Report Number: ICRR0024766

1. Project Data

Project ID P160083	**Project Name** SEQIP
Country Kenya	**Practice Area(Lead)** Education

L/C/TF Number(s)	Closing Date (Original)	Total Project Cost (USD)
IDA-61380	31-Dec-2023	184,554,025.43
Bank Approval Date	**Closing Date (Actual)**	
15-Sep-2017	31-Dec-2024	

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	200,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	205,238,475.00	0.00
Actual	184,554,025.43	0.00

Prepared by	Reviewed by	ICR Review Coordinator	Group
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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

According to the Financing Agreement (page 4) and the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, page 15), the project objectives were as follows:

- **To improve student learning in secondary education and transition from primary to secondary education, in targeted areas.**

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?
No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?
No

d. Components
1. Improving quality of teaching in targeted areas (Appraisal: US$ 36.0 million; Revised: US$ 25.6 million; Actual: US$ 22.0 million): This component aimed to address the supply-side issues that constrain teaching and learning, including inadequate quantity and quality of teachers and insufficient availability of textbooks. Using a results-based financing (RBF) modality, disbursements were to be linked to achievement of results, as measured by disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs). Activities included: allocation of ten percent of new teaching posts for math, science, and English to the targeted sub-counties; Prescribed Modules Program that established a teacher professional development (TPD) framework with defined standards, identified training needs, and provided training modules; School-based TPD Program that established a school-based teacher support system in science, math and English including a peer learning technology-based platform; and decentralized selection of textbooks with centrally managed procurement.

2. Improved retention in upper primary school and transition to secondary school in targeted areas (Appraisal: US$ 132.0 million; Revised: US$ 141.8 million; Actual: US$ 122.0 million): This component aimed to address the supply and demand issues that constrain retention and transition rates. Activities included: school infrastructure needs assessment; construction of additional classrooms, science laboratories, multi-purpose rooms, dormitories, toilet and water facilities, and electricity; construction of national training center; advocacy and social support program targeting parents and community leaders; provision of school kits for poor and vulnerable children; gender-sensitization for schools; and scholarship program combined with mentorship for poor but academically promising students to enter Form 1 through to Form 4 (four years of secondary education).

3. System reform support (Appraisal: US$ 20.0 million; Revised: US$ 21.4 million; Actual: US$ 22.4 million): This component aimed to put in place a new competency-based curriculum (CBC). Activities included: development of curriculum and materials for early childhood and lower primary grades; roll-out of the CBC for grades 4-8; assessment tools for grades 3 and 6; national exam item bank; and monitoring learning results.

4. Project management, coordination, and monitoring and evaluation (Appraisal: US$ 12.0 million; Revised: US$ 11.2 million; Actual: US$ 20.4 million): This component aimed to support effective project management including annual work plans, monitoring, assessments, research, and fiduciary support.

Disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs):

- DLI 1—Reduced teacher shortages in science, mathematics, and English (Component 1)
- DLI 2—Teacher Professional Development (TPD) and School-Based Support (Component 1). Note: This DLI was modified from six-course unit completion to completion of the introductory TPD module.
- DLI 3—Improving Student-Textbook Ratio (Component 1)
- DLI 4—Increasing Enrollment of Poor and Vulnerable Students (Component 2)

- DLI 5— Increasing Retention of Poor and Vulnerable Students in Grades 7 and 8 (Component 2)

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

Project cost

- The project cost at appraisal was US$ 200.0 million, later revised to US$ 205.2 million. The actual project cost was US$184.55 million.
- Planned vs. actual costs per component: Component 1 (Appraisal: US$ 36.0 million; Actual: US$ 22.0 million); Component 2 (Appraisal: US$ 132.0 million; Actual: US$ 122.0 million); Component 3 (Appraisal: US$ 20.0 million; Actual: US$ 22.4 million); Component 4 (Appraisal: US$ 12.0 million; Actual: US$ 20.4 million.

Financing

- The project was financed by an IDA Credit in the amount of EUR 175.5 million (US$ 200.0 million), of which EUR 174.3 million disbursed (US$ 184.55 million) Of the disbursed amount, EUR 1.9 million remained unutilized and was refunded to the Bank.

Borrower contribution

- There was no planned Borrower contribution.

Dates

- *September 15, 2017*: Project approval.
- *December 7, 2017*: Project effectiveness.
- *May 31, 2021*: Mid-term review.
- *September 15, 2021*: Project restructuring. . This restructuring reallocated funds from the results-based portion of the project (disbursement Category 1) to the infrastructure improvement component under disbursement Category 2 because the evaluation of bids for infrastructure improvements showed that the initial estimates were inadequate, particularly during and after the COVID pandemic period.
- *September 28, 2022*. Project restructuring. Targets for several intermediate indicators and DLIs were revised; project funds were reallocated between Components 1 and 2, and the project closing date was extended from December 31, 2023 to December 31, 2024.
- *December 31, 2024*: Project closing.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

Kenya is a lower middle-income country that has been experiencing solid economic growth and reduction in poverty overall. Medium-term growth prospects are such that the country hopes to achieve upper middle-income status by 2030, as expressed in the Kenya Vision 2030 development plan. However, inequity remains high, with severe incidence and depth of poverty in the Northern and North Eastern counties, many of which are marked by arid and semiarid climate, cross-border insecurity and violence, and internal conflicts arising from competition for resources and land issues. The government has targeted an increase in the country's Human Development Index from 0.45 in 2005 to 0.7 in 2030, emphasizing education as the primary means of economic development, social mobility, and national cohesion, as well as the key to addressing the high rate of unemployment, which is estimated at about 40 percent. Access to school is universal for lower primary level; however, school drop-out rates increase significantly in grades 7 and 8 compared to lower grades and there is significant variation in school participation across counties, especially at the secondary level. Gender disparity is also concentrated in the most educationally disadvantaged counties. In terms of learning outcomes, Kenyan students have attained language and mathematics scores that have ranked among the top Sub-Saharan African countries on regional assessments. However, 66 percent of Kenyan urban adults performed lower than their peers in other low- and middle-income countries surveyed in Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America.

In line with the Kenya Vision 2030 strategy, the project objectives respond to a key domain in the Bank's Country Partnership Strategy for 2014–2018: to protect the vulnerable and deliver shared prosperity; however, there are no explicit outcomes in education. The more recent Country Partnership Framework (FY23-28) includes the objective to shrink disparities in learning and health outcomes, with the average share of students achieving higher order proficiency levels in grade 3 in lowest performing quintile of counties and share of girls who drop out in primary and junior secondary school identified as key indicators.

Rating
High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1
Objective
To improve student learning in secondary education in targeted areas.

Rationale
The theory of change was sound. In support of Objective 1 achievement the project supported two *activities/outputs*: (1) results-based disbursements to reward a series of phased actions and achievements aimed at improving the availability and quality of teachers (DLIs 1 and 2) and the availability of learning materials, especially in targeted areas (DLI 3); and (2) capacity building support focused on strengthening the competency-based curriculum, competency-based student assessments, and mechanisms for tracking learning outcomes and project performance. These activities/outputs were expected to enable the achievement of the following *intermediate results:* reduced teaching shortages in SME subjects; improved teacher skills in content knowledge and in pedagogy; improved availability of structured teaching materials;

and the operationalization in all target schools of a competency-based framework, ensuring curriculum relevance and competency-based assessments to track student progress and strengthened M&E systems at national and county levels. These intermediate results – better teaching practices and student assessments, enhanced accountability, and evidence-based policymaking – were expected to culminate in improved student learning in secondary education, which was to be measured by: (1) average student test score in science subjects (disaggregated by biology, chemistry, and physics) at Form 2 in public schools in targeted sub-counties; and (2), average student test score in mathematics at Form 2 in public schools in targeted sub-counties, both measures to specify performance by female students.

The project targeted geographic areas with higher poverty and vulnerability, alongside lower primary school retention and primary-secondary transition rates. 107 of the lowest-ranking sub-counties plus 3 sub-counties in Murang'a County in the central region (to ensure national coverage) were selected, comprising 7,852 public primary schools and 2,147 public secondary schools in 30 of the 47 counties in the country.

Outputs

- Results-based disbursements rewarded a series of phased actions and achievements aimed at improving the availability and quality of teachers (DLIs 1 and 2) and the availability of learning materials, especially in targeted areas (DLI 3).
- Capacity building support focused on strengthening the competency-based curriculum, competency-based student assessments, and mechanisms for tracking learning outcomes and project performance.

Intermediate results

Improved quality and availability of teachers

- 52,109 teachers trained (original target: 20,000; revised target: 30,400) through two programs (DLI2); the Prescribed Modules Program for all teachers and the School-based Teacher Professional Development Programs specifically for science, math and English (SME) teachers in project sub-counties. As noted previously, the DLI associated with this activity was modified from completion of the six-course unit to completion of the introductory TPD module. The project design included an assessment of the SME training program but it is not clear from the ICR whether this was conducted.
- 4,734 teachers recruited (original target: 2,500; revised target: 3,500). Of these, 1,906 were female (original target: 750; revised target: 1,247) (DLI1).
- Pilot program for livestreaming lessons learned in improving access to quality teaching and learning processes due to teacher shortages in hard-to-staff areas. Principal schools (mainly well-resourced boarding secondary schools) delivered live lessons to satellite schools (mainly in rural and remote villages). An evaluation of the pilot concluded that the livestreaming intervention significantly increased classroom instruction time and students' engagement in circumstances where the target students would have otherwise missed teaching.

Improved availability of teaching materials/ Strengthened relevance of curriculum

- Textbook procurement reform, which centralized procurement and fostered competition among suppliers, resulting in significant cost savings and provision of core textbooks to majority of learners. The reforms also addressed weak governance issues in the procurement and distribution of textbooks

and ensured the timely delivery of books. The share of schools in targeted sub-counties reporting a student: textbook ratio of 1:1 at Grades 7 and 8 and Forms 1-4 increased from 0 to 82 percent by project closing, achieving the target of 80 percent (DLI3).

- Development and roll-out of competency-based curriculum (CBC) for Grades 7 and 8, including textbooks for grades 4-9 and adapted materials for learners with special needs. Additionally, designs for a stage-based curriculum for foundational, intermediate, and pre-vocation levels were completed.

Enhanced accountability and evidence-based policymaking

- National Competency-Based Assessment (CBA) system introducing continuous formative assessments for Grades 3 to 9, including web-based portals for uploading assessment tools. Educators were trained in using formative assessments and best practices. The CBA Framework, a comprehensive policy document, provided teachers with a clear and effective support system, ensuring that assessments under the CBC were reliable and valid.

Outcomes

- The average student test score in science subjects overall at Form 2 in public schools in targeted sub-counties increased from 24.1 in 2017 to 26.1 at closing, falling short of the target of 27.7. For girls, the average test score increased from 23.7 to 25.1, falling short of the target of 27.3. The ICR noted (page 8) that the project was implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which learning outcomes went down globally. The Post COVID-19 midline assessment showed that the scores for the sciences were still on a positive trajectory, which was attributed to the SEQIP support for digital resources.
    - The average student test score in Biology increased from 17.7 in 2017 to 20.3 at closing, achieving the target of 20.35. For girls, the average test score increased from 17.5 to 19.4, falling short of the target of 20.1.
    - The average student test score in Physics increased from 28.5 in 2017 to 30.5 at closing, falling short of the target of 32.8. For girls, the average test score increased from 27.9 to 29.5, falling short of the target of 32.1.
    - The average student test score in Chemistry increased from 26.0 in 2017 to 27.6 at closing, falling short of the target of 29.9. For girls, the average test score increased from 25.9 to 26.5, falling short of the target of 29.8.
- The average student test score in mathematics at Form 2 in public schools in targeted sub-counties *decreased* from 23.4 in 2017 to 21.7 at closing, falling short of the target of 25.3. For girls, the average test score also decreased from 22.0 to 20.7, falling short of the target of 26.9. Similar to the note above on COVID impact, the midline assessment showed mathematics scores had initially declined from the baseline of 23.4 to 18.7. Due to a strong push to improve a better understanding of the approach to mathematics under the CBC and CBA reforms and to provide intense remedial learning programs through the project's SME teacher training program, mathematics score subsequently increased from mid-line 18.7 to 21.7.

Achievement of this objective is rated Modest due to shortfalls in achieving targets in learning outcomes (which were set before the COVID-19 pandemic).

Rating
Modest

OBJECTIVE 2
Objective
To improve transition from primary to secondary education in targeted areas.

Rationale
The theory of change was clear. The primary interventions were to increase and upgrade school infrastructure, to provide financial and social support to poor and vulnerable students, and to increase community awareness of gender inclusion in education. These activities were likely to lead to the intermediate results to increase enrollment and retention of poor and vulnerable students. These components of the theory of change were well-linked to the results framework, including the DLIs.

Outputs

- Provision of a Minimum Package of Safe School Infrastructure (MPSSI), which consisted of classrooms (capacity and furnishing for 45 students), science labs, library, separate toilets for boys and girls, water facilities, and electricity (through grid or solar). The infrastructure was designed to be disability-friendly, seismic-risk mitigated, and semi- or permanent. Schools were prioritized according to those with higher girls' enrollment, special needs children, and lack of adequate toilet and water facilities. 937 primary schools were provided with functioning toilet and water facilities (original target: 3,000; revised target: 1,872). 1,660 new classrooms/science labs/ multi-purpose rooms were added to secondary schools (original target: 2,000; revised target: 1,872). As noted in the ICR (page 12), COVID-19 impacts and government delays in the signing of contracts contributed to 26 months passing between advertising contracts and the start of construction in May 2022, challenges due to the management of the large number of contracts decentralized across in 30 counties, insecurity in the project areas, and cost inflation of construction materials. As of May 2025, the government indicated that 83 percent of the construction had been completed and certified and that the outstanding works would be completed using resources from the follow-up Secondary Education Equity and Quality Improvement Program (P501648).
- Construction of modern ICT-enabled training facility at national level
- Baseline survey to identify factors contributing to school dropout among upper primary students, which informed design and implementation of project activities.
- Targeted advocacy and social support program focusing on parents and community leaders promoting completion of primary school and transition to secondary school and prevention of gender-based discrimination and violence. 93 percent of primary and secondary schools conducted gender sensitization campaigns (target: 80 percent).
- Provision of in-kind support to over 1.6 million students in grades 7 and 8 (original target: 37,500; revised target: 1.1 million). The original project design was in-kind support in the form of school kits containing uniforms and hygiene items, while actual support was feminine hygiene products.

- Scholarships and mentoring support for 18,000 students.
- Two policy studies (original target: three; revised target: two) on the prevalence and factors of gender based and students' violence in schools and the capacity of the Jomo Kenyatta Foundation to regulate, manage and coordinate scholarship provision and social support.

Intermediate results

- The retention rate of students receiving scholarships was 98.1 percent (target: 90 percent) (DLI5). From the first cohort of 3,898 scholarship recipients, 3,256 scholars (83.5 percent) successfully applied for placement in colleges through the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) and 1,641 (967 females and 674 males) applied for Technical Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) admissions.
- The Primary Net Enrollment Rate (NER) in counties with poor and vulnerable students increased from 68.22 percent in 2020 to 76.53 percent in 2022, with the lowest quartile counties improving from 71.5 percent to 82.2 percent (DLI 4). Secondary education also showed progress, with NER rising from 31.9 percent to 38.4 percent in these underperforming counties. The disparity gap decreased, with the range between higher and lower performing counties declining from 18.8 percentage points to 9.3 points for primary education, and from 43.2 points to 18.8 points for secondary education between 2020 and 2022.

Outcomes

- The transition rate from primary to secondary education in targeted sub-counties increased from 77.2 percent in 2017 to 87.56 by project closing, achieving the target of 86.0 percent. Among girls, the transition rate increased from 74.9 percent to 88.44 percent, surpassing the target of 83.4 percent.

Achievement of this objective is rated Substantial due to outcomes in improving transition rates from primary to secondary education including for poor and vulnerable populations.

Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale
Achievement of the objective to improve student learning is rated Modest due to evidence of improved learning outcomes in targeted areas, particularly in the context of COVID-19, although shortfalls in meeting targets. Achievement of the objective to improve transition from primary and secondary school is rated Substantial due to improving transition rates in the targeted areas, including for poor and vulnerable populations. Overall efficacy is rated Substantial, taking into consideration the positive trends in learning outcomes in the context of COVID-19, even though they fell short of pre-COVID targets.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

At appraisal (PAD, pages 39-40), project benefits were identified as improved incomes (through increased educational attainment and improved skills) while costs were identified as educational expenses and opportunity costs because of working if not pursuing secondary education. The cost benefit analysis assumed upper school primary enrollment increases ranging from .75 to 1.5 percent, secondary school enrollment increases ranging from 0.9 to 1.8 percent, annual income premium increases for upper primary vs. lower primary education ranging from 1 to 2 percent, and annual income premium increases for secondary vs. upper primary education ranging from 3 to 5 percent. Comparing the estimated present discounted values (PDVs) of economic benefits and costs for Kenyan youth due to project interventions, the net economic benefits of SEQIP ranged from US$ 110 million to US$253 million and the internal rate of return (IRR) ranged from 10.2 to 12 percent.

At completion (ICR, Annex 4), internal efficiency gains for the education sector were estimated for the period 2018 to 2024, due to reductions in repetition rates. Data were drawn from baseline and endline figures from Implementation Status Reports and government expenditures per student at the relevant education levels. Costs were equivalent to the total cost of the project, which disbursed a total of US$ 186.8 million over a period of 6 years. The first cohort of students benefited from improved transition rates from primary to secondary school, which increased from 77.2 percent at baseline to 87.56 percent at endline, impacting 59,922 students. The second cohort benefited from a higher secondary school completion rate, which rose from 81.6 percent to 96.4 percent, benefiting 88,800 students. In total, 148,722 students benefited, which enabled the government to achieve an annual reduction in inefficient government expenditure amounting to US$ 5.1 million by 2024 due to a 2-percentage point
reduction in the repetition rate between the baseline and endline. With the actual improvements in learning outcomes, for students who complete all four years in secondary school and with an overall average gain of 8.3 percent in science test scores, the NPV was calculated as US$ 730 million, with an IRR of 22.2 percent.

Regarding project implementation efficiency, there were some elements of the project design that likely contributed to positive efficiency. These included the strong focus on results-based financing, which linked disbursements to the achievement of specific targets thereby sharpening government efforts and improving resource allocation, and embedding of implementation arrangements within existing government structures to enhance sustainability and system governance. However, the project faced significant delays in civil works completion, including with some contracts abandoned, requiring legal and procurement interventions. As noted previously, COVID-19 impacts and government delays in the signing of contracts contributed to 26 months passing between advertising contracts and the start of construction in May 2022. Management of a large number of contracts spread out across in 30 counties, insecurity in the project areas, and cost inflation of construction materials also contributed to inefficiencies. Lastly, the actual cost for project management and support activities (Component 4) - US$ 20.4 million - far exceeded the planned cost of US$ 12.0 million.

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	✓	10.20	100.00 ☐ Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	22.20	100.00 ☐ Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

Relevance is rated High due to strong alignment with country conditions, country and Bank strategies. Efficacy is rated Substantial due to achievement of outcomes in improving transition rates and evidence of improved learning outcomes although short of targets. Efficiency is rated Modest due to indications of project implementation efficiency. Therefore, overall outcome is rated Moderately Satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

The project supported numerous institutional measures that strengthened capacity and contributed to sustainability of outcomes. These measures included development and rollout of the competency based curriculum and relevant assessments, teacher professional development framework, textbook procurement reform, and classroom construction guidelines. The results-based approach also improved capacity to monitor progress and assess results. The follow-up Bank operation - Secondary Education Equity and Quality Improvement Program (P501648, approved FY25 for US$ 250.0 million) will continue support to science and math education, monitor improvements in learning, and rollout CBC to secondary schools.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The results chain was logical and straightforward, with interventions that were likely to lead to achieving the objectives. The project design drew from internationally-recognized research on improving learning outcomes, including increasing school inputs and quality of teachers. The targeting approach was appropriate, identifying hard-to-reach areas of high vulnerability and low retention rates. There was a

strong focus on key institutional reforms and capacity building that helped to ensure longer-term and sustainable outcomes, including a result-based financing approach that helped to ensure focus on results and institutional reforms. This is a notable achievement, given that this was the first IDA education operation in Kenya after a gap of over ten years of IDA support to basic education and the first education operation to use a hybrid structure of investment and results-based financing.

Risks to implementation and appropriate mitigation measures were clearly identified following the description of each sub-component, as laid out in the ICR (para. 50). The M&E arrangements were appropriate given the capacity of the implementing agencies, although technical assistance was provided for monitoring and verifying the newly introduced disbursement-linked results approach. However, decentralized procurement arrangements and complexity of the construction implementation arrangements made it difficult to manage contracts once implementation began.

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision
The Bank provided regular and proactive implementation support, with all missions staffed appropriately with specialists and technical experts. Additional school infrastructure technical missions were also undertaken. The project disbursed almost entirely with substantial progress made on most planned activities. M&E activities were critical to achieving project outcomes and were effectively carried out, although targets for key performance indicators on learning outcomes were not adjusted in light of COVID impacts.

Initial fiduciary challenges led to implementation delays. Government budget for teachers to take the professional development modules was not secured in a timely manner, thereby leading to adjustments to the indicator/target for teacher professional development. In 2021, the government placed holds on signing and awarding infrastructure contracts, leading to reduced infrastructure targets. Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic had significant negative impacts on implementation timelines and construction costs, to which the Bank team responded with alternative delivery modes (i.e. radio and TV programming, online teacher training, WhatsApp teacher support groups) and project restructurings to adjust fund allocations and targets. These challenges were largely outside the control of the Bank team, which responded proactively to overcome the challenges. Safeguards compliance was in the unsatisfactory range for part of the project period though issues were subsequently resolved with Bank support.

Quality of Supervision Rating
Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating
Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The theory of change was sound and appropriately reflected in the results chain and the PDO statement was clear. The results chain was also clear, with monitorable and measurable indicators to assess progress towards achieving outcomes. Baseline and target figures were identified at the project start, aside from those for which new educational content was being introduced as part of project activities (SME, CBC) and would be set over the course of the project period. The M&E arrangements were clear, including regular reports from the project coordination unit (which would draw from existing education management information systems), hiring of an independent verification agency to monitor achievement of DLIs, and learning assessments such as Monitoring Learner Achievement (MLA) to measure actual impact on learning. The project design also introduced new assessment tools - Grades 3, 6, and 9 national assessments, continuous formative assessment - to increase capacity to monitor learning outcomes. Evaluative activities included process evaluations of several project interventions (i.e. gender sensitization, scholarships, SME teacher training).

b. M&E Implementation

The project indicators were tracked regularly, including learning assessment results and DLI results. A baseline survey to identify factors contributing to school dropouts among upper primary learners was carried out. Evaluative activities of prior advocacy programs was completed and informed project design in retention efforts, as well as for the teacher professional development. As noted in the ICR, the 2022 project restructuring could have revised the learning targets, given the significant disruption of COVID; however, the government requested that the existing targets be maintained in order to keep the overall system focused on improved learning, which was expected to significantly decline and dropouts to increase, especially among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners.

c. M&E Utilization

As reported in the ICR (page 17), data was made available regularly for the results framework and used to inform implementation decisions. The various assessments were used by the implementing agencies to evaluate the impact of courses and teachers' pedagogical practices on student achievement. As a consequence, the SME teacher training was adjusted to ensure a sharper focus on specific learning areas or concepts that learners were lagging. The DLI verification led to disbursement of funds

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified as an Environmental Category "B" project due to minor civil works. The project triggered safeguard policies on Environmental Assessment (OP/BP4.01) and Physical Cultural Resources (OP/BP4.11). A project Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was prepared and implemented, as well as Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs) for the classrooms, wash facilities & laboratories, and the national training center. During implementation, a Vulnerable and Groups Framework (VMGF) and subsequent Vulnerable and Marginalized Group Plans(VMGPs) were prepared.

As reported in the ICR (page 18), during the classroom construction phase, there were significant safeguards compliance challenges. As a result, in April 2023, the safeguards overall rating was downgraded from moderately satisfactory to moderately unsatisfactory, but subsequently upgraded back to moderately satisfactory in April 2024, following achievement of agreed actions. Challenges included: (i) limited environmental health and safety compliance at construction sites and adherence to related established measures that resulted in a fatality and multiple injuries at one site, as well as multiple serious injuries at another site (Note: For all cases, incident investigations were undertaken, corrective actions prepared and implemented); (ii) poor labor management including delayed/or lack of payment of wages and inconsistent signing of labor contracts (approximately 90 percent) and Code of Conduct; and (iii) delayed resolution of open grievances. At project closing, the government prepared an Environmental, Health and Safety Post-closure Action Plan for the remaining sub-projects.

The project established a grievance redress mechanism (GRM), with committees at the national, county, sub-county, school and community levels and 10,243 GRM focal persons appointed. As reported in the ICR (page 18), during project implementation, most grievances were resolved and closed, with some still open as at project closure (regions 1,2, 3 and 4: 70; counties: 15; Equity Group Foundation: 10; and CEMASTEA: 5). The Bank's internal system reported an Inspection Panel investigated complaints of indigenous people not being treated/included properly though this is not noted in the ICR.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial management: Financial management (FM) performance was rated moderately satisfactory for most of the project implementation period. However, during the one-year period from April 2023 to April 2024, it was downgraded to moderately unsatisfactory, due to audit findings that identified weaknesses in the reporting of scholarship funds by the Equity Group Foundation, as well as instances of expenditure exceeding the approved budget in 2023. These issues were subsequently addressed through the strengthening of internal controls. As reported in the ICR (pages 18-19), other FM challenges encountered during implementation included: (i) limitations in physical monitoring of field activities due to COVID-19-related disruptions; (ii) recurrent budget cuts resulting from constrained government fiscal space; (iii) persistently low budget absorption against the approved Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB), largely due to delays in school construction activities; (iv) delays in the submission of internal audit reports by both the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Teachers Service Commission (TSC); and (v) delays in the presentation of audit issues to the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC). The most recent audit report was qualified, identifying (i) stalled school construction projects in some counties;

(ii) delays in the completion of classrooms, laboratories, and sanitation blocks, resulting in some incomplete activities at project closure; and (iii) lapses in contract management, including the expiration of performance bonds without timely renewal. The final external audit, covering the grace period, is expected by December 31, 2025. The ICR noted (para. 61) that FM performance was rated MS for most of the implementation period, indicating compliance with the Bank's guidelines

Procurement: The Bank's procurement team conducted regular implementation support missions and procurement performance was rated moderately satisfactory throughout implementation. However, as reported in the ICR (page 19), procurement challenges were related to the construction activities, which experienced significant delays. The government took a long time to sign contracts with the selected contractors, and then there were challenges due to the management of the large number of contracts decentralized across 30 counties. The subprojects yet to be completed by project closing are expected to be completed by the government and under the follow up Bank operation. The ICR (para. 62) reports that procurement performance was MS throughout implementation, indicating compliance with the Bank's guidelines.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

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d. Other

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11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

Lessons drawn from the ICR (pages 20-21), adapted by IEG:

- Results-based financing can be a highly effective mechanism for building institutional capacity and ensuring implementation of sector reforms. In the case of this project, the use of disbursement-linked indicators helped to strengthen monitoring capacity, focus on results, and stay the course on challenging reform efforts in the areas of teacher support, textbook procurement, and support for poor and vulnerable students.

- A strong monitoring and evaluation design can provide not only data on overall project achievements. It can also be used for mid-course adjustments. In the case of this project, various elements of the M&E plan informed project implementation along the way. This included: the learning assessments, particularly in the midst of COVID, which pointed to the need for remedial support, assessments of pilot programs such as the livestreaming of teacher training, and the phased roll-out of the new curriculum, which allowed for feedback along the way.

13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The quality of the evidence was substantial due to the strong M&E program supported by the project. The quality of the analysis was also substantial, with clear linkages drawn between the project interventions and reported outcomes. The ICR was overall results-oriented, internally consistent, and consistent with guidelines. Lessons were clearly drawn from project implementation experience.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

Substantial