment that facilitate the application of additional class time would be expected to contribute to improving the learning environment coupled with other interventions that can promote better learning.

The intended outcome was to be measured by the number of students enrolled in new schools that meet 'required quality standards' that included: (a) high quality educational infrastructure; (b) at least 7.5 hours of class per day; and (c) at least 2.5 hours a week of school staff meetings. High quality educational infrastructure referred to having at least: (i) a design that complied with minimum required areas per student; (ii) common open space areas; and (iii) design and materials that ensure low-maintenance costs. An assumption is that teachers would fully utilize the increased time in school with effective instructional activities.

Outputs and intermediate results

The number of additional primary level classrooms rehabilitated or constructed in FTS schools reached 389 primary education classrooms, exceeding the target of 160 classrooms; and the project added 20 ECD classrooms for 3-year-olds, achieving the target. The ICR (para. 36) noted that the project's extension allowed for adaptation of existing infrastructure to COVID-19 sanitation measures to promote re-opening of schools during the pandemic.

The project provided learning materials to 44 FTS schools, exceeding the target of 28 schools. Project support included didactic materials, school libraries, information technology, audiovisual equipment, and basic school inputs such as desks and benches.

The project provided yearly resources and technical assistance to 211 FTS School Management Committees to carry out preventive maintenance, achieving the target. The baseline in 2016 was 100 FTS schools.

The ICR (p. 19) reported that the project financed Uruguay's first nationwide diagnosis on gender equality in the education sector for students, teachers, principals, and other education sector personnel. The report, published in December 2020, identified gender issues in the education sector and provided recommendations to be included in ANEP's National Plan for Gender Equality. These recommendations were incorporated into the ongoing curriculum reform and triggered sectoral plans to reduce specific gender gaps.

Outcomes

By January 2023, 10,316 additional students were enrolled in schools with required quality standards, exceeding the end target of 4,500. The baseline was considered to be zero in December 2016 before the start of the project. To clarify what this absolute number represented in terms of development change, the TTL noted on January 11, 2024, that the number of 10,316 additional students accounted for 18.9 percent of total FTS enrollment in 2022 and 11.6 percent of enrolled students in urban vulnerable schools (quintile 1 and 2).

Rating
Substantial

OBJECTIVE 3
Objective
Improve internal efficiency of primary education in Full-Time Schools

Rationale
The theory of change held that, in addition to infrastructure development, provision of materials, improved teaching practices and learning environment, activities consisting of remedial courses for successful transitions, in-service training to align teaching practices, and Primary-Secondary School Alliances that facilitate the continuity of students across education levels, would result in at-risk students receiving support in their transition to lower secondary and better articulation between primary education and lower secondary education. The above activities and outputs would contribute to a decrease in repetition and dropout rates, notably among at-risk students and would plausibly contribute to improved internal efficiency.

The intended outcome was adequately planned to be measured by a decreased repetition rate in the first grade. High repetition rates in the early grades of primary education are an indicator of low internal efficiency and a strong predictor of overage and dropout in primary and secondary education. Nevertheless, information on other grades could have further expanded the assessment of internal efficiency, particularly since the ICR noted the critical bottleneck and higher repetition rates in the rest of the grades (para. 7).

Outputs and intermediate results

In addition to outputs for improving the teaching practices and the learning environment described above under Objectives 1 and 2, at-risk students received support to promote transition, supported by improved teacher skills to detect vulnerable students.

A pilot program was carried out to coordinate 23 pairs of FTS and secondary education schools. These pairs worked on pedagogical proposals and frameworks to strengthen student learning trajectories, starting from the first grade, and to promote student and teacher exchanges in the transition from primary to secondary.

The project supported 36 FTS with tools to help at-risk students in their last year of primary school with remedial courses for successful transitions, which exceeded the target (30 FTS).

Outcomes

Notwithstanding a progress gap observed in 2020 and 2021 due to schooling interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the first-grade repetition rate in FTS decreased from a baseline of 11 percent in 2016 to 6.4 percent in 2023, exceeding the target of 9 percent. The first-grade repetition rate gender gap decreased from a baseline of 4.3 percent in 2016 to 1.6 percent in 2023, exceeding the target of 3.3 percent. The TTL (January 11, 2024) further explained the predictive power of first grade repetition, and the importance of early prevention of dropout. The added focus on the first grade aimed to ensure that students acquired the foundational skills needed to succeed in their education trajectories. The TTL also noted that a decline in

repetition was observed in all years of the primary level, with a total repetition rate for primary in FTS decreasing from 4.57 percent in 2015 to 3.7 percent in 2021.

The repetition rates also improved in relation to gender and socio-economic groups. The first-grade repetition rate gender gap in FTS decreased from 4.3 to 1.6, exceeding the target (3.3). First-grade repetition rates for FTS in quintiles 1 and 2 reached 7.7 percent, which exceeded target (10).

Concurrently, the ICR (p. 16) reported that the repetition rates in primary education in Uruguay have been decreasing steadily across all school types nationwide, but that the reduction was more pronounced in FTS where comparative studies showed that the FTS model had a causal impact on reducing repetition rates by about 22 percent.

Rating
Substantial

OBJECTIVE 4
Objective
Strengthen the evaluation capacity of the education system

Rationale
The theory of change envisaged activities that would strengthen evaluation capacities such as the design of a monitoring system for students' academic trajectories, early-childhood evaluation, standardized learning evaluations, analysis of FTS time-use, strengthening of GURI, impact evaluations and other studies. Such activities encompassed both ECD and primary education levels and were expected to result in outputs such as a monitoring system for students' academic trajectories being put in place, student-level databases on learning outcomes, school-level database on the use of time, expanded and integrated GURI database, and identification of cost-effective interventions that can improve student performance. The above outputs would plausibly contribute to improved availability and utilization of both student and school assessment data, reflecting a strengthened evaluation capacity of the education system and schools.

The intended outcome was to be measured by the share of schools that use national student-level assessment results for decision-making. This indicator was to track the use of standardized student assessment results for decision-making through an online survey of school principals. The "use" element would be determined based on both self-reported answers of school principals and administrative data on timely delivery of summary reports.

Note: At entry, the original indicator consisted of the share of schools that use student-level census assessment results for decision-making. The name and description of the indicator were revised in 2019 to reflect the implementation details of the national learning assessment, which was made available to all second-grade teachers nationwide. The revision included specific information on the application of the assessment (adaptive online assessment applied to students one-to-one). The target was reduced to reflect the actual implementation arrangements of the assessment (ICR, p. 12).

Outputs and intermediate results

Under the project, two census-based standardized student assessments were carried out. The project also developed local ECD assessment. The project created a monitoring system for students' academic trajectories, but the ICR did not describe its use and how it strengthened school and system evaluative capacity. The project strengthened GURI and integrated student education trajectory data with GURI's database. It supported the child development inventory, which was approved and integrated into GURI. The project supported the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education in the design and implementation of reading, writing and oral evaluation.

Several studies aiming to inform policy and decision-making were carried out, including:

- Institutional factors explaining education outcomes in FTS
- Factors impacting education outcomes in FTS between 2017-2021
- Educational modalities in extended time schools and FTS
- Teaching practices using the *Center of Educational Innovation and Digital Technologies* in FTS
- Evaluation of the community teacher program

Outcomes

The share of schools that used national student-level assessment results for decision-making increased from a baseline of zero in 2016 to 81.4 percent in 2023, exceeding both the original target of 70 percent and the revised target of 35 percent. The above results indicate that the assessment capacity was strengthened and utilized, with substantial implementation progress made; however, the ICR lacked details to show its institutionalization.

Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale
The first objective to improve teaching practices was partly achieved and is rated Modest. The second, third, and fourth objectives (to improve the learning environment; internal efficiency; and evaluation capacity) were almost fully achieved and rated Substantial. The aggregation of achievements is indicative of a Substantial rating for overall efficacy, but with caveats, as there was modest achievement of one objective.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

At appraisal, the project was expected to yield substantial economic and social benefits through its contribution to increased educational attainment and improved educational quality. From the individual point of view, the project would have a direct positive impact on lifetime earnings of the beneficiaries through an increase in their labor productivity (PAD, p. 27). Higher educational attainment facilitates labor market entry for youth and increases the probability of being employed and having a better job. From a social perspective, the project would raise human capital endowment having a positive impact on growth.

The ex-ante economic analysis estimated the economic benefits accruing from the additional lifetime income expected from the additional years of education that beneficiary children would obtain as a result of project activities. The economic analysis showed that the average beneficiary would have gained an additional 0.28 years of schooling by 2027. Assuming a return to an additional year of schooling of 10.5 percent, and that an average individual works from age 18 to 65, and applying a discount rate of 10 percent, the project would have a Net Present Value of US$136.9 million, with an Internal Rate of Return of 18.6 percent (PAD, p. 29).

At the ICR stage, the ex-post economic analysis was conducted following the methodology used at appraisal. Component 4 on M&E was excluded, as its impact was difficult to estimate. The analysis estimated an Internal Rate of Return of 11 percent, and a net present value of US$240.7 million. The results were robust to different assumptions of discount rates, yielding positive returns in all cases. Estimations were considered more realistic than the ones at appraisal since the analysis used observed data on the number of beneficiaries. The analysis also introduced additional parameters to reflect the nature of each investment. For example, in addition to the initial investment, the analysis included the cost of operating new schools. The ICR (p. 18) noted that the analysis likely underestimated the project's full impact, given that it did not include some benefits and outcomes whose monetary value was difficult to assign such as the benefits of implementing protocols for at-risk students or improving transition rates among educational levels, and from contributions to reducing poverty and inequality and improvements in health and well-being.

Implementation was adequate overall, but it was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic disruptions and delays in 2020-21 which led to the extension of the closing date by nine months as discussed in section 2e. Nevertheless, the Project Implementation Entity operated in a satisfactory manner (ICR, p. 18), and financial management performance was consistently rated satisfactory throughout the implementation period (ICR, p. 22). Staff turn-over at the National Administration for Public Education (ANEP) was low, thus facilitating continuity. The loan proceeds were fully disbursed after the 9-month extension.

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	✓	18.60	84.00 ☐ Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	11.00	84.00 ☐ Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

Relevance of objectives is rated High in view of full alignment with country strategies and the Country Partnership Framework. Efficacy is rated Substantial, as objectives were almost fully achieved, except for the partly achieved objective on teaching practices. Efficiency is rated Substantial, based on positive expected returns, but with some negative aspects of implementation that moderately reduced overall efficiency. The aggregation of these findings is consistent with a Moderately Satisfactory outcome rating, as there was modest achievement of one objective used in the assessment of overall efficacy, and which was of importance to the overall purpose of the project and its intended outcomes. The findings are indicative of essentially moderate shortcomings in the project's overall preparation, implementation, and achievement.

a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

No consequential risks to maintaining development outcomes were identified, notably since support to FTS continues under the follow-on operation (Strengthening Pedagogy and Governance in Uruguayan Public Schools Project, P176105), as reported by the ICR (p. 23). Extended learning time and lessons learned from the FTS teacher training model are part of the ongoing curricular transformation. Substantial institutional strengthening was generated, including for dealing with result-based approaches. M&E capacities were strengthened at the directorate of information and educational evaluation (DIEE), tasked with the monitoring and evaluation of most of the results framework, and at the National Institute of Education Evaluation (INEED), which was charged with monitoring PDO indicators and DLIs. The construction and/or rehabilitation of additional FTS within the framework of the project were implemented by the government through Public Private Partnerships, strengthening the government's engagement with the private sector,

The project financed Uruguay's first nationwide diagnosis on gender equality in the education sector for students, teachers, principals, and other education sector personnel. The 2020 report identified gender issues in the education sector and provided recommendations that were included in the National Plan for Gender Equality. These recommendations were incorporated into the ongoing curriculum reform and triggered sectoral plans to reduce specific gender gaps (ICR, p. 19).

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The project approach was sound, as it was responsive to the prevailing priorities in advancing the education agenda and in improving qualitative aspects. The design included a portion of funds that was results-based to further increase attention to results, while concurrently assisting the government in gaining experience with applying this modality of performance-based conditions to its own internal financing in the future (ICR, p. 20).

The design was informed by lessons of earlier projects in the education sector and prior support to FTS, both in Uruguay and other countries, and by analytical work. Lessons pertained to FTS and its extended class time, in-service training, systemic impact and internal efficiency, and importance of information and evaluation systems.

The Project Implementing Entity was ANEP, represented by the Central Directive Council of Education that would provide guidance to the Preschool and Primary Education Council and liaise with other stakeholders, specifically the National Institute of Education Evaluation (INEED) and the Ministry of Education and Culture. ANEP and INEED would enter into an agreement of cooperation for monitoring and evaluation activities and the verification of achievement of DLIs. The agreement would derive from a broader inter-institutional agreement already in place between both stakeholders.

Under ANEP, a Project Coordination Unit (PCU) would be responsible for day-to-day implementation aspects. Both ANEP and its PCU had a long experience and strong track record in coordinating and implementing Bank-assisted projects. The PCU's fiduciary team would be responsible for carrying out all activities related to financial management, procurement and safeguards compliance. Social and environmental safeguards would continue to be managed by experienced specialists, including an architect with a post-degree in environmental planning and management, a design coordinator, and a coordinator for civil works and maintenance. The PCU also had an M&E specialist, a lawyer, and a group of supervisors for regional works.

Risks were well identified with adequate mitigation measures. In addition to macroeconomic risks, there were risks related to (a) the technical design, including buy-in among beneficiaries on teacher training approaches and unregulated use of additional class time in FTS; (b) institutional capacity for implementation and sustainability, including in the decentralized and fragmented organization of the educational system; and (c) fiduciary risks that may arise from the implementation of diverse activities. M&E arrangements were adequate, with minor shortcomings in the results framework (ICR, p. 23).

Overall, the project was ready for implementation after loan approval (ICR, p. 23).

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

Throughout implementation, the World Bank Team maintained an open and continuous dialogue with ANEP implementation teams. Although the project had three Task Team Leaders, the ICR reported that there was sufficient continuity both in task management and among the sectoral, safeguard, and fiduciary teams. The ICR (p. 23) reported that the Project Implementation Status and Results Reports were timely, clear, results focused and provided a strong basis for understanding the issues that faced progress toward the achievement of the stated objectives. The Bank Team facilitated project restructurings, and the first restructuring went through various iterations to ensure the adequacy of amendments. The second restructuring ensured that the project could complete planned activities that were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The ICR noted that technical implementation support was strong, including close support to teacher training, assistance in adapting the 'Teach' tool to the local context, and responding to challenges raised by the pandemic. The ICR (p. 20) reported that project implementation and supervision benefited from continued political support and full commitment from the technical units in the sector.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The objectives were clearly stated and generally reflected by the selected indicators. Baselines were available in 2016, except for new activities that have not yet started. The outcome target for the first objective was not available at the outset because the indicator on teaching practices as reported by the classroom observation tool was based on a new instrument developed by the World Bank, and which was intended to be adapted, piloted, and validated across several countries (ICR, p. 21). Uruguay was one of the countries piloting the tool, hence, it was difficult to assess at the outset how much change would be feasible under the project. As a mitigation measure, the results framework included a sub-PDO indicator to triangulate the results with a self-reported tool.

ANEP had overall responsibility for tracking progress and assessing outcomes according to the results framework and DLI Matrix, assisted by its Research, Evaluation and Statistics Division (DIEE) through existing monitoring systems, while INEED was responsible for reporting on most of the newly introduced DLIs, as noted in section 8. Several evaluation studies were to be carried out by INEED (see section 4, Objective 4).

b. M&E Implementation

Overall, M&E implementation and coordination were adequate, but with delays in baseline data collection for teaching practices where the classroom observation tool was being piloted as noted in section 9a,

above. During implementation, ANEP used the information provided by focal points in various technical areas, and data were updated periodically. INEED adequately verified and reported on DLIs.

c. M&E Utilization

Findings were used for regular project monitoring and evaluation. The TTL (January 11, 2024) noted that project findings benefitted the dialogue with the government on how to improve the targeting of interventions in the sector to the most vulnerable populations (quintiles 1 and 2), and that findings were used by the ongoing follow-on operation (Strengthening Pedagogy and Governance in Uruguayan Public Schools Project, P176105), including for financing infrastructure improvements only in quintile 1 and 2 schools to ensure equalization of conditions for the most vulnerable.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified under Environmental Assessment Category B, as it triggered Safeguard Policy OP/BP 4.01 in view of school construction and civil works. The project also triggered OP/BP 4.11 on Physical Cultural Resources, OP/BP 4.09 on Pest Management, given that schools may use pesticides, and OP/BP 4.12 on Involuntary Resettlement (PAD, p. 4, and ISDS at the Appraisal Stage, October 2, 2016).

ANEP developed an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) approved by the World Bank. It aimed to: (i) ensure compliance with pertinent national legislation and Bank policies for works; (ii) identify potential environmental and social impacts based on the scope of physical interventions and site characteristics; (iii) establish appropriate procedures for sub-project evaluation, along with mitigation, management, and monitoring measures; and (iv) identify and assesses specific strengthening needs for the environmental and social management of the project. Related requirements, procedures and measures for the triggered safeguard policies were included in the ESMF (PAD, p. 38).

The ICR (p. 22) did not address the specific safeguard policies that were triggered, but it reported that the implementation of environmental and social aspects was satisfactory. The ESMF guided the preparation of ‘Manuals for Use and Maintenance’ to mitigate any potential negative environmental and social impacts associated with school activities. Related processes enhanced the quality of the infrastructure itself and strengthened the monitoring and supervision of environmental and social issues by promoting active participation of school directors and district supervisors to oversee these aspects of project implementation, contributing to their institutionalization.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

The ICR (p. 22) reported that the project's financial management performance rating was consistently satisfactory throughout the implementation period, and that the project maintained adequate financial management arrangements which complied with World Bank requirements. Procurement arrangements, plans, and performance were also adequate, facilitated by the experience of the Project Implementing Entity in previous Bank-supported operations and familiarity with Bank procedures and guidelines.

Interim Financial Reports were received by the Bank on time, and were found acceptable. Audits were carried out by Uruguay Supreme Audit Institution (Tribunal de Cuentas). Audit reports were also received by the Bank on time, reviewed, and found acceptable. No accountability issues were encountered throughout the implementation period. Advances to the Designated Account were fully documented. The last audit report, covering the period from January 1, 2023 to the closing date (February 28, 2023), including the grace period, was expected to be submitted to the Bank no later than August 31, 2023.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

None reported.

d. Other

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11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	There was modest achievement (as assessed by both ICRR and ICR) of one objective used in the assessment of overall efficacy.
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

The ICR (pp. 24-25) offered the following three lessons that were slightly restated by IEG Review:

The benefits of incorporating a new class observation tool for assessing and improving teaching practices outweigh related uncertainties. By adapting and piloting the class observation

tool, the project was able to collect valuable data on key pedagogical aspects within the specific context of Uruguay. The tool provided a valuable learning experience for all stakeholders involved, including teachers, school administrators and counterparts. The process fostered a sense of ownership and collaboration among teachers, encouraging them to actively participate in the refinement and adaptation of the observation tool to suit their unique teaching contexts. Prior to the project, some qualitative observations and/or ad hoc instruments were used, limiting the possibility of obtaining comparable data on a large scale. By introducing a standardized instrument, at scale class observation became possible. The experience served as a pilot for other projects within and beyond the region, and provided valuable insights on its potential contributions to improve teaching practices.

The longstanding Bank engagement with the Full-Time School approach and the inclusion of relevant studies on its impact allowed the project to generate substantial knowledge in this specific area. The project design included the production of a set of studies and publications on the experience of the FTS model in Uruguay to generate knowledge sharing and documenting experiences. Incorporating these studies as part of the evaluation component design facilitated their timely and quality delivery.

A smooth transition to results-based financing instruments can be facilitated by the pathway of previous projects that have already provided continuity in sustaining gradual policy reform. After supporting the Fully-Time School model in Uruguay though serial IPF operations since its inception, the World Bank was able to effectively support the government in piloting a results-based financing instrument. This allowed a shift that increased attention to the achievement of key results and outcomes, and built sectoral expertise in applying results-based financing.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR was well organized and clear. It was candid and internally consistent. The theory of change was adequately illustrated and logical, but could have been further developed. The quality of available evidence was adequate overall, but presentation was over-reliant on indicators. The ICR also missed the opportunity to leverage more information from the multiple studies undertaken to broaden evidence (beyond indicators) to further assess the attainment of objectives, particularly how these studies helped the strengthening of evaluation capacity and data use by schools and the education system. The ICR could have also discussed the role that the observation tool had upon changing teachers' practices and learning generated during the pilot. The ICR linked its narrative to the evidence and provided a set of observations that were aligned to the project development objectives. The ICR offered lessons that were anchored in project experience. Its reporting on fiduciary compliance and financial management aspects was remarkably thorough. The ICR was very concise

and consistent with guidelines, except for a lapse in deriving the overall outcome according to Bank guidelines and another lapse in reporting on safeguard policies triggered by the project.

a. Quality of ICR Rating
Substantial