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IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION AND RESULTS REPORT  
(TF-91822)

ON A

EDUCATION FOR ALL-FAST TRACK INITIATIVE GRANT

IN THE AMOUNT OF US\$14 MILLION

TO THE

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA

FOR A

EDUCATION SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

September 28, 2012

Africa Education Department – West/Central (AFTEW)  
AFCF1  
Africa Region

## CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

Currency Unit = US Dollars

## FISCAL YEAR

January 1 – December 31

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CF	Catalytic Fund
CSR	Country Status Report
DPEF	<i>Direction des Projets Education et Formation</i> – Directorate for Education and Training Projects
DREN	<i>Direction Régionale de l'Education Nationale</i> –Regional directorates for national education
DSPC	<i>Direction des Statistiques, de la Planification et Coordinnation</i> – Directorate for statistiques, planning and coordination
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program
EFA-FTI	Education for All – Fast Track Initiative
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPCV	<i>Enquête Permanente sur les Conditions de Vie des ménages</i> - Permanent multi-purpose household survey
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GIR	Gross Intake Rate
GOM	Government of Mauritania
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICR	Implementation Completion and Results report
ISR	Implementation Status and Results report
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey
MNE	Ministry of National Education
NIR	Net Intake Rate
PAD	Project Appraisal Document
PDO	Project Development Objectives
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

TTL  
UM  
UNICEF  
WFP

Task Team Leader  
Mauritanian Ouguiyas  
United Nations Children's Fund  
World Food Program

Vice President:	Makhtar Diop
Country Director:	Vera Songwe
Sector Manager:	Peter Materu
Project Team Leader:	Cherif Diallo
ICR Team Leader:	Cherif Diallo

**ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA**  
**EFA-FTI Education Sector Development Program**

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<b>A. Basic Information</b>			
Country:	Mauritania	Project Name:	EFA/FTI: Education Sector Development Program
Project ID:	P109078	L/C/TF Number(s):	TF-91822
ICR Date:	09/28/2012	ICR Type:	Core ICR
Lending Instrument:	SIL	Grantee:	ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA
Original Total Commitment:	USD 14.00M	Disbursed Amount:	USD 14.00M
Revised Amount:	USD 14.00M		
<b>Environmental Category: B</b>			
<b>Implementing Agencies:</b> Direction des Projets Education et Formation (DPEF)			
<b>Cofinanciers and Other External Partners:</b>			

<b>B. Key Dates</b>				
Process	Date	Process	Original Date	Revised / Actual Date(s)
Concept Review:	02/28/2008	Effectiveness:		06/24/2008
Appraisal:	03/21/2008	Restructuring(s):		06/09/2010 09/20/2011
Approval:	04/08/2008	Mid-term Review:	10/11/2010	
		Closing:	06/30/2010	03/31/2012

<b>C. Ratings Summary</b>	
<b>C.1 Performance Rating by ICR</b>	
Outcomes:	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Risk to Development Outcome:	Substantial
Bank Performance:	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Grantee Performance:	Moderately Unsatisfactory

<b>C.2 Detailed Ratings of Bank and Borrower Performance (by ICR)</b>			
Bank	Ratings	Borrower	Ratings
Quality at Entry:	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Government:	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Quality of Supervision:	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Implementing Agency/Agencies:	Moderately Unsatisfactory
<b>Overall Bank Performance:</b>	Moderately Unsatisfactory	<b>Overall Borrower Performance:</b>	Moderately Unsatisfactory

<b>C.3 Quality at Entry and Implementation Performance Indicators</b>			
<b>Implementation Performance</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>QAG Assessments (if any)</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Potential Problem Project at any time (Yes/No):	No	Quality at Entry (QEA):	None
Problem Project at any time (Yes/No):	Yes	Quality of Supervision (QSA):	None
DO rating before Closing/Inactive status:	Moderately Unsatisfactory		

<b>D. Sector and Theme Codes</b>		
	<b>Original</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Sector Code (as % of total Bank financing)</b>		
Central government administration	14	5
Health		1
Primary education	86	94
<b>Theme Code (as % of total Bank financing)</b>		
Education for all	100	98
Nutrition and food security		2

<b>E. Bank Staff</b>		
<b>Positions</b>	<b>At ICR</b>	<b>At Approval</b>
Vice President:	Makhtar Diop	Obiageli Katryn Ezekwesili
Country Director:	Vera Songwe	James P. Bond
Sector Manager:	Peter Nicolas Materu	Eva Jarawan
Project Team Leader:	Cherif Diallo	Cherif Diallo
ICR Team Leader:	Cherif Diallo	
ICR Primary Author:	Franco Russo	
	Sandra F. Beemer	

## **F. Results Framework Analysis**

### **Project Development Objectives (from Project Appraisal Document)**

Overall the Catalytic Fund (CF) will help the Government of Mauritania to accelerate the implementation of the Government's Education Sector Development Program (ESDP 2001-2010) in its entirety. Activities financed by the CF are within the ESDP's plan of action over the period 2008-2010. CF would have the following more specific objectives: (i) promote access to education, and improve equity and retention in the sector by building additional classrooms in existing incomplete schools and through the acquisition

of equipment, furniture and the expansion of school feeding program; (ii) improve the quality of the pedagogical content of the primary education and the internal efficiency of the education system; and (iii) improve the quality of teaching and the internal efficiency of education to improve monitoring and management of the education system.

**Revised Project Development Objectives (as approved by original approving authority)**

n/a

**(a) PDO Indicator(s)**

Indicator	Baseline Value	Original Target Values (from approval documents)	Formally Revised Target Values	Actual Value Achieved at Completion or Target Years
<b>Indicator 1:</b>	Access to Grade 1 of primary education (%) (Gross Intake Rate – GIR)			
Value quantitative or qualitative)	108.5%	100%	n/a	112%
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	The end target of 100% was incorrectly selected during project design. The 100% was net intake rate not GIR making it difficult to assess overall achievement. However, trends in GIR show a 3.5 % improvement over the life of the project.			
<b>Indicator 2:</b>	Completion rate of the primary education cycle (%)			
Value quantitative or qualitative)	50%	64%	n/a	73.1%
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	This indicator has been exceeded.			
<b>Indicator 3:</b>	Ratio of girls to boys in primary (%)			
Value quantitative or qualitative)	50.3%	50.5%	n/a	50.6%
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	The target for this indicator was met. ISR data was incorrect: MNE data shows 2008 baseline of 50.3% and 2010 target of 50.5% (not 55%) since overall female proportion of the population was only 52% in 2011 according to MICS survey.			
<b>Indicator 4:</b>	Direct project beneficiaries (number), of which are female (%) - Core Bank			
Value quantitative or qualitative)	0	700,220	n/a	907,757
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	The target was met. Students, teachers, MNE staff and communities all benefitted from the project. The project was retrofitted with this indicator when the Bank began to include project beneficiaries as a core indicator.			

**(b) Intermediate Outcome Indicator(s)**

Indicator	Baseline Value	Original Target Values (from approval documents)	Formally Revised Target Values	Actual Value Achieved at Completion or Target Years
<b>Indicator 1:</b>	Primary schools that offer a complete cycle (%)			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	43%	78%	n/a	71%
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	The target was not met. However, during the project period the percentage of schools offering pedagogical continuity increased substantially and the project financed approximately 63% of all new classrooms built during the project period.			
<b>Indicator 2:</b>	Mission, TOR and administrative, personnel and financial procedures of each directorate, DREN and the system as a whole are clearly defined and understood by all the stakeholders.			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	No	Yes	n/a	Yes
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	This indicator was met. A new decree with TORs and responsibilities was established to include the mandates of all ministries in each DREN.			
<b>Indicator 3:</b>	Information on school performance is readily available and used for decision making.			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	No	Yes	n/a	No
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2008		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	Target not met; activities related to this indicator were not carried out.			
<b>Indicator 4:</b>	Girls' enrollment in primary education in three disadvantaged regions (%)			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	48.2%	50%	n/a	50%
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	The target was met.			
<b>Indicator 5:</b>	Incentive for teachers in remote areas.			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	No	Yes	n/a	Yes
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2008		03/31/2012
Comments	US\$1.6 million in bridge financing to cover three months of teacher incentives			



(incl. % achievement)	until the extra budget was approved by parliament and regularized in the education budget.			
<b>Indicator 6:</b>	School mapping and other planning mechanisms are fully operational (yes/no)			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	No	Yes	n/a	Yes
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	The school mapping was also carried out and revealed that approximately 90 percent of classrooms built by the project were in the poorest regions of the country.			
<b>Indicator 7:</b>	EMIS is fully operational and personnel trained to use it.			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	No	Yes	n/a	No
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	Components of an EMIS were developed but no fully-integrated system is in place.			
<b>Indicator 8:</b>	Classrooms built and/or rehabilitated.			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	0	600	n/a	600
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	The project target was met.			
<b>Indicator 9:</b>	Purchasing 3 million textbooks and 75,000 instructional materials.			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	0	3 million textbooks and 75,000 instructional materials	n/a	2,776,314 textbooks; 0 instructional materials
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	Approximately 90% of the target was met. The project did not purchase the 75,000 sets of instructional materials.			
<b>Indicator 10:</b>	Primary teachers are re-trained to be able to teach the new curriculum in the bilingual system (%).			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	0	80%	n/a	100%
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	This target was exceeded: 100% of teachers (existing ones as well as new entrants) were retrained to teach in both French and Arabic and incentives were given.			
<b>Indicator 11:</b>	S/T ratio at primary level			
Value (quantitative)	47/1	40/1	n/a	39/1

or qualitative)				
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2008		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	Target exceeded but S/T ratios vary between <i>wilayas</i> .			
<b>Indicator 12:</b>	Additional qualified teachers (number) – Core Bank			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	0	3,286	n/a	3,381
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	This Bank core indicator was added in 2010 to retrofit all education projects. The project did not support teacher training but is reporting on the number of teachers trained. The government supports the pre-service teacher training in Mauritania.			
<b>Indicator 13:</b>	Teachers trained in-service (number) - Core Africa			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	0	9,000	n/a	8,714
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	This Africa core indicator was added in 2010 to retrofit all Africa education projects. The project did not support teacher training but is reporting on the number of teachers trained. The Spanish Agency for International Development supports in-service teacher training in Mauritania			
<b>Indicator 14:</b>	Learning assessment in place (yes/no) - Core Bank			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	No	Yes	n/a	Yes
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	This Bank core indicator was added in 2010 to retrofit all education projects. This target has been met.			
<b>Indicator 15:</b>	Primary students that have textbooks in four core subjects (%).			
Value (quantitative or qualitative)	not available	96%	n/a	not available
Date achieved	06/11/2008	06/30/2010		03/31/2012
Comments (incl. % achievement)	This indicator is the government's ESDP indicator. The textbooks purchased under this project were not distributed in time to assess its contribution to achieving this target.			

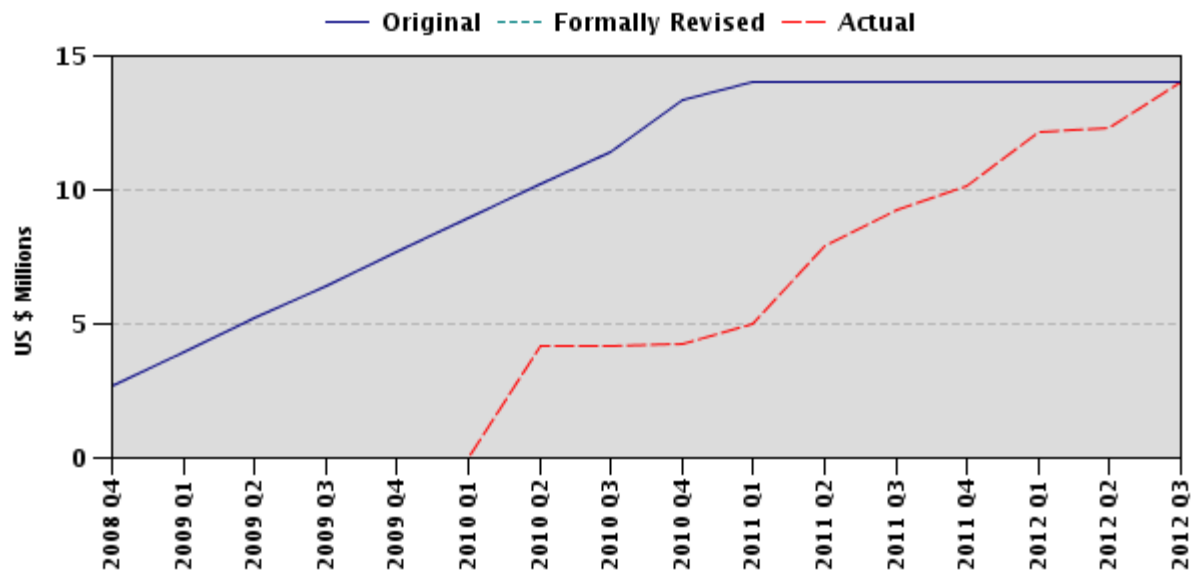
## G. Ratings of Project Performance in ISRs

No.	Date ISR Archived	DO	IP	Actual Disbursements (USD millions)
1	06/16/2008	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.00
2	12/11/2008	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.00
3	03/16/2009	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.00
4	12/02/2009	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	2.50
5	06/27/2010	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	4.25
6	03/29/2011	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	9.22
7	12/11/2011	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	12.16
8	03/29/2012	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	14.00

## H. Restructuring (if any)

Restructuring Date(s)	Board Approved PDO Change	ISR Ratings at Restructuring		Amount Disbursed at Restructuring in USD millions	Reason for Restructuring & Key Changes Made
		DO	IP		
06/09/2010		S	S	4.21	Extension of closing date; update list of PDO-level indicators
09/20/2011		S	S	12.16	Extension of closing date

## I. Disbursement Profile





# 1. Project Context, Development Objectives and Design

## 1.1 Context at Appraisal

1. **Country context.** At the time of appraisal, Mauritania had experienced relatively consistent growth between 2001 and 2005, averaging 4 percent. Fiscal policy, however, was less stringent than expected, allowing for considerable extra-budgetary spending (more than 20 percent of GDP in 2003), financed predominantly by central bank advances. The government re-established macroeconomic stability by implementing prudent monetary and fiscal policies, and made substantial progress in terms of improving transparency in public expenditure management. Growth reached 11.7 percent mostly due to the start of oil production<sup>1</sup>. Strict observance of the fiscal and monetary policy stances was instrumental in bringing 12-month inflation down to an average of 6.2 percent in 2006. Fiscal performance has been strong, reflecting the government's revenue collection efforts and sustained spending discipline. As a result, by end-2006, the basic non-oil fiscal deficit was limited to 4.4 percent of non-oil gross domestic product (GDP). However, approximately 47 percent of the population was still poor, with poverty remaining a predominantly rural phenomenon. In 2004 the rural poor made up approximately 75 percent of all of Mauritania's poor. Given the discovery of oil resources and an already stable macro-economy, increased public and private investment was expected and thought to be leading to robust GDP growth. However, political stability was undermined by a coup d'état in August 2008, which led to the suspension of all Bank operations before project implementation could start. Elections took place on July 18, 2009, the Bank re-engaged with the government on September 11, 2009 and the first supervision mission took place in November 2009. Therefore, project start up was delayed and implementation was carried out in a changed political environment compared to appraisal.

2. **Sector Context.** In April 1999, Mauritania adopted a sweeping reform of its education system, which aimed at: (i) consolidating its education system with the introduction of a single schooling track to help ensure full bilingual education; (ii) strengthening lower secondary education by adding one additional year of schooling, and introducing physics and information technology starting in years three and four; and (iii) strengthening foreign language instruction<sup>2</sup>.

3. To meet the objectives of the new reform, the Government of Mauritania (GOM) decided to take a comprehensive approach that would guide and support the evolution of its schools. This decision led to the development of the "Education Sector Development Program – ESDP", adopted in 2001 and which covered the decade ahead. The ESDP was in line with the letter of sectoral policy, had incorporated the national policy choices, and

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<sup>1</sup> Oil revenues (including an exceptional signature bonus of US\$100 million) were estimated at US\$223 million (10.9% of non-oil GDP) in 2006.

<sup>2</sup> "Evaluation rétrospective du programme national de développement du secteur éducatif (PNDSE) en Mauritanie, 2001-2010", Lahaye and Robert, 2010

defined the sector's objectives and the different strategies to be adopted to meet these objectives. In a sense, the ESDP played a dual role, serving as a policy tool as well as an investment program that harmonized donor interventions in the education sector.

4. By the time of project preparation, the combination of economic growth, increased education expenditures and the satisfactory implementation of the ESDP led to improved access to basic education. Primary school enrollment rates had increased from 88.6 percent in 2001-2002 to 98 percent in 2006-2007, and gender equity had reached parity when averaged out nationwide. For four consecutive years, girls' gross enrollment rate (GER) had exceeded that of boys, with girls' GER at 100 percent compared to boys' at 95.4 percent.

### **CAS objectives supported by the project/rational for Bank Assistance**

5. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 - 2011 Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) objectives were in line with the second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP-2, 2006 – 2010) and focused on: (i) economic governance and public sector capacity; (ii) diversified growth through investment climate improvement, and possibly key enabling infrastructures through enclave operations; and (iii) continued efforts to fight poverty and inequalities in both urban and rural areas. The CAS also supported the PRSP-2's five strategic pillars, of which Pillar III "Development of Human Resources and Expansion of Basic Services" focused on "education", "promotion of gender equity and the role of women" and "universal access to basic services" amongst other priorities. The PRSP-2's priority actions for primary school included: (i) continuing the expansion and restructuring of educational supply especially through the continuation of classroom construction and teacher recruitment programs; (ii) increasing the number of schools that can offer ongoing education (to 50 percent by 2010); (iii) involving the private sector (10 percent by 2010); and (iv) reducing gender and cross-regional disparities. Furthermore, the CAS' results framework included improved quality of education infrastructure and improved quality of teaching as two of its objectives to support the PRSP-2's Pillar III.

6. Therefore, project interventions were in line with both the CAS and PRSP-2 objectives.

### **1.2 Original Project Development Objectives (PDO) and Key Indicators**

7. The higher level project PDO was that the project would help the Government of Mauritania accelerate the implementation of the Government's Education Sector Development Program (ESDP 2001-2010) in its entirety and the activities financed by the CF were within the ESDP's 2008-2010 action plan. The project would have the following more specific objectives: (i) promote access to education, and improve equity and retention in the sector by building additional classrooms in existing, incomplete schools and through the acquisition of equipment, furniture and the expansion of the school feeding program; (ii) improve the quality of the pedagogical content of primary education and the internal efficiency of the education system; and (iii) improve the quality of

teaching and the internal efficiency of education to improve monitoring and management of the education system.

8. The key indicators used to monitor impact of the project and progress toward achieving the PDO are indicated in the table below.

**Table 1 (a): Original PDO-level indicators**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline 2008</b>	<b>Target (2011/12)</b>
Access to Grade 1 of primary education (%) - GIR	108.5%	100%
Completion rate of the primary education cycle (%)	50%	64%

### **1.3 Revised PDO (as approved by original approving authority) and Key Indicators, and reasons/justification**

9. The PDO was not revised during the project period. However, the list of PDO-level indicators was updated as part of the 2010 restructuring paper that extended the closing date from June 30, 2010 to September 30, 2011. Reasons for including two new PDO-level indicators were to: (i) have a means to measure equity; and (ii) to retrofit the project with one of the Bank's relevant core indicators. The two new indicators were: (i) ratio of girls to boys in primary education; and (ii) number of direct project beneficiaries, with the percentage of females provided.

**Table 1 (b): Revised PDO-level indicators**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline 2008</b>	<b>Target (2011/12)</b>
Access to Grade 1 of primary education (%) - GIR	108.5%	100%
Ratio of girls to boys in primary education (%)	50.3%	50.5% <sup>3</sup>
Completion rate of the primary education cycle (%)	50%	64%
Direct project beneficiaries, of which are female <sup>4</sup>	0	700,220

### **1.4 Main Beneficiaries**

10. The project beneficiaries were: (i) rural children who benefitted from new/upgraded classrooms, textbooks and school feeding, (ii) teachers who benefitted

<sup>3</sup> The data provided in the ISRs during the project period was incorrect. The MNE official data shows that the baseline for 2008 was 50.3 percent and the 2010 target was 50.5 percent (not 55 percent as originally stated) since the overall proportion of females in the total population according to the 2011 MICS survey is 52 percent.

<sup>4</sup> The project was retrofitted with this indicator when the Bank began to include project beneficiaries as a core indicator.

from new classrooms and/or incentives; (iii) villagers who benefitted from new classrooms in their communities; and (iv) MNE's student assessment unit staff.

### 1.5 Original Components

11. The project had three main components:

12. **Component 1: Promote Access to Education and Improve Equity and Retention in the sector (US\$9.14 million).** This component supported: (i) construction of classrooms, giving priority to incomplete primary schools to be able to offer six grade levels, and the acquisition of equipment and furniture for such classrooms; (ii) training parent associations in their involvement in school management; and (iii) expanding the school feeding program to improve retention of students in areas where the poor are concentrated.

13. **Component 2: Improve quality of the pedagogical content of primary education and the efficiency of the education system (US\$2.83 million).** This component supported: (i) the acquisition of three million textbooks aimed at increasing the availability of textbooks and teachers' guides in schools; and (ii) acquisition of 75,000 instructional materials to supply small school libraries and reading corners.

14. **Component 3: Improve the quality of teaching and internal efficiency of education (US\$2.03 million).** This component supported: (i) providing incentives to encourage teachers who are teaching effectively (*"prime de craie"*) for a period of three months; (ii) financing activities related to teacher evaluation to monitor the most important aspects of classroom practices and teacher behavior (attendance, preparation of lessons, planning of instructional time, student evaluation and interaction with parents); and (iii) supporting improvements in the quality of student examination as well as the activities of the student learning assessment unit (*Cellule d'Evaluation des Acquis des Elèves*).

### 1.6 Revised Components

15. The components were not revised during the life of the project

### 1.7 Other significant changes

16. The project became effective on June 24, 2008 and on August 6, 2008, the project was suspended for 13 months due to a *coup d'état*. Elections took place on July 18, 2009 and the Bank officially re-engaged with the GOM on September 11, 2009.

17. There was a level 2 project restructuring approved on June 9, 2010, which extended the project closing date from June 30, 2010 to September 30, 2011, giving the project an additional 15 months for implementation. This was requested because once the Bank re-engaged with the GOM, there were only nine months remaining for project implementation and none of the project activities had been completed.



18. There was a second level 2 project restructuring approved on September 20, 2011 that extended the project closing date to March 31, 2012. This extension was requested to: (i) complete the school construction that had been delayed due to heavy rain and flooding; and (ii) finalize the acquisition of student desks and textbooks.

## **2. Key Factors Affecting Implementation and Outcomes**

### **2.1 Project Preparation, Design and Quality at Entry**

19. **Project Preparation:** In 2008, the Bank team prepared, appraised and approved the project in four months using Education for All – Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) procedures relevant at that time. There was a need to submit the project document by the time of EFA-FTI Board’s spring submission deadline in order to secure the US\$14 million project financing. Efforts to meet this deadline negatively affected the preparation team’s ability to take advantage of reviews that could have guided project design and scope. However, the preparation and appraisal team included Bank technical experts that were appropriate for the development of the project as well as technical experts from the donor community in Mauritania. The preparation team used sectoral studies<sup>5</sup> and ongoing IDA projects to guide the conceptualization of this project. However, the preparation team did not finalize and disclose the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) as indicated in the project document. The risk assessment did not identify potential government instability or MNE capacity constraints related to procurement. These aspects were the areas that ultimately created implementation challenges for the project.

20. **Project Design:** The project design fit into the ESDP, PRSP-2 and the Bank’s CAS, all of which supported equitable access, developing human resources, improving governance and building capacity. The project was designed to support the ten-year ESDP with a results framework that included sector-wide indicators to measure progress and was linked to the government’s ESDP objectives and goals. Linking project results frameworks to a country’s larger education sector goals and objectives was typical of EFA-FTI projects at that time. The project design also included implementation mechanisms that were based on an established government structure and built on the successful experience of the community-based construction approach. This approach was applied under the IDA-funded Education Sector Support Program (Cr. 3573-MAU) and successfully contributed to the building of 1,802 classrooms.

21. While the project fit within the Mauritania ESDP: (i) the PDO was complex; (ii) indicator targets were sometimes inaccurately calculated or reported; (iii) there were too

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<sup>5</sup> *Rapport d’Etat sur le Système Educatif Mauritanien: Eléments de diagnostic pour l’atteinte des objectifs du millénaire et la réduction de la pauvreté, mai 2006.*

many activities for a two-year period and insufficient resources to finance all planned activities<sup>6</sup>; and (iv) there were inconsistencies in the project documentation.

22. **Quality at Entry:** As previously mentioned, the need to meet the EFA-FTI Board submission deadline did not leave sufficient time to conduct a Quality Enhancement Review for the project. Furthermore, the requirements for EFA-FTI project preparation in 2008 did not include quality reviews. However, the project would have benefited from a quality review that offered recommendations on project design, particularly given the limited resources and the need to strategically use those resources. The project would have benefitted from a review that recommended narrowing the scope of the project, simplifying the PDO and strengthening the results framework. The project also lacked important details related to the: (i) teacher evaluation mechanism; (ii) student assessment activities; and (iii) interventions to improve efficiency. This was in part due to the short four month preparation period.

## 2.2 Implementation

23. There were several exogenous factors that affected project implementation. The project became effective in June 2008. Shortly thereafter, in August 2008, there was a *coup d'état* and all Bank operations were suspended for over a year until the Bank re-engaged with Mauritania in September 2009. By September 2009, there were only nine months remaining until the project closing in June 30, 2010. In June 2010 the project closing was extended for the first time to September 30, 2011. During the period of the *coup d'état*, project implementation was stopped. In 2010, there was also a reshuffling of the ministries in charge of basic education, which meant that the project implementation unit, the "*Direction des Projets Education et Formation – DPEF*", was moved from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development to the newly created State Ministry in Charge of Education. This change created a new reporting structure for the DPEF. There were also four different DPEF directors over the life of the project, which resulted in loss of continuity and institutional memory and affected project implementation. Finally, the 2010 floods slowed down school construction and the distribution of some student desks, which led to an extension of the project closing date to March 31, 2012. All of these exogenous factors presented challenges for project implementation.

24. After re-engagement, the DPEF prepared an updated procurement and action plan and project implementation began again, albeit slower than anticipated. Management and procurement capacity within the DPEF was weakened by all the staffing changes and led to implementation delays: (i) textbook acquisition took two years to complete due to bidder complaints and contractual issues between the government and the firm; (ii) procurement of desks was delayed due to bidder complaints and contractual issues; and (iii) the school feeding program was delayed for one year because the World Food Program (WFP) and the Bank needed to develop and agree on a subsidiary agreement

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<sup>6</sup> Project costing during preparation underestimated the actual resources required to fully implement all activities outlined in the project document. However, exchange rate gains helped ensure that those activities that were implemented had adequate resources.

before being able to procure and distribute food to school canteens. Despite these exogenous and endogenous difficulties, the project, which was under active implementation for a total of 30 months, was able to: (i) complete and inspect 600 classrooms, which increased the percentage of schools offering six years of primary education; (ii) deliver 30,000 student desks to the regional education offices (*Direction Régionale de l'Education Nationale - DREN*), which exceed the original target by 9,900, and was due to a pledge by the president to distribute more student desks<sup>7</sup>; (iii) carry out the school feeding activity that helped feed 149,609 children; (iv) train some parent associations on canteen management and hygiene; (v) train approximately ten staff members from the student learning assessment unit; (vi) purchase approximately three million textbooks; and (vii) support the teacher incentive scheme (*"prime de craie"*) for a three month period. At the time of project closing, the textbooks had just been delivered to the central warehouse. By completion of the ICR, however, the textbooks had not been delivered to the schools for the start of the 2012/13 school year.

25. There were some activities that were not implemented due to an ambitious project design, a limited implementation period, and insufficient resources to finance all planned activities and inaccurate costing<sup>8</sup>. Activities that were not implemented were: (i) financing the development of a teacher evaluation mechanism to monitor classroom practice and behavior; (ii) improving the quality of student assessment; (iii) training parent associations to become effectively involved in school management; and (iv) procuring 75,000 instructional materials for school libraries and reading corners.

26. The Bank conducted yearly supervision missions and worked with the government to restart implementation after the 2008 suspension. The Nouakchott-based TTL was able to meet regularly with the DPEF, DSPC, MNE staff and other donors to deal with ongoing issues. The project also disbursed 100 percent of project funds by the closing date despite difficulties encountered during implementation. However, the quick disbursement levels led the supervision team to rate the project satisfactory even though some project activities, as mentioned in the Bank's supervision reports, were not being implemented or were delayed. The Bank also did not use the two restructuring opportunities to redefine the PDO, modify inaccuracies in the results framework and strengthen it with more relevant PDO and intermediate level project indicators, or reduce the number of project activities since there were insufficient resources to implement them. The Bank team also did not finalize the safeguards documentation and therefore could not monitor safeguards compliance of project construction because there were no safeguards tools available.

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<sup>7</sup> The presidential pledge was explained to be in response to the large need of student desks, which exceeded the numbers proposed as part of the original project design.

<sup>8</sup> Although the cost to build schools was affected by the rise in construction material prices, it was off-set by approximately US\$2.73 million exchange rate gains. The procurement of student desks came in lower than originally anticipated but the savings per student desk were not sufficient to fully cover the additional 9,900 student desks procured as part of the presidential pledge.

## 2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Design, Implementation and Utilization

27. **M&E Design.** The project results framework was developed to measure progress toward achieving the Government's ESDP (2001-2010) goals. However, the project activities were only designed to be implemented between 2008 - 2010 and were a subsection of the overall activities within the ESDP. The data collection system used for the results framework was an established government system that collects data for the statistical yearbook and was used to track progress of the IDA-financed Education Sector Development Program (Cr. 3573-MAU). This data system is the beginning of the Education Management and Information System (EMIS) that the government has been developing. The fully-integrated EMIS will be included in the next basic education project due to begin in 2013. The M&E design also included: (i) a joint annual government and donor meeting to review progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), data quality and timely reporting; and (ii) government submission to the Bank of quarterly progress reports. These M&E mechanisms were appropriate to measure project progress.

28. **M&E implementation.** The indicators in the results framework were monitored and reported on during implementation. The DPEF was originally selected to collect and monitor project data for the results framework. However, the DPEF did not have the capacity to collect this data on a regular basis. Therefore, the Bank and the government agreed to use the government's statistical unit (*Direction des Statistiques, de la Planification et Coordination - DSPC*) as the unit to provide project education data since they are responsible for all education data. DSPC uses an existing system, which was developed with the support of UNICEF to produce the statistical yearbooks. This data is used by MNE to inform policy decisions made throughout the education system in Mauritania. As mentioned, the project was designed to use the joint government and donor annual reviews to monitor and evaluate progress toward the MDGs and validate data. However, after the 2008 *coup d'état*, these joint annual reviews were discontinued by the government, leaving it to the Bank or the Lead Donor (currently the French Development Agency) to bring together the various donors involved in the education sector. As a result, there was limited joint government/donor monitoring of the project or the ESDP. The quarterly progress reports were provided to the Bank although often later than required under the Grant agreement and did not include an in-depth data analysis. This was in large part due to the rapid change in DPEF directors and associated staff changes, which also affected the Bank's ability to properly monitor project performance. Despite all of these changes, the government did continue to collect data on a regular basis albeit with delays in reporting.

## 2.4 Safeguard and Fiduciary Compliance

29. **Fiduciary Compliance.** The fiduciary aspects of the project were handled by the DPEF, which was adequately staffed to satisfactorily carry out the project's financial management functions. The DPEF prepared and submitted the required quarterly interim financial reports on time. The annual audit reports were also received on time, revealed no irregularities and were unqualified. Financial management of the project was

consistently rated satisfactory. The project had adequate procurement staff, although their capacity could have been strengthened with regard to the preparation of bidding documents and bid evaluation process. This weakness became evident when complaints were filed questioning a firm's ability to fulfill the school desks contract. Although the complaints were satisfied, the winning firm did struggle to deliver the agreed number of desks and to meet the delivery deadline. Resolving procurement complaints coupled with weak supplier capacity resulted in an extended procurement process and delays in delivering the desks. Similar difficulties were also encountered during the procurement of textbooks.

30. **Safeguards.** The Project Appraisal Document (PAD) indicated that an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) was prepared during project preparation and the Implementation Status Reports (ISRs) rated safeguards as satisfactory throughout implementation. However, the ICR team could only find an early draft of the ESMF in the project files, and there was no indication that an ESMF was ever disclosed in-country or the InfoShop. Moreover, the DPEF did not have knowledge of the need to prepare an ESMF. Although the ESMF was never completed or disclosed, the government did confirm that engineers supervised school construction in keeping with standards issued by the Ministry of Environment. In addition, a post-construction review was carried out, which indicated that all construction adhered to the norms established by the Ministry of Environment. The review confirmed that there was no loss of livelihood or long-lasting environmental damage. It also confirmed that all school construction was carried out on existing school grounds to either extend existing schools or replace make-shift schools, and did not involve the purchase of land. However, the norms established by the Ministry of Environment have not been reviewed by Bank safeguards specialists and therefore cannot take the place of an ESMF. The ICR team discussed the possibility of carrying out an environmental audit. However, given that no ESMF was finalized, the audit would not have had any points of reference and hence no measure of assessing compliance. Based on the above, safeguards compliance is rated **unsatisfactory**.

## 2.5 Post-completion Operation/Next Phase

31. A new Global Program for Education (GPE - formerly EFA-FTI) operation to support basic education is under preparation with the involvement of the relevant government entities and local partners. This project is expected to be delivered in FY13 and will build on the achievements and lessons learned of the previous operations in Mauritania. The project will focus on quality of teaching and improvements in bi-lingual education, which continues to be an impediment to improved quality and learning in primary education, as well as access to lower secondary school. It will also focus on specific inputs and define clear outcomes, while continuing to support the government's second phase of its ESDP (2011 – 2020).

32. **Institutional arrangement for the next operation.** The DPEF is in charge of project preparation and will also be responsible for implementation<sup>9</sup>. This will ensure a smooth transition between projects. The new project will also continue to use the DSPC,

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<sup>9</sup> This will be done in close collaboration with the Bank and the French Development Agency, which is the lead donor

which has a strong track record in collecting, tracking and analyzing data, and help with the establishment of a fully integrated monitoring system. Relying on these established entities with their experience will ensure the appropriate support for the preparation of the new project. In addition, the Bank's team will continue its close collaboration with the government and donors. Preparation activities will also include assessing procurement and financial management capacity of the DPEF and propose remedial actions if necessary.

### 3. Assessment of Outcomes

#### 3.1 Relevance of Objectives, Design and Implementation

33. **Relevance of Objectives.** The higher level objective of the project, which was to help the government accelerate the implementation of the ESDP (2001-2010), continues to be relevant to the country needs as reflected in the ESDP, the PRSP-2 and the CAS. The project-specific objectives of increasing access and improving equity, retention, quality and efficiency also continue to be relevant to the PRSP-2 and the CAS.

34. **Relevance of Design.** The project design contributed to accelerating the government's education sector program by: (i) increasing the availability of classrooms through school construction; (ii) improving the quality of education through the acquisition of additional textbooks; (iii) keeping children in school by offering meals as part of the school feeding program; and (iv) motivating teachers through the provision of incentives. However, the project design had a complex PDO, a weak overall results framework without enough project relevant PDO and intermediate level indicators, too many activities to implement in two years, inadequate resources, and no safeguards instrument. Based on the above, the relevance of project design is judged to be **modest**.

35. **Relevance of Implementation.** The relevance of implementation for the project is judged to be **modest**. The project design used existing MNE structures to implement the overall project, which included the DPEF and DSPC. Both of these units had been involved in previous Bank-supported operations. The project also used the World Food Program (WFP) to implement the school feeding program thereby capitalizing on WFP's established process for delivering food to schools and communities. All of these structures were properly selected for implementation. However, by using existing units within the MNE, implementation delays occurred due to: (i) changes within the education ministry structure that led to issues of project ownership and continuity; (ii) capacity constraints caused by DPEF staff changes; and (iii) Bank and WFP bureaucratic procedures associated with the school feeding program. In addition, the Bank did not use the two restructuring opportunities to limit the scope of the PDO or project activities, nor did it revise and strengthen the results framework and indicators. It also did not monitor school construction from a safeguards perspective because there was no Bank safeguards documentation.

### 3.2 Achievement of Project Development Objectives

36. The higher level objective of the project is judged to be **substantial**. This can be seen by the project's support of the ESDP action plan, which included constructing classrooms, training parent associations in school management, expanding the school feeding program, acquiring textbooks, teachers' guides and library reading materials, and providing teacher incentives. Achievement of the project specific objectives: (i) promote access to education, and improve equity and retention in the sector by building additional classrooms in existing, incomplete schools and through the acquisition of equipment, furniture and the expansion of the school feeding program; (ii) improve the quality of the pedagogical content of primary education and the internal efficiency of the education system; and (iii) improve the quality of teaching and the internal efficiency of education to improve monitoring and management of the education system, are judged to have been **modest**.

37. **Promotion of access, improved equity and retention.** These goals were to be measured by the PDO indicators: (i) access to grade 1 of primary education (%) – GIR and (ii) ratio of girls to boys in primary school (%). The original results framework did not include primary school retention rates; however this indicator is monitored by the government as part of the ESDP and therefore has been included in the ICR analysis.

38. The percentage of students with access to grade 1 of primary school increased from 108.5 percent to 112 percent by 2012<sup>10</sup> and the ratio of girls to boys increased from 50.3 percent in 2008 to 50.6 percent in 2012. The initial 55 percent target is incorrect<sup>11</sup> but was never changed to reflect the official 50.5 percent ESDP target. Therefore, the ICR team considers this indicator to have surpassed its target. Available primary school retention rate data indicates that retention rose from 58.6 percent in 2007/08 to 67.4 percent in 2011/12. This is a substantial increase over the three year implementation period.

39. The intermediate project indicators used to measure progress toward achieving the access, equity and retention goals were: (i) primary schools offering a complete cycle (%); (ii) percentage of girls' enrollment in primary education in three disadvantaged regions<sup>12</sup>; (iii) implementing planning capacity through school mapping and other planning mechanisms; and (iv) classroom construction. The project was successful in completing the construction of 600 classrooms and meeting the end target. The school

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<sup>10</sup> Although the Gross Intake Rate (GIR) increased, the achievement of this target cannot be assessed. The GIR target provided in the ESDP was stated as 100 percent, which in fact refers to the Net Intake Rate (NIR). Therefore, the ICR team cannot assess if the target was met. Table 8 provides a time series data of the GIR.

<sup>11</sup> The MNE official data shows that the baseline for 2008 was 50.3 percent and that 2010 target 50.5 percent. The end target could not be 55 percent as mentioned in the project documentation because the percentage of females in the total population was only 52 percent.

<sup>12</sup> Disadvantaged areas are areas identified by the Country Status Report as those with the lowest gross enrollment rates, gross intake rates and girls' enrollment, and include the wilayas of Guidimakha, Hodh el Charghi and Hodh el Gharbi. They also belong to the six poorest regions (Assaba, Brakna, Gorgol, Hodh el Charghi and Hodh el Gharbi) as defined by the PRSP-2 and associated poverty studies using geographical, socio-cultural, economical indicators, as well as child and maternal mortality rates as criteria.

mapping exercise was also carried out and revealed that approximately 90 percent of the 600 classrooms were built in the poorest regions of the country. In addition, pedagogical continuity improved because the percentage of primary schools offering a complete cycle increased from 43 percent to 71 percent in project intervention areas. Although the target of 78 percent was missed, it is a significant increase compared to the 2007/08 figures. The percentage of girls enrolled in primary education in the three disadvantaged regions increased from 48.2 percent in 2006/07 to 50 percent in 2012 thereby meeting the target by project closing.

40. **Improved quality and internal efficiency of the education system.** These goals were to be measured by one PDO level indicator: completion rate of the primary education cycle. During the project period, the completion rate in primary education increased from 50 percent in 2008 to 73.1 percent, surpassing the 64 percent target by 9.1 percent.

41. Intermediate indicators used to measure quality and internal efficiency were: (i) decrease in the student:teacher ratio; (ii) number of additional qualified teachers as measured by teachers graduating from pre-service teacher training; (iii) number of teachers trained in-service training; (iv) 80 percent of primary teachers re-trained to be able to teach the new curriculum in the bilingual system; (v) incentives for teachers in remote areas; (vi) purchase of three million textbooks and 75,000 instructional materials; (vii) primary students that have textbooks in four core subjects (%); and (viii) EMIS is fully operational and personnel trained to use it (yes/no).

42. The achievement of the selected intermediate indicators is as follows: (i) the student:teacher ratio decreased from 47:1 in 2008 to 39:1 in 2012, surpassing the target of 40:1; (ii) the number of additional qualified teachers graduating from pre-service training was 3,381 thereby exceeding the target of 3,286; (iii) the teachers graduating from in-service training was 8,714 just missing the target of 9,000;<sup>13</sup> and (iv) 100 percent of the primary school teachers were retrained to teach the new curriculum in the bilingual system, thereby surpassing the target of 80 percent. The project also provided US\$1.6 million in bridge financing to cover three months of teacher incentives until the extra budget was approved by parliament and regularized in the education budget. This support helped mitigate tensions between teachers unions and the government, and kept teachers in schools. However, the student:textbook ratio cannot be verified because the textbooks purchased with project funds arrived in Mauritania one week prior to project closing. The project did procure 2.78 million textbooks but missed the target of three million. The most recent information indicates that the textbooks are still in a central warehouse in Nouakchott. The project was not able to purchase 75,000 sets of instructional materials for school libraries and reading corners due to insufficient project funds. Although

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<sup>13</sup> This is an Africa Core Indicator that was added in 2010 to retrofit all Africa education projects. In-service teacher training in Mauritania is supported by the Spanish Agency for International Development. However, the Bank team did retrofit the results framework with this indicator and therefore, the ICR team is including it in their analysis. In addition, the ISRs included a baseline of 10,714 for pre-service and 5000 for in-service training instead of 0 as indicated in the 2010 restructuring paper.



teachers were re-trained to teach in both Arabic and French, their ability to do so in both languages remains uneven.

43. The project was to support the evaluation unit in the MNE to develop a teacher evaluation instrument to measure classroom practice and teacher behavior, and support the student learning and monitoring unit to improve student examination. The project financed the development of a teacher evaluation questionnaire but a baseline study of teacher behavior was not carried out. The project supported the training of the MNE's student assessment team, the development of associated materials and the carrying out of an initial learning assessment. The project did not support investments in the EMIS, however, Mauritania does have standalone monitoring systems that now need to be fully-integrated to create a EMIS.

### 3.3 Efficiency

44. The project disbursed approximately US\$5.9 million to finance the construction of 600 primary classrooms by communities. Approximately 80 percent of these classrooms were new constructions, while the remainder was classrooms built to replace old ones whose quality was inadequate. School mapping data shows that approximately 90 percent of the 600 classrooms were built in the poorest regions of the country. The project built on 25 years of experience in Mauritania of using the community-based school construction approach. The community-based approach supported the achievement of the project objectives with a lower unit cost than the private sector and despite the fact that construction material costs had escalated worldwide since 2005.

**Table 2: Comparison of construction costs for a standard classroom<sup>14</sup>, by communities and the private sector**

	2005	2008	2010
	Local currency: UM	Local currency: UM	Local currency: UM
Communities	2,060,000	2,450,000	3,150,000
Private sector	4,172,000	4,754,000	5,129,000
Price per square meter community	38,148	45,370	58,333
Price per square meter private sector	77,259	88,037	94,981

Source: *DPEF*

45. During the project period, the average cost of classrooms was 2,800,000 UM, increasing from 2,450,000 UM in 2008 to 3,150,000 UM in 2010. The recent tenders issued by the state and executed by the private sector show that the cost charged by the project using the community-based approach is economically viable and remains competitive. Although the price per square meter for classrooms has risen from UM 45,370 in 2008 to UM 58,333 in 2010, it is lower than the private sector price (UM 94,981 in 2010). Data from the DSPC shows that the construction of new classrooms led to an increase in the number of children attending school by 17 percent between 2007/08

<sup>14</sup> "Standard classroom" refers to a classroom that can accommodate up to 40 children

and 2010/11 in the targeted areas. The 2009 Country Status Report (CSR), which used the analysis of the 2008 permanent multi-purpose household survey (EPCV), indicates two reasons for parents not sending their children to school: (i) the lack of teachers in classrooms; and (ii) the lack of satisfaction with classroom conditions.

46. **Desks.** The project financed 30,000 student desks compared to the initial 20,100 as a result of the pledge by the president. The budgeted unit cost was US\$91/student desk at appraisal. Following competitive bidding, the unit cost fell to US\$80/student desk, which helped cover 21 percent of the sector needs in terms of student desks.

47. **School Feeding.** Research on the benefits of canteens suggests that school feeding programs could contribute to a parent's decision to enroll a child in school and help the child stay in school. Several studies have examined the role of school feeding in stimulating enrollment and increasing attendance. The project has reached 149,609 students based on WFP's selection criteria, which include the poverty level, the level of girls' participation and overall vulnerability. According to the first results of the school feeding program impact analysis, the success rates for first year of college entrance exams is approximately 51.4 percent in schools benefiting from the program. This rate is higher than the average in other schools without canteens. Assessments conducted in Mauritania in 2001, 2006 and 2011 show a positive relationship between a child's learning outcomes in language and mathematics and the presence of a canteen.

48. **Textbooks:** The project was supposed to support the acquisition of three million textbooks and 75,000 instructional materials. The textbooks were rewritten by national experts while the editing and printing of the books was done abroad. The project supported the acquisition of 2,776,314 textbooks. The unit cost of these textbooks was US\$0.73 per book, which is slightly higher than the US\$0.67 per book estimation in the PAD. However, the price per textbooks acquired under this project is lower than that in other countries: in Benin the cost of a primary textbook is approximately US\$1.78 per book, in Togo US\$2.0, in Mozambique US\$1.40, in Niger US\$1.07 and in The Gambia US\$1.08<sup>15</sup>. Unfortunately, the project did not purchase the 75,000 instructional materials for school libraries and reading corners as originally envisioned.

49. The education indicators have generally improved over the life of the project. By project completion, the primary completion rate reached 73.1 percent in 2011/12, which is an increase compared to 50 percent in 2007/08. In recent years, efforts have been made to improve school provision, which contributed positively to the increase in enrollments. The number of classrooms increased from 12,247 in 2008/09 to 13,240 in 2010/11 distributed across 4,075 schools. The project financed 600 of the 993<sup>16</sup> additional classrooms that were constructed during this period and which correspond to approximately 63.4 percent of the total number of classrooms. The number of additional teachers reached 14,095 in 2011/12, thereby leading to a student:teacher ratio of 39:1. In

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<sup>15</sup> However, this price comparison does not include an analysis of quality.

<sup>16</sup> The government and development partners have constructed a total of 993 classrooms: FTI-630; French Cooperation-111; Government:73; earlier projects: 179

terms of access, the actions of the GOM have led to a significant increase in Gross Intake Rate - GIR, which reached 112 percent in 2011/12. In terms of retention, available data indicates that retention rose from 58.6 percent in 2007/08 to 67.4 percent in 2011/12; Analysis by gender shows a slight difference in favor of girls at the national level (69 against 65.9). Sector spending more than doubled between 2005 and 2011 and accounts for nearly one fifth of current expenditures of the state and more than 5 percent of state revenue, while only 7 percent are covered by external resources.

50. Despite these commendable improvements, broader findings indicate that overall efficiency of the project was **modest** because of considerable shortcomings: (i) during project preparation, the Bank team did not allocate sufficient resources, which resulted in several key quality activities not being implemented; (ii) although the student desks cost less than originally expected, some were deemed by beneficiaries to be of poor quality or inappropriate for small children; (iii) the savings from procuring student desks were not sufficient to finance the additional 9,900 desks, so that the additional cost had to be financed with funds originally allocated for other activities; (iv) less textbooks were purchased for a higher price than estimated, which negatively affected the projects ability to finance the 75,000 instructional materials destined for small libraries and reading corners; (v) procurement delays did not allow for the timely distribution of these textbooks so that the majority is still in a central warehouse in Nouakchott; and (vi) funds allocated for the school feeding program were only sufficient to cover 28 percent of a normal school year<sup>17</sup>.

### 3.4 Justification of Overall Outcome Rating

#### Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory

51. The overall outcome rating of the project is moderately unsatisfactory. This overall rating is based on the fact that: **relevance** of project design and implementation were **modest**. This can be seen by the fact that: (i) the project design fit into the ESDP, PRSP II and CAS; and (ii) the implementation mechanism was appropriate in that it used existing MNE systems and units to implement the project. However, (i) the PDO was complex, (ii) indicator targets were sometimes inaccurately calculated or reported; (iii) there were too many activities, and (iv) some activities were not implemented due to insufficient resources and in some cases inaccurate costing. **Efficacy** of the project is **substantial** for all of the reasons stated previously while **efficiency** is judged to be **modest**.

**Table 3: Overall outcome ratings**

Relevance	Achievement of PDO-Efficacy	Efficiency	Overall Rating
Modest	Substantial	Modest	Moderately Unsatisfactory

<sup>17</sup> According to government data, a normal school year consists of 150 days

### **3.5 Overarching Themes, Other Outcomes and Impacts**

#### **(a) Poverty Impacts, Gender Aspects, and Social Development**

52. Mauritania's share of girls' enrollment in primary education continues to outpace that of boys, which is impressive. As of the 2011/2012 school year, the gender ratio is at 1.07, with more girls in primary school on a national average. Specifically, school construction interventions in the *wilaya* of Guidimagha (one of the Mauritania's most disadvantaged regions) seem to have helped improve the percentage of girls enrolled in primary school compared to 2007/08 levels: at project onset, girls' enrollment lagged behind that of boys by four percentage points while by project closing, enrollment was slightly higher for girls than for boys. Anecdotal evidence would indicate that beneficiary communities are more optimistic about the possible returns they get from sending their children to school. Mauritania, as other countries in the Sahel, is battling food shortages due to drought, which significantly impacts a child's physical and mental development. Having contributed to WFP's school feeding program has, at least in the short run, helped meet the most imminent nutritional needs of school children.

#### **(b) Institutional Change/Strengthening**

53. The project aimed at strengthening the government's student assessment and teacher evaluation capacity. The project financed the training of the MNE's assessment unit in Senegal and France, which helped the government develop the relevant materials and conduct a baseline study. It is expected that this experience and knowledge will allow the government to conduct further assessments that can inform sound policy decision making. The Prime Minister just recently issued a decree officially establishing the student learning assessment unit within the MNE. This will give this unit official standing and the requisite budget allocation for performing their responsibilities. The government also instituted the "*prime de craie*" to give incentives to teachers to work in remote areas. The capacity of communities to manage school canteens and classroom construction has also been strengthened as part of project interventions as both activities included a training component.

#### **(c) Other Unintended Outcomes and Impacts (positive or negative)**

54. No significant unintended outcomes or impacts.

### **3.6 Summary of Findings of Beneficiary Survey and/or Stakeholder Workshops**

55. The project conducted a beneficiary survey (*Enquête de satisfaction portant sur "Le Programme Fast-Track" en République Islamique de Mauritanie*), which is available on file in French. However, the findings can be summarized as follows: (i) 75 percent of the student desks were of satisfactory quality and were viewed by education personnel at the local levels as contributing to improved student learning, while the remaining 25 percent were of sub-standard quality or not appropriate for small children; (ii) the school construction program has improved teachers' ability to teach, students' ability to learn and parents' opinion of the quality of schooling but designs should be

adapted to local conditions; (iii) the availability of textbooks has a positive impact on student learning and is appreciated by students and teachers alike but that there do not exist sufficient textbooks to meet the needs<sup>18</sup>; (iv) school canteens are viewed as an effective way to help poor families meet their children's nutritional needs, to ensure school attendance and reduce drop out, and improve children's ability to study/learn; and (v) the teacher incentive scheme had a positive impact on teacher attendance.

#### **4. Assessment of Risk to Development Outcome**

##### **Rating: Substantial**

56. The risks identified during project preparation were mostly appropriate: two were rated negligible and three modest. The two ratings of negligible related to education funding were accurately selected. Between 2005 and 2011, spending on the sector more than doubled, thus showing the importance attached to education. Education spending accounts for nearly one fifth of current expenditures of the state and more than 5 percent of state revenue, while only 7 percent are covered by external resources. However, supervision missions noticed that no maintenance plans for sector investments had been established. The absence of adequately funded maintenance plans that include school furniture and books there is a risk that the new construction will deteriorate and the gains in access will diminish over time. However, the government continues to be committed to financing education therefore, this risk appears to be modest. The two modest ratings related to decentralization were appropriate. The government continues to build the capacity of local education administrators so as to improve their ability to run the local education systems. Therefore, risk is still modest because local responsibility for the education system is recognized by the government as being important to the efficient internal functioning of the sector. The risk associated with bilingual education should have been rated substantial. The supply of qualified bilingual teachers is still very low in Mauritania and deployment of those qualified teachers to the remote areas remains a challenge for the government. However, the new GPE project will focus specifically on improving the quality of bilingual education at the two teacher training institutions in Mauritania. The preparation team did not identify procurement capacity as a risk nor did they identify the risk of political instability. These should have been identified with the appropriate mitigation measures. These remain valid risks and could affect project outcome, especially because these were two areas that had already an impacted on project implementation.

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<sup>18</sup> A sample study carried out by the evaluators at the *Institut Pédagogique National*, which covered 206 schools across 6 wilayas and 30 departments, showed that only 62 percent of students in grades 3 and 5 each had a textbook in Math, Arabic and French.

## **5. Assessment of Bank and Borrower Performance**

### **5.1 Bank Performance**

#### **(a) Bank Performance in Ensuring Quality at Entry**

##### **Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory**

57. The Bank preparation team included the appropriate staff to appraise the project and the operation was appropriately aligned with the ESDP, PRSP-2 and CAS. The Bank team was actively engaging with the government counterparts and local donors throughout the preparation process. This collaboration ensured that all relevant stakeholders were aware of the proposed project activities and enabled them to coordinate the donor interventions.<sup>19</sup> The Bank team also prepared the project within the short period of time provided by the EFA-FTI for submission and approval by the EFA-FTI Board of Directors. However, the short preparation period led to the development of a weak results framework that did not include enough relevant PDO and intermediate level indicators or had targets that were sometimes inaccurately calculated or reported. There were also inconsistencies in the project documentation that made evaluating the project difficult, and some activities were not fully developed prior to project start-up. Finally, the team did not finalize the ESMF and disclose it in Mauritania or the Bank's Infoshop. This could have been avoided had the preparation team systematically involved the Bank's environmental safeguards specialists.

#### **(b) Quality of Supervision**

##### **Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory**

58. The Bank team carried out annual supervision missions, with periodic interactions of the country-based TTL with the relevant stakeholders. The Mauritania-based TTL was also able to carry on a dialogue with the government and donors even during the period of political turmoil. The presence of a fiduciary team (procurement specialist and disbursement assistant) in Nouakchott was also important as it helped facilitate the resolution of procurement issues related to the purchase of desks and textbooks. However, supervision teams were often too optimistic when assessing project progress and focused mainly on the satisfactory disbursement levels and progress of construction, textbooks, student desk and school feeding activities. Although the project was restructured twice, the Bank team did not use these opportunities to redefine the PDO, revise or strengthen the results framework to better track progress and assess project performance. These were missed opportunities to narrow the project scope by eliminating project activities for which there were no or insufficient project resources and to correct some of the project design problems. Finally, no environmental safeguards supervisions were conducted during the life of the project.

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<sup>19</sup> The Spanish Agency for International Development supported in-service teacher training and UNICEF conducted a study on girls' education and causes for gender gap.

**(c) Justification of Rating for Overall Bank Performance**

**Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory**

59. Based on the discussion above, the ICR team judges the overall Bank performance to be **moderately unsatisfactory**.

**5.2 Borrower Performance**

**(a) Government Performance**

**Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory**

60. The government remained available and accessible for the Bank teams throughout project implementation. This factor was very important for the Bank's ability to support the DPEF in implementing the project and conduct an open dialogue with the government. However, the government political instability and ultimate *coup d'état* led to delays in implementation. After the *coup d'état*, the government changed the education ministry structure several times thereby changing the ministry responsible for the project. This caused confusion that led to issues of government ownership and continuity. The government also discontinued the annual education sector reviews which had proved useful for both the donors and government in monitoring the ESDP and the project implementation. Once these meetings were discontinued, there was no longer a mechanism available to bring stakeholders together for dialog on challenges facing the education sector. Therefore, the government's performance is rated **moderately unsatisfactory**.

**(b) Implementing Agency or Agencies Performance**

**Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory**

61. DPEF was adequately staffed but frequent changes in staffing and weak capacity of some departments slowed project implementation activities. Progress reporting remained challenging throughout the life of the project, which was due to the lack of a fully-integrated information management system. However, DPEF staff provided the necessary support to Bank missions and helped facilitate supervision activities. They were instrumental in organizing high-level meetings and field visits and were generally responsive to the Bank's requests. Also, the DPEF's fiduciary departments functioned reasonably well, displayed no irregularities and were consistently rated satisfactory. DPEF was also able to manage classroom construction and facilitate the provision of food supplies to canteens in addition to procuring textbooks and student desks. However, the limited capacity of certain DPEF departments led to several implementation issues. The procurement process was slow due to bidder complaints but also because of delays at the DPEF level when requested to respond to procurement inquiries from bidders and the Bank. Frequent staff changes at the DPEF also led to non-familiarity with Bank procedures, which also impacted implementation progress. The DPEF also did not follow up or ensure satisfactory completion of project activities, such as textbook storage and distribution. Only at the insistence of the Bank's supervision team did the DPEF work with the responsible government entity to transfer the books to a more adequate storage facility. Furthermore, the textbooks were not distributed, which negatively affected the

textbook:student ratio indicator. By the time the ICR was completed the textbooks had still not been distributed. Furthermore, the DPEF did not address the sub-standard quality of 25 percent of the student desks at the time of acceptance. Based on this mixed performance, the ICR team rates the implementation agency's performance **moderately unsatisfactory**.

**(c) Justification of Rating for Overall Borrower Performance**

**Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory**

62. The ICR team judges the borrower's overall performance as **moderately unsatisfactory** based on the discussion above.

## **6. Lessons Learned**

63. **Lesson 1. Special agreements with United Nations agencies and other donors should be cleared prior to project effectiveness.** The project's school feeding program was delayed for one year due to the bureaucratic processes between the Bank and the WFP. There existed no standard contracts between the government and the WFP, which could have been reviewed and then approved by the Bank's legal department. Going forward it will be important for the Bank and the WFP to develop a standard contract that can be easily adapted to different country and project circumstances.

64. **Lesson 2. Project implementation units within the ministry are more effective than those outside the ministry structure.** The DPEF plays an important role in donor coordination and implementation of education projects. Moreover, having this unit located within the regular structure of the ministry helps facilitate project management's interactions with other governmental departments. However, the risk of relying of such structures is that there can be frequent staff changes (including at the level of the minister) when governments change, which could have an impact on implementation effectiveness.

65. **Lesson 3. Community participation for school construction is important for ensuring low cost school construction and local ownership in Mauritania.** Having the community actively involved led to an increased sense of ownership and interest in the overall management of a school. This type of construction also led to a more cost effective use of project resources as evidenced by the project's economic and financial analysis. While schools constructed by the communities have proved to be cost effective, it will be important for the future design and construction of these schools to include the ancillary structures of latrines and fences. Communities should also be trained in the maintenance of schools and the development of maintenance plans.

66. **Lesson 4. Joint government and donor annual sector reviews are important for ensuring coordination of activities and quality implementation in Mauritania.** The previous education projects greatly benefitted from the Joint Annual Sector Reviews, which served as a platform for donors and the government discuss education sector interventions. It was beneficial in finding solutions to common problems and adapting a coherent approach to donor interventions.



67. **Lesson 5. Project preparation should include a quality review regardless of institutional requirements.** Many of the project's short-comings might have been avoided had there been a quality at entry review. The project scope was too extensive and ambitious for the funds and implementation period allocated, and there were weak or no linkages between the proposed objectives and interventions. A quality review would also have allowed a deeper analysis of the results framework and ensured its ability to track project progress and assess achievement of the objectives.

68. **Lesson 6. Projects must have adequate monitoring arrangements in place prior to effectiveness.** It is important to put in place a well staffed and capacitated unit that would facilitate monitoring various aspects of project – project outcome/output/process indicators as well project management. Future education projects in Mauritania must ensure that the DPEF's M&E unit has the required systems and fully trained staff with adequate capacity to fully monitor all aspects of implementation.

69. **Lesson 7. Submission deadline constraints by external financiers can impact the quality of project preparation.** The preparation team only had four months to prepare, appraise and submit the project to the EFA-FTI Board to secure the funds. Such tight deadlines undermine the Bank team's ability to follow due diligence in project preparation and should be avoided going forward. It would be important for financiers to put in place a mechanism that would allow project teams to delay submission without the risk of losing funding.

## **7. Comments on Issues Raised by Grantee/Implementing Agencies/Donors**

**(a) Grantee/Implementing agencies**

**(b) Cofinanciers/Donors**

**(c) Other partners and stakeholders**

*(e.g. NGOs/private sector/civil society)*

## Annex 1. Project Costs and Financing

### (a) Project Cost by Component (in USD Million equivalent)

Components	Appraisal Estimate (USD millions)	Actual/Latest Estimate (USD millions)	Percentage of Appraisal
<b>Component 1:</b> Promote access to education and improve equity and retention in the sector	9.14	10.23	112%
<b>Component 2:</b> Improve quality of the pedagogical content of primary education and the efficiency of the education system	2.83	2.09	74%
<b>Component 3:</b> Improve the quality of teaching and internal efficiency of education	2.03	1.68	83%
<b>Total Baseline Cost</b>	14.00	14.00	
Physical Contingencies	0.00	0.00	0.00
Price Contingencies	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Project Costs</b>	14.00	14.00	
Project Preparation Costs	0.00	0.00	.00
	0.00	0.00	.00
<b>Total Financing Required</b>	14.00	14.00	

### (b) Financing

Source of Funds	Type of Cofinancing	Appraisal Estimate (USD millions)	Actual/Latest Estimate (USD millions)	Percentage of Appraisal
Trust Funds		0.00	0.00	
EFA-FTI Education Program Development Fund		14.00	14.00	100%

## Annex 2. Outputs by Component

### Component 1: Promote Access to Education and Improve Equity and Retention in the Sector (US\$9.14 million)

1. This component was to support the first PDO of promoting access to education, and improve equity and retention by: (i) constructing and equipping classrooms; (ii) training of parents' associations and sensitization campaigns; and (iii) expanding the school feeding program. To measure achievements, the following PDO indicators were tracked: (i) access to grade 1 of primary education (%) - GIR; and (ii) ratio of girls to boys in primary (%). Although the original results framework did not include primary school retention rates, this indicator is monitored by the government within the ESDP and therefore has been included in the ICR analysis. Intermediate indicators were: (i) primary schools that offer a complete cycle (%); (ii) classrooms built and/or rehabilitated; (iii) percentage of girls' enrollment in primary education in three disadvantaged areas; (v) school mapping and other planning mechanisms are fully operational (yes/no).

2. The percentage of students with access to grade 1 of primary school increased from 108.5 percent to 112 percent by 2012. Although the Gross Intake Rate (GIR) increased, the achievement of this target cannot be assessed. The GIR target provided in the ESDP was stated as 100 percent, which refers to the Net Intake Rate (NIR). Therefore, the ICR team cannot assess if the target was met. Table 8 provides a time series data of GIR from 2008/09 to 2011/2012. The ratio of girls to boys increased from 50.3 percent in 2008 to 50.6 percent in 2012. The initial 55 percent target was incorrect<sup>20</sup> but never changed to reflect the 50.5 percent ESDP target. Therefore, the ICR team considers this indicator to have surpassed its target. Available primary school retention rate data indicates that retention rose from 58.6 percent in 2007/08 to 67.4 percent in 2011/12, which is a substantial increase.

3. The project met the target of constructing 600 classrooms and exceeded original target of 20,100 desks by 9,900. The school mapping exercise was also successfully carried out, which showed that approximately 90 percent of schools were built in the poorest regions of the country<sup>21</sup>. Given the poor quality of school structures in those regions, construction activities mostly focused on replacing existing classrooms. One of the project's main goals was to ensure that 78 percent of primary schools offer pedagogical continuity<sup>22</sup> in 2010/11 compared to 43 percent in 2007/08. Although the project did not meet the end target, 71 percent of the schools<sup>23</sup> supported by the project now have the capacity to offer pedagogical continuity. This is a major achievement. The percentage of girls enrolled in primary education in the three disadvantaged regions increased from 48.2 percent in 2006/07 to 50 percent in 2012 thereby meeting the target.

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<sup>20</sup> The MNE official data shows that the baseline for 2008 was 50.3 percent and that 2010 target 50.5 percent. The end target could not be 55 percent as mentioned in the project documentation because the percentage of females in the total population was only 52 percent.

<sup>21</sup> Brakna, Gorgol, Guidmakha, Assaba, Hodh Charghi and Hodh Gharbi

<sup>22</sup> Pedagogical continuity refers to a school that offers 6 grades

<sup>23</sup> The project supported construction of 600 classrooms which impacted 292 schools.

The use of community participation in the construction of classrooms allowed the project to reduce the cost by almost one third to UM 3.15 million. This is compared to the unit costs for government-constructed schools (UM 4.83 million) and unit costs for construction financed by the private sector (UM 5.13 million). This approach also helped strengthen the capacity of communities to manage and supervise construction and maintenance of schools due to training and provided by the DPEF.

4. The decentralization activities within the project never fully materialized. This was due to the fact that after the 2008 *coup d'état*, the government abandoned the previous focus on decentralization. The project did not conduct the study on girls' education and causes for gender gaps or train school committees in school management. However, the project did supported a study on causes of regional gaps in completion of schooling and the training of 546 school committee members in the management of canteens, hygiene and environment through the WFP activities. While the project did not complete all agreed activities, UNICEF carried out a study on girls' barriers to education, which included recommendations that have guided the preparation of the new GPE project. UNICEF also supported 560 school committees, including parents' associations, in school management, environment, school maintenance and management of sub-project/funds.

5. The project was successful in providing US\$1.94 million which allowed the government to sign a contract with the World Food Program (WFP) for 1,876 tons of food. It benefitted 149,609 children in 1,698 schools (1,808 schools including Koranic schools) for 42 days, two meals a day. These funds also contributed to WFP's overall 2011/2012 feeding program and purchased a total of 3.15 million tons of food to cover a 94-day period over two trimesters. Initial data seems to show that success rates for first year of college entrance exams in schools with canteens are slightly higher than in schools without (51.35 percent versus 50.11 percent). A preliminary report was prepared by the WFP and shared with the ICR mission.

## **Component 2: Improve Quality of the Pedagogical Content of the Primary Education and the Efficiency of the Education System (US\$2.83 million)**

6. This component was to support the second PDO indicator of improved quality of learning within primary education and the internal efficiency of the education system. To reach this goal, the project supported the new government's policy of providing free textbooks to primary schools. The PDO indicator used to measure achievement of this goal was the increase of the primary school completion rate from 50 percent in 2008 to 64 percent in 2012. The intermediate indicators used to measure achievement were: (i) the purchase of three million textbooks and 75,000 instructional materials for school libraries and reading corners; and (ii) primary students that have textbooks in four core subjects (%).

7. The primary completion rate increased from 50 percent in 2006 to 73.1 percent in 2012, surpassing the target of 64 percent by 9.1 percentage points.

8. The project outputs for this component are largely unmet. The project supported the government's free textbook program with the purchase of 2,776,314 textbooks. It should be noted that the EFA-FTI project was the only donor project that supported the acquisition of textbooks and therefore, any achievement within this component would be directly attributed to the FTI project. However, the textbooks did not arrive in Mauritania until the week of project closing and the latest information indicates that the majority of these textbooks have not been distributed. Based on this, the student:textbook ratio cannot be verified. In addition, the project was not able to purchase the 75,000 sets of instructional materials for school libraries and reading corners. Therefore, the intermediate indicator of 96 percent of primary school students with four core textbooks was not achieved and there was only partial achievement related to the procurement of textbooks and instructional materials.

### **Component 3: Improve the Quality of Teaching and Internal Efficiency of Education (US\$2.03 million)**

9. The component was to support the third PDO of improving quality of teaching by: (i) providing three months of bridge financing for a new teacher incentive program that required approval by the parliament in a special session since the education budget had already been approved; (ii) supporting the evaluation unit in the MNE to develop a teacher evaluation instrument to measure classroom practice and teacher behavior; and (iii) supporting the student learning and monitoring unit to improve the student examination. The project did not include a PDO indicator to measure quality of teaching. However, the intermediate indicators selected were: (i) decrease in the student:teacher ratio; (ii) additional qualified teachers as measured by the number of teachers graduating from pre-service teacher training; (iii) number of teachers trained in-service training; (iv) 80 percent of primary teachers re-trained to be able to teach the new curriculum in the bilingual system; (v) incentives for teachers in remote areas; and (vi) EMIS is fully operational and personnel trained to use it (yes/no).

10. The achievement of the selected intermediate indicators can be seen by: (i) student: teacher ratio decreasing from 47:1 in 2008 to 39:1 in 2012 surpassing the target of 40:1; (ii) the number of additional qualified teachers graduating from pre-service training was 3,381 thereby exceed the target of 3,286; (iii) the teachers graduating from in-service training was 8,714 just missing the target of 9,000 (iv) 100 percent of the primary school teachers were re-trained to teach the new curriculum in the bilingual system thereby passing the target of 80 percent (although their ability to teach in both Arabic and French remains uneven); and (v) incentives were provided to teachers for three months.

11. The project outputs for this component were partially met. The project did provide US\$1.6 million in bridge financing to cover three months of teacher incentives until the extra budget was approved by parliament and regularized in the education budget. This helped mitigate tensions between the teachers unions and the government and kept teachers in schools. The project also supported the development of a teacher evaluation questionnaire but a baseline study of teacher behavior was not carried out.

Therefore, information on school performance is not available. The project also covered the costs of additional training in Dakar for the MNE student assessment team on techniques for conducting student assessments (a first round of training took place in France). The materials were developed and the government carried out a student assessment in 2011, which is currently being analyzed. This is a positive step forward as Mauritania continues to institutionalize assessment of the education system and this unit will be used to implement the assessment activities in the new GPE.

## Annex 3. Economic and Financial Analysis

### Economic Analysis.

1. Mauritania has over the last twenty five years developed an expertise in construction according to community outreach and cost. The EFA-FTI project used community-based construction as a part of project implementation. There was an audit of the schools that were constructed during the project which showed that: (i) 95 percent of the schools constructed were satisfactory according to the standard life of 25 years, (ii) 4 percent had deteriorated, and (iii) 1 percent was in poor condition.

2. The project disbursed approximately US\$5.9 million to finance 600 primary classroom constructions by communities. Approximately 80 percent of classrooms were new constructions, while the remainder were classrooms built to replace old ones whose quality was inadequate. The project built on the 25 years of experience in Mauritania of using the community-based school construction approach. The community-based approach supported the achievement of the project objectives with a lower unit cost than the private sector and despite the fact that construction material costs had escalated since 2005 worldwide.

**Table 4: Comparison of construction costs for a standard classroom, by communities and the private**

	2005	2008	2010
	Local currency: UM	Local currency: UM	Local currency: UM
communities	2,060,000	2,450,000	3,150,000
Private	4,172,000	4,754,000	5,129,000
Price per square meter community	38,148	45,370	58,333
Price per square meter private	77,259	88,037	94,981

Source: *DPEF*

3. During the project period, the average cost of classrooms was UM 2,800,000, increasing from UM 2,450,000 in 2008 to UM 3,150,000 in 2010<sup>24</sup>. The recent tenders issued by the state and executed by the private sector show that the cost charged by the project using the community-based approach is economically viable and remains competitive. Although the price per square meter for classrooms has risen from UM 45,370 in 2008 to UM 58,333 in 2010, it remains lower than the private sector price (UM 94,981 in 2010).

4. Data from the DSPC shows that the construction of new classrooms led to an increase in the number of children attending school by 17 percent between 2007/08 and 2010/11 in the 600 classrooms. The 2009 CSR, which used the analysis of the 2008 permanent multi-purpose household survey (EPCV), indicates two reasons for parents not sending their children to school: (i) the lack of teachers in classrooms; and (ii) the lack of

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<sup>24</sup> Although the cost to build schools was affected by the rise in construction material prices, it was off-set by approximately US\$2.73 million exchange rate gains.

satisfaction with classroom conditions. The data below shows that, when parents were asked about reasons for their dissatisfaction with schools, 25 percent indicated poor conditions of schools, 14 percent cited the teacher competency and 12 percent mentioned the lack of books.

**Table 5: Causes of dissatisfaction among parents for basic education (2008)**

	Rural	Urban	Total
Lack of teachers	35.6%	32.3%	33.5%
Property in poor condition	20.6%	28.1%	25.4%
Teacher quality	12.4%	15.3%	14.3%
Lack of books	12.4%	11.6%	11.9%
other causes	19.0%	12.7%	14.9%

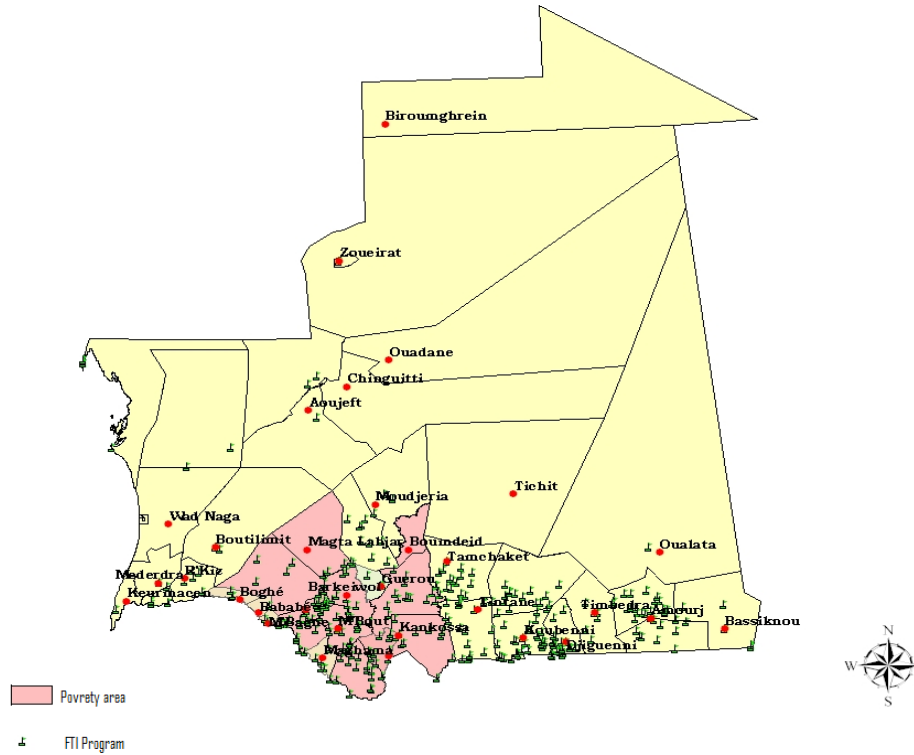
Sources: Country status report, 2009

5. The CSR also indicated that the risk of non-attendance is stronger when children are in rural areas and belong to the poorest quintile. The probability of not being educated is estimated at 10.8 percent for children living in cities compared to 26.4 percent for those living in rural areas. The rural areas represent 54 percent of the population of children aged 8 to 13 years and therefore have a higher risk of not being educated. The result is that 78 percent of children that are currently excluded from schools are located in rural areas while only 22 percent are located in cities.

6. The map below shows where classrooms were constructed with the support of the project. They were in the poorest areas as identified in the PRSP-2 which mainly concerns the *wilayas* of Gorgol, Brakna and Assaba. In addition, a maximum number of classrooms were built in *wilayas* that traditionally have low levels of enrollment referred to as “disadvantaged areas” (i.e. Hodh el Charghi and Hodh el Gharbi).



**Figure 1: Map of schools constructed under the project**



**Table 6: Summary of school distribution by wilaya**

WILAYA	Number of classrooms <sup>25</sup>	Percentage (%)
Hodh Echarghi	156	24.9
Hodh El Gharbi	201	32.1
Assaba	82	13.1
Gorgol	66	10.54
Brakna	22	3.5
Trarza	21	3.35
Adrar	7	1.12
Tagant	20	3.2
Guidimagha	46	7.4
Tiriszemmour	5	0.79
Total	626	100.0

Source: DPEF

7. The table below shows that the number of schools offering a complete cycle of primary education has increased between 2008 and 2012, increasing from 25.2 percent to 33.9 percent. This increase can be attributed in large parts to the 600 additional classrooms constructed through the project.

<sup>25</sup> This table includes the 26 classrooms that were completed by the government with its own funds after project closing.

**Table 7: The evolution of the proportion of complete schools by wilaya between 2001/02 and 2011/12 (%)**

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
H.Charghi	8.2	11.9	12.5	13.7	15.6
H.Gharbi	7.6	9.1	10.8	11	16.1
Assaba	13.7	14.7	16.9	17.2	19.1
Gorgol	18.4	20.1	20.3	22	22.6
Brakna	28.3	32.1	34.8	37.8	39.1
Trarza	30.1	32.7	33.2	31.8	34.8
Adrar	22.4	28.4	27.3	25.2	28
Nouadhibou	83.3	81.8	79.3	75.9	75.3
Tagant	17.7	21.2	22.7	23.6	24.1
Guidimakha	21	25	25.7	28.7	35.7
T.Zemmour	82.8	76.7	80.6	74.2	77.4
Inchiri	33.3	36	37	44	35.7
Nouakchott	92.1	94.3	91.4	89.2	88.2
Total	<b>25.2</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>33.9</b>

Source: *Direction des Stratégies, de la Planification et de la Coopération*

8. **Desks.** The project financed 30,000 student desks compared to the initial 20,100 as a result of the pledge by the president. The budgeted unit cost was US\$91/student desk at appraisal. However, following competitive bidding, the unit cost fell to US\$80/student desk, which helped cover 21 percent of the sector needs in terms of desks.

9. **School Feeding.** Research on the benefits of canteens suggests that school feeding programs could contribute to a parent's decision to enroll a child in school and help the child stay in school. They found that such activities could help parents: (i) appreciate the value of education; (ii) have the peace of mind that there exist adequate school facilities; (iii) weigh the direct and indirect costs of sending a child to school; and (iv) realize that food is available at their children's schools. Several studies have examined the role of school feeding in stimulating enrollment and increasing attendance. The project has reached 149,609 students based on WFP's selection criteria, which include the poverty level, the level of girls' participation and overall vulnerability. According to the first results of the school feeding program impact analysis, the success

rates for first year of college entrance exams is approximately 51.4 percent in schools benefiting from the program. This rate is higher than the average in other schools without canteens. Assessments conducted in Mauritania in 2001, 2006 and 2011 show a positive relationship between a child's learning outcomes in language and mathematics and the presence of a canteen.

10. **Textbooks.** The project was to support the acquisition of three million textbooks and 75,000 instructional materials. The textbooks were rewritten by national experts while the editing and printing of the books was done abroad. The project financed the acquisition of 2,776,314 textbooks. The unit cost of these textbooks was US\$0.73 per book, which is slightly higher than the US\$0.67 per book estimation in the PAD. This higher cost included the cost of delivery to the central warehouse but not the distribution to schools. However, the price per textbooks acquired under this project is lower than that in other countries: in Benin the cost of a primary textbook is approximately US\$1.78 per book, in Togo US\$2.0, in Mozambique US\$1.40, in Niger US\$1.07 and in The Gambia US\$1.08<sup>26</sup>. The project did not purchase the 75,000 instructional materials as originally envisioned by the project.

11. The education indicators have generally improved over the period of the project. By project completion, the primary completion rate reached 73.1 percent in 2011/12, which is an increase compared to 50 percent in 2007/08. In recent years, efforts have been made to improve school provision, which contributed positively to the increase in enrollments. The number of classrooms increased from 12,247 in 2008/09 to 13,240 in 2010/11 distributed across 4,075 schools. The project financed 600 of the 993<sup>27</sup> additional classrooms that were constructed during this period and which correspond to approximately 63.4 percent of the total number of classrooms. The number of additional teachers reached 3,381 in 2011/12, thereby leading to a student:teacher ratio of 39:1. Although the percentage of students with access to grade 1 of primary school increased from 108.5 percent to 112 percent by 2012, the ICR team cannot assess if the target was met as previously discussed. In terms of retention, available data indicates that retention rose from 58.6 percent in 2007/08 to 67.4 percent in 2011/12; Analysis by gender shows a slight difference in favor of girls at the national level (69 against 65.9). Moreover, between 2005 and 2011, spending on the sector more than doubled, thus showing the importance attached to education. They account for nearly one fifth of current expenditures of the state and more than 5 percent of state revenue, while only 7 percent are covered by external resources.

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<sup>26</sup> However, this price comparison does not include an analysis of quality.

<sup>27</sup> The government and development partners have constructed a total of 993 classrooms: FTI-630; French Cooperation:111; Government:73; earlier projects: 179

**Table 8: The evolution of the Gross Intake Rate (GIR) by wilaya and gender (2008/09 - 2011/12**

Wilaya/Year/Sex	2008/09			2009/10			2010/11			2011/12		
	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T	B	G	T
H.Charghi	126.6	126.8	126.7	110.3	117.1	113.7	113.6	116.3	114.9	114.1	117.9	115.9
H.Gharbi	120.3	125.1	122.7	112.2	132	122	112.8	140.3	126.2	121.2	147.3	133.9
Assaba	102.1	105.8	103.9	107.6	107.7	107.6	106.9	110.2	108.5	108.8	111.9	110.3
Gorgol	85.3	90.7	87.9	86.6	91.4	89	119.6	124.8	122.1	108.3	111.1	109.7
Brakna	130.7	143	136.8	123.1	131.7	127.3	110.9	120.5	115.6	120.9	132.4	126.5
Trarza	102.4	102.5	102.5	85.7	82.5	84.1	98.8	101.1	99.9	99.5	98.9	99.2
Adrar	101.6	101.4	101.5	101.6	96.1	98.9	95.1	93.8	94.4	101.4	103.4	102.4
Nouadhibou	85.3	99.9	92.3	101.7	108.1	104.7	80.9	89.7	85.2	109.6	114.2	111.8
Tagant	144.3	138.8	141.6	135.9	139.2	137.6	132.9	130.9	131.9	141.7	148.8	145.2
Guidimakha	165.2	164.6	164.9	127.2	125	126.2	118.3	120.7	119.5	140.2	148.2	144.1
T.Zemmour	78.9	77.7	78.3	81.5	79.1	80.3	75.6	83.8	79.6	85.3	84.4	84.9
Inchiri	101.7	108.8	105.2	111.6	112.8	112.2	101.2	113.7	107.3	117.3	138.1	127.6
Nouakchott	77.4	85.2	81.2	86.4	91.9	89	80.9	87.9	84.3	90.7	99.6	95
<b>Mauritania</b>	<b>106.1</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>108.5</b>	<b>101.6</b>	<b>106.4</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>101.9</b>	<b>108.8</b>	<b>105.3</b>	<b>108.3</b>	<b>115.8</b>	<b>112</b>

Source : Direction des Stratégies. de la Planification et de la Coopération

**Table 9: Primary School Retention Rate by wilaya between 2008/09 and 2011/12 :**

Wilaya/Year/Sex	2008/09			2009/10			2010/11			2011/12		
	G	F	T	G	F	T	G	F	T	G	F	T
H.Chargui	37.3	42	39.6	48.6	55.3	51.9	50.2	49.4	49.8	47.4	51.9	49.7
H. Gharbi	53.3	60.5	57.2	29.8	35.2	32.5	68.5	76	72.5	51.8	64.6	57.9
Assaba	45.2	45.4	45.3	42.8	44.3	43.5	52.1	47.5	49.7	51.1	46	48.2
Gorgol	56.5	50.9	53.6	47.1	37.3	42	57.9	55.4	56.7	78.6	77.4	77.5
Brakna	55.7	62	58.7	52.6	53.3	42	57.5	56	56.8	47	51.6	49.2
Trarza	61.6	69.5	65.4	53	47.8	50.3	64.8	79.5	71.7	86.4	86.9	88
Adrar	80.4	76.5	78.4	55.2	54.2	54.7	63	59.4	61.3	104.1	85.2	94.5
NDB	67	65.3	66.1	105.7	110.7	108	55.4	61.1	58.2	108.5	100.1	104.2
Tagant	57.7	48	52.9	92.1	93.4	92.9	57.8	53.1	55.5	64.6	57.2	61.1
Guidim	51.6	37	44.3	73.4	63.3	68.8	58.1	45.8	52.1	74.6	67	70.9
T.Zemour	105.5	126.1	114.8	60.3	69.2	64.5	87.1	86.1	86.9	76.3	73.4	74.9
Inchiri	93.6	81.4	87	55.5	74.3	64.5	46.2	49.8	48.1	53.7	94.9	73.6
NKTT	108.8	114	111.5	125.9	117.1	121.4	NA	NA	NA	92.7	102.3	97.3
<b>Mauritania</b>	<b>60.2</b>	<b>62.1</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>57.8</b>	<b>58.6</b>	<b>63.8</b>	<b>66.5</b>	<b>65.2</b>	<b>65.9</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>67.4</b>

Source : Direction des Stratégies. de la Planification et de la Coopération

**Table 10: Evolution of education spending and structure by type of expenditure**

Fiscal Years	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Operations Cost</b>	<b>14,323</b>	<b>21,049</b>	<b>28,674</b>	<b>33,169</b>	<b>33,692</b>	<b>35,134</b>	<b>40,827</b>
<b>Investment</b>	<b>5,540</b>	<b>8,381</b>	<b>6,460</b>	<b>7,770</b>	<b>2,853</b>	<b>3,968</b>	<b>3,401</b>
National Resources	1,264	1,822	2,001	2,217	978	321	272
External Resources	4,276	6,559	4,459	5,553	1,875	3,646	3,129
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,863</b>	<b>29,430</b>	<b>35,134</b>	<b>40,939</b>	<b>36,545</b>	<b>39,102</b>	<b>44,228</b>
National Resources	15,587	22,871	30,675	35,386	34,670	35,456	41,100
External Resources	4,276	6,559	4,459	5,553	1,875	3,646	3,129
External financing proportion (%)	27.4%	22.3%	12.7%	13.6%	5.1%	9.3%	7.1%
<b>Current expenditure on education as% GDP</b>	2.9%	2.9%	3.9%	3.7%	4.2%	4.4%	5.1%
<b>% Current Expenditure Education / Total Government budget</b>	11.3%	13.3%	18.0%	16.7%	20.9%	21.6%	19.2%
<b>% Total Expenses Education / Total Government budget</b>	12.2%	14.5%	16.1%	14.6%	14.9%	14.5%	13.9%

12. Despite these commendable improvements, broader findings indicate that overall efficiency of the project was **modest** because of considerable shortcomings: (i) during project preparation, the Bank team did not allocate sufficient resources, which resulted in several key quality activities not being implemented; (ii) although the student desks cost less than originally expected, some were deemed by beneficiaries to be of poor quality or inappropriate for small children; (iii) the savings from procuring student desks were not sufficient to finance the additional 9,900 desks, so that the additional cost had to be financed with funds originally allocated for other activities; (iv) less textbooks were purchased for a higher price than estimated, which negatively affected the projects ability to finance the 75,000 instructional materials destined for small libraries and reading corners; (v) procurement delays did not allow for the timely distribution of these textbooks so that the majority is still in a central warehouse in Nouakchott; and (vi) funds allocated for the school feeding program were only sufficient to cover 28 percent of a normal school year<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> According to government data, a normal school year consists of 150 days

## Annex 4. Grant Preparation and Implementation Support/Supervision Processes

### (a) Task Team members

Names	Title	Unit	Responsibility/ Specialty
<b>Lending/Grant Preparation</b>			
Cherif Diallo	Sr. Implementation Specialist	AFTEW	
Johanne Angers	Senior Operations Officer	ECSH1	
Marie-Christine Balaguer	Consultant	OES	
Helene Bertaud	Sr. Counsel	LEGAF	
Fatima Cherif	Program Assistant	AFMMR	
Sakhevar Diop	Consultant	AFTED	
William Experton	Consultant	AFTED	
Maimouna Mbow Fam	Sr. Financial Management Specialist	AFTFM	
Nicole Hamon	Language Program Assistant	AFTHE	
Yahya Ould Aly Jean	Program Assistant	AFMMR	
Moustapha Ould El Bechir	Senior Procurement Specialist	AFTPC	
<b>Supervision/ICR</b>			
Cherif Diallo	Sr. Implementation Specialist	AFTEW	
Hamoud Abdel Wedoud Kamil	Sr. Education Specialist	AFTEW	
Franco Russo	Operations Analyst	AFTEW	
Sandra Beemer	Sr. Operations Officer	AFTEW	
Mohamed El Hafedh Hendah	Procurement Specialist	AFTPC	
Helene Bertaud	Sr. Counsel	LEGAM	
Wolfgang Chadab	Sr. Finance Officer	CTRLA	
Fatima Cherif	Program Assistant	AFMMR	
Mohamed I. Diaw	Operations Assistant	CFPTO	
Sakhevar Diop	Consultant	AFTED	
Saidou Diop	Sr. Financial Management Specialist	AFTFM	
William Experton	Consultant	AFTED	
Yahya Ould Aly Jean	Program Assistant	AFMMR	
Moustapha Ould El Bechir	Sr. Procurement Specialist	AFTPC	

**(b) Staff Time and Cost<sup>29</sup>**

<b>Stage of Project Cycle</b>	<b>Staff Time and Cost (Bank Budget Only)</b>	
	<b>No. of staff weeks</b>	<b>USD Thousands (including travel and consultant costs)</b>
<b>Lending</b>		
<b>Total:</b>		0.00
<b>Supervision/ICR</b>	2.0	4.95
<b>Total:</b>	2.0	4.95

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<sup>29</sup> This operation was almost exclusively funded by trust fund resources. To date, US\$197,429 have been used for the supervision of this operation, including staff time and travel cost. Preparation costs were likely covered by ongoing operations.

## **Annex 5. Beneficiary Survey Results**

Available on file in French



## **Annex 6. Stakeholder Workshop Report and Results**

Not applicable

## **Annex 7. Summary of Grantee's ICR and/or Comments on Draft ICR**

(full version in French is available on file)

### **Opportunities for intervention and Recommendations**

- In terms of access, the different sub-components were adapted to the needs and must be consolidated and focus on *wilayas* that remain significantly behind in terms of education; emphasis needs to be placed on the component student desk supply because the needs remain still very high;
- The qualitative performance of the education system in general and basic education in particular are inadequate and require special attention, including the improvement of the education and training of teachers and learning conditions;
- There exists a need to focus also on the acquisition of instructional materials;
- Conduct training for teachers;
- Incentives for teachers to improve the quality of basic education;
- The protection of schools through fencing and the putting in place of maintenance plans for all investments (including student desks and other infrastructure);
- Building local colleges to promote the education of girls;
- Continue support for school canteens under future interventions; and
- Involve local partners to supervise works and the maintenance of infrastructure and other investments.

### **Conclusion**

The results of the project demonstrated its relevance to the achievement of objectives in the field of basic education. Delays are mainly due to external factors (political change) or procedural problems that were overcome with the Government's support to ensure proper implementation of the project but also the guidance and help of the World Bank to help improve the primary school enrollment rate and quality of basic education. Therefore, it is recommended to consider a new phase of the Fast Track project, which should take into account the lessons learned from this phase.

DPEF has confirmed that they do not have any substantive comments on the ICR.

## **Annex 8. Comments of Cofinanciers and Other Partners/Stakeholders**

Not available

## **Annex 9. List of Supporting Documents**

*Enquête Permanente sur les Conditions de Vie des ménages* – World Health Organization (2008)

Country Assistance Strategy, Report Number 39532-MR – World Bank (2007)

Second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Report Number 38116-MR, World Bank (2006)

*Programme National de Développement du Secteur Educatif – République Islamique de Mauritanie; Ministère de l'Education Nationale (2001)*

*Evaluation retrospective du programme national de développement du secteur éducatif (PNDSE) en Mauritanie, 2001-2010; Lahaye and Robert (2010)*

*Rapport de mise en oeuvre des projets, Direction des Projets Education et Formation, 2012*

*Rapport d'Etat sur le Système Educatif Mauritanien: Eléments de diagnostic pour l'atteinte des objectifs du millénaire et la reduction de la pauvreté, Report Number 59239-MR, World Bank, 2006*

*Enquête de satisfaction portant sur le « Programme Fast-Track » en République Islamique de Mauritanie, Cellule Nationale d'Evaluation et de Suivi, 2012*

*Note sur les activités du Fast Track II, Programme Alimentaire Mondial (PAM), 2012*

*Rapport d'Achèvement du Projet Fast Track, “Direction des Projets Education et Formation” et “Bureau d'Etude de Conseils et de Représentation”, 2012*

Implementation Completion and Results Report for the “Education Sector Development Program”; Report Number ICR00001567, World Bank, 2011

Aide memoirs (2008 – 2012)

# MAURITANIA

- |   |                           |     |                          |
|---|---------------------------|-----|--------------------------|
| ○ | SELECTED CITIES AND TOWNS | —   | MAIN ROADS               |
| ⊙ | REGION CAPITALS           | —   | RAILROADS                |
| ⊗ | NATIONAL CAPITAL          | —   | REGION BOUNDARIES        |
| — | RIVERS                    | --- | INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES |

