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**IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION AND RESULTS REPORT**

TF-16473

ON A

SMALL GRANT

IN THE AMOUNT OF USD 3.8 MILLION

TO THE

MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE, IN CHARGE OF INDUSTRY AND PLANNING

FOR AN

ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION PROJECT (P145323)

December 28, 2018

Education Global Practice  
Middle East And North Africa Region

**CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS**

(Exchange Rate Effective December 14, 2018)

Currency Unit = Djibouti Francs (DJF)

DJF 100 = 0.56

US\$ 1 = 178.02

FISCAL YEAR

July 1 – June 30

**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

ACIGEF	Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Education Management System Project ( <i>Projet d'appui des capacités institutionnelles et de la gestion de l'éducation et de la formation</i> )
AFD	French Development Agency ( <i>Agence Française de développement</i> )
CAS	Country Assistance Strategy
CFEEF	Training Center for Basic Education ( <i>Centre de formation des enseignants de l'enseignement fondamental</i> )
CPP	Project Steering Committee (Comité de pilotage des projets)
CRIPEN	National Education Research and Information Production Center ( <i>Centre de recherche, d'information, et de production pour l'éducation nationale</i> )
DGA	Directorate for Central Administration ( <i>Direction générale de l'Administration</i> )
DGE	Directorate for General Teaching ( <i>Direction générale de l'enseignement</i> )
EFA-FTA	Education for All – Fast Track Initiative
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
FM	Financial Management
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IDA	International Development Association
INDS	National Initiative for Social Development ( <i>Initiative nationale de développement social</i> )
LEG	Local Education Group
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MENSUP	Ministry of National and Higher Education ( <i>Ministère de l'éducation nationale et supérieure</i> )
MENFOP	Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training ( <i>Ministère de l'éducation nationale et de la formation professionnelle</i> )
MEFP	Ministry of Economy, Finance and Planning
OTI	National standardized test to assess students' learning outcomes ( <i>Objectif terminal d'intégration</i> )
PAE	National Education Action Plan ( <i>Plan d'action de l'éducation</i> )
PAEQ	Education Access and Quality Project ( <i>Projet d'accès à l'éducation de qualité</i> )



PIU	Project Implementation Unit ( <i>Service de gestion des projets</i> )
PAAE	School Access and Improvement Program ( <i>Programme d'amélioration de l'accès aux écoles</i> )
PAAE2	Second School Access and Improvement Program ( <i>Programme d'amélioration de l'accès aux écoles 2</i> )
SSA	Sub-Sahara Africa
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

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DATA SHEET

BASIC INFORMATION

Product Information

Project ID	Project Name
P145323	Access to Quality Education Project
Country	Financing Instrument
Djibouti	Investment Project Financing
Original EA Category	Revised EA Category
Partial Assessment (B)	Partial Assessment (B)

Organizations

Borrower	Implementing Agency
Republic of Djibouti	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training

Project Development Objective (PDO)

Original PDO

The project development objective is to improve the learning environment and instructional practices of teachers in the first threeyears of primary education.

FINANCING

	Original Amount (US\$)	Revised Amount (US\$)	Actual Disbursed (US\$)
<b>Donor Financing</b>			
TF-16473	3,800,000	3,800,000	3,798,499
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,800,000</b>	<b>3,800,000</b>	<b>3,798,499</b>
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>3,800,000</b>	<b>3,800,000</b>	<b>3,798,499</b>

#### KEY DATES

Approval	Effectiveness	Original Closing	Actual Closing
18-Mar-2014	13-Apr-2014	30-Jun-2017	30-Jun-2018

#### RESTRUCTURING AND/OR ADDITIONAL FINANCING

Date(s)	Amount Disbursed (US\$M)	Key Revisions
23-May-2017	1.35	Change in Results Framework Change in Components and Cost Change in Loan Closing Date(s) Change in Implementation Schedule

#### KEY RATINGS

Outcome	Bank Performance	M&E Quality
Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Modest

#### RATINGS OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN ISRs

No.	Date ISR Archived	DO Rating	IP Rating	Actual Disbursements (US\$M)
01	09-Jun-2014	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0.00
02	20-Jan-2015	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	0.00
03	20-Jul-2015	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	0.40
04	28-Dec-2015	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	0.46
05	03-Aug-2016	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	0.64
06	29-Jun-2018	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	2.82



**ADM STAFF**

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## I. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

### Context at appraisal

#### Project Overview

1. **The access to Quality Education Project (*Projet d'accès à l'éducation de qualité-PAEQ*) was funded by a small grant from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) for US\$3.8 million.** It aimed to improve the learning environment and teaching practices by training teachers, school principals and other school staff, and through rehabilitating and constructing primary school classrooms, providing furniture and equipment.<sup>1</sup> It focused on instruction in mathematics. PAEQ complemented an International Development Association (IDA)-supported project, the Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Education Management System Project (*Projet d'appui des capacités institutionnelles et de la gestion de l'éducation et de la formation-ACIGEF*), which focused on building management capacity of the sector (effective January 15, 2013). In fact, PAEQ was designed not only as a complement to other donor- and government-funded initiatives but was also seen as a vehicle to support donor coordination through the Local Education Group which is part of the GPE funding approach. PAEQ became effective on April 13, 2014 and closed on June 30, 2018 after a one-year extension of the original closing date. The extension was part of a level two project restructuring (dated May 23, 2017) that was needed to complete project activities and was necessitated by implementation delays early in the project. The project met most of its results targets. There were improvements in student mathematics performance as measured by the Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA), and at the same time evidence of the use of improved teacher pedagogical practices, thus establishing a link between the project and improved learning outcomes. This contributed to an overall moderately satisfactory outcome for the project.

#### Context at Appraisal

2. **Djibouti is a small, low-income country bordering Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea that has minimal natural resources and is highly dependent on revenue from its port and on foreign direct investment (FDI).** In 2012, Djibouti had a population of less than 1 million (881,000) and a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of around US\$1,500. Leading up to appraisal, Djibouti had achieved growth rates for the previous five years at an average of almost 5 percent. During the same period, FDI constituted an average of 15 percent of GDP. Social indicators generally lagged the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) average, and the Human Development Index ranking was only 150 out of 172. Yet, Djibouti was endowed with a large portion of young people (with 38.5 percent estimated to be under the age of 15) who the government believed could act as engine for economic growth and social development. The government recognized that economic development could not advance without building its human resources.

3. **The project design addressed several key constraints to improving the learning environment and instructional practices of teachers in the first three years of primary education.** These constraints at appraisal led to weak student performance in reading and mathematics. About 7 students out of 10 did not master basic reading either well or at all. The mean score on the math portion was 11 points out of a possible total of 20

<sup>1</sup> The ICR estimates that about one-third of the country's early primary education teachers were trained by the project.





points.<sup>2</sup> This relatively weak performance in reading and mathematics in early primary was linked to teacher training. Only 10 percent of public primary school teachers held a university level degree, while 50 percent held the *baccalaureate*, signifying the completion of 13 years of primary and secondary education. An additional 35 percent held a BEPC or “*Brevet d’études du premier cycle*,” roughly equivalent to a high-school diploma and slightly below the *baccalaureate* credential.

4. **PAEQ was designed to support the National Education Strategy 2010-2019 over a three-year period and was consistent with the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) of 2009.** PAEQ was to be a central element of the Djibouti National Education Action Plan (*Plan d’action de l’éducation*, PAE 2014-2016)<sup>3</sup>, which was developed by the MENFOP with the coordination of UNICEF and presented to stakeholders and the education donor partners in June 2013. The CAS highlighted needed improvements in the education sector and centered on three themes: (1) supporting growth; (2) supporting human development and access to basic services; and (3) supporting governance and public-sector management. The planned assistance under the CAS was to (1) further expand access to basic education, particularly in rural areas and for girls, including by reducing dropout and repetition rates; and (2) enhance the quality of education, especially by increasing teacher training and the availability of school books. PAEQ focused on basic education by increasing teacher training at the primary level, promoting pre-school education, improving the physical learning environment and school management through training of school directors.

#### Project Development Objectives (PDOs)

5. **The Project Development Objective (PDO) was to improve the learning environment and instructional practices of teachers in the first three years of primary education.**<sup>4</sup> The PDO was not revised but end targets were adjusted to account for the one-year extension.

#### Key Expected Outcomes and Outcome Indicators

6. The main expected outcomes are a better physical learning environment through newly constructed and rehabilitated classrooms and improved instruction through targeted teacher training. Improved school management through training of school principals and staff would also lead to an improved learning environment. The project also sought to improve the national mathematics examination, which would provide important information needed to improve the learning environment.

7. A key value process involved improving the learning environment through teacher training. The approach under PAEQ was as follows:

*Assessment of students in conjunction with an observation of teacher practice in class → Identification of needs to improve instruction → Tailored in-service teacher training<sup>5</sup> → Re-observation of teacher practices in class → Re-assessment of students.*

<sup>2</sup> These results are from: *Evaluation en lecture des élèves de 2ème année, Rapport d’analyse MENESUP 2009 and Evaluation des niveaux d’acquisitions des élèves de 2ème année de l’enseignement primaire en lecture et en mathématiques, Rapport d’analyse 2010, MENSUP.*

<sup>3</sup> This is the second stage of the 2010-2019 Strategy

<sup>4</sup> Note that although the project and component one titles mention ‘access’, it is not part of the PDO, on which the ICR assessment is based. While the project plausibly contributed to access through building classrooms and training teachers, the ICR ratings do not incorporate this contribution, nor does the project results framework measure it.

<sup>5</sup> There are two innovative features of teacher training in Djibouti. Before training, teachers must sign contracts pledging to use



8. This was an innovative approach for Djibouti, a country where teacher performance had not been systematically evaluated up till then. MENFOP, convinced of its value, intends to continue using the approach. The evaluation of student performance also became more systematic using EGMA.

9. Key outcomes were to be measured by the following outcome indicators: (1) Percentage of teachers implementing at least three pedagogic practices in which they have received Project-supported training, (2) Enhanced versions of grade 2 math and French exams administered-Target, (3) Percentage of school directors implementing at least three management practices in which they have received Project-supported training, and (4) Direct project beneficiaries (number), of which female (percentage).

### Components

10. The project had three components aimed at achieving an improved learning environment and improved instructional practices:

11. **Component 1: Access to Primary Education (appraisal: US\$1.6 million, actual cost: US\$1.83).** This component promoted improvements to the physical learning environment in selected rural schools in the areas of Dikhil, Arta, Ali Sabieh and Tadjourah. The project financed: (1) the construction and equipping of a new primary school in Tawaoco Chiniley (Dikhil); (2) the rehabilitation of six existing schools (22 classrooms) in Dorra and Adaillou (Tadjourah), Sankal (Dikhil), Ali Addeh (Ali Sabieh) Omar Djagga and Wéa (Arta), as well as (3) additional classrooms in those same six schools to add a total of 25 new classrooms and necessary facilities. In total, 47 classrooms were built or rehabilitated and their quality verified at regular intervals by the project architect. The idea was to reduce overcrowding in these schools and improve the learning environment. The project also financed the provision of furniture and equipment for these additional classrooms (i.e., desks, tables, chairs, cabinets, chalk boards, solar panels).

12. **Component 2: Quality of Primary Education (appraisal:US\$1.9 million, actual cost: US\$1.53).** This component promoted students' learning outcomes through the in-service training of primary school teachers (early primary grades), school directors, pedagogic counselors and inspectors, and through support to pre-primary education. UNICEF worked with the World Bank to support pre-school education. Originally, the Project had intended to leverage financing from USAID in early grade reading to complement the Project's support to early grade mathematics, providing a unified package of support for quality early primary instruction in Djibouti. However, given challenges in aligning the two donor implementation timelines and activity schedules, it was agreed to keep literacy and numeracy activities separate and based on each institution's comparative advantage: the Bank focused on early grade mathematics and USAID on early literacy. The training in management practices was provided to school directors, school inspectors and pedagogic counselors in four modules: (1) coordinate, evaluate and promote teaching, (2) design strategies to improve learning, (3) promote citizenship and peace education in the school, and (4) promote education on hygiene and environmental preservation. The rationale was that school directors would advance beyond just their administrative roles and assume more of a school "leadership" role. An assessment tool was developed to this end that was used by academic inspectors to report on this.

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the training back in class. Training is done by the Center for Teacher Training (CFEEF) in the capital with in-school personalized follow-ups to check the training was successful.



13. **The training for teachers was on instructional practices, student formative assessment, lesson planning, support to low-performing students, with a focus on mathematics instruction.** Instructional resources were purchased for existing regional training centers. In order to ensure follow-up and supervision of these investments, primary inspectors were trained and equipped under this component. Special training was also financed for teachers of students with hearing and visual impairments, for example training in the use of sign language and braille. These approaches all constituted innovations for Djibouti.<sup>6</sup>

14. **This component also supported the development of a student assessment policy.** This included the development of in-class formative assessment tools for teachers focusing on early grade mathematics as well as strengthening the existing national primary examinations system, also with a focus on mathematics. The goal was to implement at least one adapted Early Grade Math Assessment (EGMA “lite”) or similar assessment.<sup>7</sup>

15. **The third activity was support for the development and piloting of a community-based model for pre-school service provision in partnership with UNICEF.** This component supported student learning outcomes in primary school targeted by the Project through improvements in student readiness for primary and age-appropriate enrollment. Training and instructional materials for providers of pre-school education were financed.

16. **Component 3: Project Monitoring and Management (appraisal: US\$0.3 million, actual cost: US\$0.44) to support a project implementation unit (PIU) within the Ministry of Education (Service de Gestion des Projets, SGP).** The PIU facilitated the implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the project, while the project also reinforced the capacity of the PIU, which also managed three other donor-financed projects: the *Projet de Renforcement d'accès à l'enseignement fondamental* (PRAEF) financed by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB); the *Projet de construction et d'équipement d'un établissement de formation des enseignants de l'enseignement fondamental* financed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); and the *Projet Education pour tous à Djibouti* (EPTD) financed by AFD as well as one nationally-financed project (*Projet d'extension et de construction des écoles primaires*). The PIU also managed the IDA-funded Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Education Management System Project (ACIGEF) project. Specific support to the PIU included: (1) incremental operating costs (communications, bank fees, consumables, fuel, office supplies, procurement advertisements), i.e. extra costs generated by the project; (2) the recruitment of an accountant and a procurement specialist dedicated to the project; (3) transportation fees related to the supervision of works and follow-up of environmental aspects by the PIU, Department of environment and DHU; (4) audit expenses; and (5) training in procurement, financial management and monitoring and evaluation of PIU staff dedicated to that specific project. The Government also directly hired an M&E specialist who followed up on all project indicators, which kept the Ministry conscious of and proactive about project targets.

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<sup>6</sup> The Ministry of Health performed in-school sight and hearing tests, after which the Project paid for glasses. Most hearing problems were due to ear infections. One school in Djibouti provides classes for the sight-impaired.

<sup>7</sup> Originally to be in partnership with an Early Grade Reading Assessment to be financed by USAID.



## II. OUTCOME

### Assessment of Achievement of Each Objective/Outcome

**PDO: to improve the learning environment and instructional practices of teachers in the first three years of primary education.** Substantially achieved

17. The ICR assesses improved learning environment and instructional practices as a single objective. Improved instructional practices are a critical ingredient to the improved learning environment, and therefore it is not necessary to separately analyze the results associated with each as they contribute to project outcomes.

18. Overall, the project met or exceeded three of the four PDO targets and six out of seven intermediate targets. It met the targets for use of improved pedagogical practices, exceeded the target for the total number of beneficiaries (1,754 vs. 1,200) and met the target for female share of beneficiaries (46 percent). This performance record demonstrates that improvements to the learning environment reached a greater number of people than originally envisioned and with adequate participation of female beneficiaries. The target for implementing the revised exam for mathematics was only partially met (explained below).

19. **The project made progress in introducing improved teaching practices, with 82.1 percent of teachers demonstrating use of improved instructional practices (meeting the target of 80 percent).** Reaching this target is particularly important as it relates directly to the PDO, ‘improve... instructional practices of teachers...’ The use of improved pedagogical practices is consistent with the measured improvements in the EGMA results of 2018 over 2017<sup>8</sup>. There are also some specific examples of improved instructional practices that link the project to the EGMA results.<sup>9</sup> The EGMA reported that students were able to count higher in 2018 than in 2017 and on average were also able to correctly count from 1 to 55 in 2018, as opposed to 52 in 2017. This difference is statistically significant at 5 percent. Although these are lower level skills, they nevertheless demonstrate the value of pedagogical tools promoted by the project to improve instructional practices. A slightly more advanced performance result from EGMA was that the proportion of students who correctly identified every 20 numbers in less than 60 seconds, in less than 30 seconds or between 15 and 30 seconds is significantly higher in 2018 than in 2017.

20. **The challenge in measuring the use of improved teaching practices proved more difficult than anticipated, but the challenge was overcome by the end of the project.** When the first observation of teachers was carried out in 2017, observers were given *oral* instructions on how to use the observation tool to rate teacher’s use of the pedagogical techniques on which they had been trained by the project. In 2018, however, observers were given *written* instructions on how to use the observation tool to rate the use of the five main pedagogical techniques (which include 27 sub-techniques). As a result, it was concluded that results in 2018 were likely to be less than if they had they been assessed using the oral protocol (because more rigor in scoring the observations was possible because of the written guidelines). The 2018 scores would likely have been higher if the 2017 protocol had been retained, in other words.

<sup>8</sup> EGMA was administered in both 2017 and 2018 to a nationally representative sample of Y2 students in Djiboutian primary schools.

<sup>9</sup> EGMA results were not part of the project results framework.



21. **The indicator related to percentage of school directors implementing at least three management practices in which they have received project-supported training was also achieved:** 60 percent of school directors (compared to a target of 60 percent) were observed using new management practices that were introduced through the project. A report on school directors<sup>10</sup> showed positive impact on school management. The report found that the six schools that were visited had approved new management strategies for human resources (based on training of directors from 13 to 14 December 2017 at the CFEEF). The report found that the delegation of increased responsibilities to teachers has resulted in considerable reduction in the director's workload, a clear improvement of the atmosphere in the life of the school, and an increase in autonomy for teachers. The report also documented how schools are developing new visions and establishing priorities for school improvement. These top priorities differ from school to school, but include creating green spaces and other environmental improvements, adding school canteens, increasing tutoring for reading. Each of these findings demonstrate an improved learning environment.

22. **The PDO indicator relating to the revised mathematics exam was partially achieved.** The project supported the modifications to the mathematics exam as envisaged through a study of the test items, and recommendations were made based on this study and submitted to the government entity responsible for the exam, which is outside the purview of the Ministry of Education. While the revisions were made, final formal approval was not reached in time due to Project delays. It is expected that approval will be granted in the current school year 2018/19 that follows the Project closing and the new exam used at the end of school year 2018/19).

23. **The intermediate target for component 1 (Access to Primary Education) of 47 classrooms built and rehabilitated was met.** These new classrooms contribute to the PDO by providing a significantly improved learning environment through improvements to the physical condition of classrooms, better lighting and new furniture, as well as new latrines and facilities for teachers. The schools were selected using pro-poor criteria (schools in Balbala, the large suburb of the capital, and all schools outside of the capital city are considered disadvantaged and were therefore targeted) and thus promoted educational equity.

24. **Intermediate indicators for component 2 (Quality of Primary Education) met four out of five targets.** The training activities vastly exceeded their target reaching 19,284 training days compared with a target of 9,000. This training contributed to the improvement in teaching quality by training teachers in the use of pedagogical practices, as well as management training for school principals and staff. The project promoted an improved learning environment at the primary level by increasing enrollment at the pre-school level with 577 preschoolers enrolled vs. a target of 500, which was achieved mainly by training of pre-school teachers (by CFEEF and supported by both the Bank and UNICEF). By increasing enrollment in pre-school, students' readiness to learn is improved – particularly linguistically through pre-school exposure to French. Thus, it also contributes to improving the learning environment at the primary level. The teacher observation form was also adopted, but, regrettably, too late in the project to make additional year-to-year measurement of progress in teaching practices.

25. **The intermediate indicator target for component 3 was met.** The Project Steering Committee, the CPP, did meet two times per year as stipulated. The one unanticipated result was that committee tended to defer to the Minister in resolving issues rather than fully carrying out its mandate. This was not a significant

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<sup>10</sup> *Formation des Directeurs, Généralisation Compte Rendu du Suivi des Modules N°1 & N°3 DU 29/01 au 31/01/2018*

shortcoming, but rather a lesson to be learned for the future: more difficult project issues could be addressed by the Minister separately, leaving less complex issues to the steering committee itself. Delegation is needed.

**26. Though an efficiency rating is not required for this assessment, the ICR acknowledges the significant achievements for a relatively small amount of resources.** In particular, the training of teachers and school directors was good value for money. With only US\$1.51 million of actual expenditures, the project was able to train more than 19,000 individuals and carry out an EGMA that showed improvements in mathematics. The one area of high cost was for classrooms. The overall cost for building and rehabilitation by the project (component 1) was US\$1.81 million for a total of 47 classrooms or US\$38,510 per classroom. While this number includes furniture and equipment, it is still more than double the SSA average for a newly constructed classroom. However, Djibouti is recognized to be an expensive context in which to build as almost all materials must be imported and delivered over poor roads or tracks to difficult-to-access locations. In addition, this cost includes not only classroom-related activities but also access to potable water and acquisition and installation of solar panels, which are inherently more costly but all the more critical for a country like Djibouti.

### Overall Outcome Rating

**27. The project’s demonstrable links to improvements in EGMA scores and the successful implementation of physical classroom improvement are good evidence that support a moderately satisfactory outcome rating.** Table 3 provides a summary of achievement of results targets showing that most PDO and intermediate targets were reached or exceeded. The use of improved pedagogical practices is significant, levels of training were delivered beyond what was anticipated, new classrooms targets were met, and pre-school teacher training helped meet enrollment targets. The fact that EGMA was carried out successfully for two straight years was an important achievement which saw improvements in student mathematics performance that were statistically significant. The main shortcoming is that the revision of the mathematics exam and its application was not carried out as planned.

**Table 3: Summary of Achievement of Results Indicator Targets**

Component/PDO	Achieved or Exceeded	Not Achieved	Dropped Replaced	Total
PDO	3	1	0	4
1. Access to Primary Education	1	0	0	1
2. Quality of Primary Education	4	1	1	6
3. Project Monitoring and Management	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>

### Other Outcomes and Impacts

**28. PAEQ had synergies with the IDA-supported ACIGEF project.** The main synergy was in project implementation in which PIU personnel could use improved FM and procurement knowledge which was applied to two projects at the same time. ACIGEF preceded PAEQ, so PAEQ benefited more in this regard. In addition, supervision missions could be combined and many of the same issues in implementation simultaneously addressed. More importantly, however, PAEQ served as a vehicle to strengthen donor



coordination through the Local Education Group, which helped facilitate sharing of information between different donors, identify potential new activities depending on a donor's comparative advantage and reduce overlap/duplication of efforts. This was a significant contribution by the project.

**29. The project also addressed the specific needs of handicapped and poor students.** The project trained teachers in sign language (25 teachers) and in the use of braille (20 teachers). The project also funded eye and ear examinations which led to some students obtaining 1,600 pairs of eye glasses. Personal hygiene was also provided which helped deal with some recognized conditions hindering learning, such as ear infections. Other equipment to assist the physically handicapped was provided to schools. The project also supported a sub-office for children with disabilities within the MENFOP. The pre-school enrollment supported by the Bank was pro-poor because it was targeted to an underprivileged area (Balbala) near Djibouti-ville.

### III. KEY FACTORS THAT AFFECTED IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME

**30. Three positive factors for project implementation were MENFOP's experience with previous World Bank projects, having a project champion at the level of the minister at preparation and in the last two years of the project, and hiring a local consultant who could regularly support project implementation.** Experience in the PIU with previous projects meant that preparation of components could proceed more smoothly. There was also a good deal of knowledge of financial management (FM) and procurement already built up in the PIU. Having a project champion at a high level also guaranteed expeditious project preparation. Later in the project a new minister provided strong support to the project, too. On the Bank side, a key factor in improving implementation during the Project's one-year extension was the hiring of a capable local consultant who supported project activities and worked with the implementing agencies daily.

**31. The project design incorporated lessons from previous projects which helped with implementation but could not fully insulate PAEQ from implementation risk factors.** The project focused on capacity building, existing implementation structures, simplicity of design, reasonable results targets, donor coordination and a focus on improved outcomes rather than just completion of activities. These design features could not however offset the impact of losing the project's reform champion early on. Despite simplicity of design and capacity building, implementation was hindered by the ministerial change in 2014, and the project lost valuable time. This delay impacted results measurement which pushed back confirmation of several key target outcomes until the end of the project. With a subsequent ministerial change in 2016, implementation accelerated, and project activities were completed. Having engaged a local consultant for the Bank to provide day-to-day guidance and support was equally important: it helped clarify how PAEQ's activities supported the ministry's strategic vision which then facilitated implementation as well.

**32. At the beginning of the project it was envisioned that USAID would launch its reading initiative in parallel, but this did not happen.** This initiative would have had synergies with the Bank's support to instruction in mathematics. However, USAID funds did not come through and, though there had already been several reading initiatives, this detracted from the PAEQ project, mainly because reading in French was essential to understanding written mathematics questions. Experts administering new teaching practices reported that teachers had to spend significant amounts of time ensuring that students comprehended the mathematics questions that were in French. This unanticipated challenge took time away from actual mathematics instruction. On the other hand, PAEQ-supported EGMA report provides additional details regarding teachers' challenges with French, which can provide critical insights for donors wishing to support early grade literacy.



At the time of ICR writing, USAID is announced that it will begin a reading initiative in 2019 and it is expected that results in student mathematics performance will benefit as a result.

**33. The design of the pedagogical and management training was supported by knowledgeable experts funded by the project.** The project was able to achieve broader coverage than anticipated with the use of training of trainers. In addition to teachers and school staff, PIU training was also provided in all functions. Training was provided in accounting (FM), procurement, civil works management, internal audit and M&E, which helped minimize fiduciary issues.

**34. The project was not able to achieve revision and application of the level 2 mathematics national exam because of a misunderstanding concerning which agency had final authority over the exam.** One shortcoming was that the project design did not take into account the time needed to work with the independent committee that oversees changes to the exam. The project did train the group of people in charge of improving the exam in technical and psychometric aspects. And this group did critique the exam and make recommendations on content. However, it was only in the late stages of the Project that they learned that they could not see the new exam, and therefore could not determine how the latest version of the math exam needed to be changed to conform to the curriculum. In the end, the group made recommendations and approval of the new exam is expected in school year 2018/19 before use at the end of the year.

#### IV. BANK PERFORMANCE, COMPLIANCE ISSUES, AND RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

**35. Bank performance was moderately satisfactory at entry.** The Bank worked with the government to design a project that was clearly aligned with national priorities and that reflected lessons from previous projects. Generally, the results targets were well chosen. They represented, for the most part, significant progress (if achieved) and yet remained realistic in the time frame of the project. There were several moderate shortcomings. One was that there was not enough groundwork done to ensure that there was a consistent method to observe and measure instructional practices. This, when combined with the eventual shortened period of time to measure progress, meant that it was only possible to measure the achievement of outcomes at the end of the project. Another moderate short coming was not fully understanding the bureaucratic issues related to the revision of the mathematics exam.

**36. Bank performance was satisfactory at supervision.** There was regular supervision every six months which was key to remaining engaged and catching up at the end of the project. The decision to hire a local consultant substantially facilitated project implementation in the end stages of the Project. Government counterparts expressed the desire that other development partners would also provide such regular support and supervision. The decision to extend the project through a restructuring was correct and allowed the project to complete key activities. An earlier restructuring of project might have been warranted, given the delays, but there was no support for this from the minister at the time.

**37. Procurement faced some challenges in attracting bidders and had to sort out some irregularities.** Some of the contracts for classrooms were small and in remote areas so it was common to have only one bid for the contract. The Bank was flexible in working around this limitation (less than three bidders required Bank review) and the targeted number of classrooms were renovated/built. Throughout project implementation, the Bank's procurement specialist carried out regular visits and reviews, issuing practical guidelines for the project team to strengthen their procurement process. In particular, guidance on the need to fully document and file all





relevant procurement documents as proof of having followed the necessary process. This was mainly due to weak capacity of project staff in dealing with Bank procurement guidelines so that in some cases, more in-depth reviews were conducted to confirm that due diligence was followed. Additional support was therefore provided by the Bank's procurement specialist and initial documentation gaps ultimately filled.

38. **There were no significant FM or compliance issues.** For FM, the accounting unit already had substantial experience with Bank funded projects and there was a National Manual of Procedures that had been recently revised (2013) to guide implementation for Bank and other donor-funded projects. Personnel also received training in Morocco, which was reported to have reinforced what staff already knew. One snag was that reimbursements required three signatures including two from the MOF (including the public debt department) and the MENFOP. Sometimes this caused delays. Audits were on time and unqualified. The final project audit was submitted in October 2018 and was unqualified.

39. **The project was listed as environmental category B**, which triggered the Bank's safeguards policy OP/BP 4.01 "Environmental Assessment". Given the limited scope of construction (one new construction and six rehabilitations/additions in existing schools), a partial assessment had been carried out and the relevant safeguards instruments developed. The Bank team routinely carried out reviews of the project's adherence to the safeguards instruments as part of its implementation support missions and found the project to be in compliance.

40. **The overall monitoring and evaluation framework was adequate and overcame several challenges.** Indicators were adequately tied into the PDO and the activities of the project. The difficulty in understanding how teachers would be observed using a consistent standard was a challenge that the project eventually overcame. Although support to EGMA was part of the project, it was prudent not to base a PDO indicator on EGMA results, given the uncertainties that EGMA would be carried out for at least two years. In the end, the use of EGMA data proved important in assessing the improvement to the learning environment. The M&E officer hired in 2016 was able to get project monitoring on track and produced detailed updates of indicators within and outside the results framework. Having up to date indicators contributed to improved project management decisions and completion of project activities during the extension period. On the other hand, including an intermediate indicator tracking classroom construction progress could have further strengthened PDO achievement since this activity also contributed to improving the learning environment. The M&E is rated, for these reasons, as modest.

41. **Risk to development outcome is rated as moderate.** The sustainability of PAEQ achievements will be supported by the *Expanding Opportunities for Learning Project* (EOLP, P166059) which will help improve teacher training and the evaluation of teachers issue among the other areas that PAEQ covered. This achievement along with EGMA implementation may require several more years before it can be said to be a regular part of doing business at MENFOP. The new EOLP will provide continued engagement and support over this time period. EOLP will also continue the support related to ECD: current discussions focus on potentially establishing model ECD centers and introducing related teacher training. In terms of assessments, the new project also explores ways for a more comprehensive and connected approach to testing (both formative and summative), linking schools to central ministry systems for informed policy making. With respect to the new and upgraded classrooms, there is still the small but noteworthy problem of no maintenance budget for schools. However, this is countenanced in a pragmatic way with minor issues being dealt with by the school and major repairs by the ministry. As school construction was completed in 2017, no significant maintenance issues were evident during the ICR mission in August 2018.



## V. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

42. **Sufficient support needs to be programmed when introducing new concepts or surveys.** The project could have benefitted from including additional support related to accurately measuring teaching practices. This was a new concept for Djibouti and required a lot of guidance, training and external expertise which had not been sufficiently programmed. As a result, there were delays in establishing a baseline for teachers' use of pedagogical practices, which then also had an impact on the extent of improvements that could be observed and measured.

43. **The approach to improving teaching adopted in the project was effective.** Linking the assessment of students and the observation of teacher practices together allows for the determination of teacher training needs, followed by training based on those identified needs, followed by re-observation of teacher practices and re-assessment of students is an effective model. The CFEEF followed this approach and while it was difficult to measure progress in improving teacher practices until the end of the project, it is believed that this approach will inevitably lead to better instructional practices in the future.

44. **Briefing new administration officials about a project's contribution to a government's development agenda, and sustaining an ongoing dialogue is important in a country context like Djibouti.** With the changes in MENFOP, there was not sufficient presence on the ground to facilitate the transition in leadership within the ministry, nor to underscore the value of PAEQ's activities to the overall development agenda. Hiring a local consultant proved very useful in ensuring clear understanding of issues and resolving them efficiently because the day-to-day contact this affords allows each party, the Bank team outside the country and the Government, to achieve a common understanding of how to proceed. Also, while sector expertise may not be available in a small country office, personnel that can provide general facilitation and follow-up are key to maintaining momentum of implementation. Having hired the local consultant earlier in the process could have mitigated some of the earlier delays.

45. **When developing a sub-sector in which there has been little activity, like pre-school, it is important to consider whether the legislative and regulatory framework is in place and is needed as a first step.** This framework may be necessary so that budget for the activity (pre-school education) can be regularly secured and the necessary unit within the ministry can be appropriately staffed. On the other hand, PAEQ was instrumental to explore the benefits of ECD for the government's consideration. In fact, PAEQ has contributed to the government's interest of the EOLP to have an ECD-specific component and to help establish the necessary regulatory framework.

46. **When project steering committees are constituted, in order to be effective, they need to take into account where the real decision-making authority lies.** In the case of PAEQ, the CPP was not sufficiently empowered to resolve significant issues in the project. That power lay with the minister of MENFOP. The CPP tended to defer to the minister and was not an effective trouble shooting agent. In the future, if feasible, it would therefore be advisable if the minister were to chair the CPP.

47. **It is difficult for a low capacity country/ministry to generate its own capacity building without sustained inputs of specific expertise.** The experience of PAEQ shows that where there was sustained expert support, such as in carrying out EGMA or in developing PIU capacity, there was important progress. That input of



expertise, however, needs to be even higher in several areas in the education sector, such as in M&E capacity, and additional teacher training in pedagogical practices.



ANNEX 1. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND KEY OUTPUTS

A. RESULTS INDICATORS

A.1 PDO Indicators

Objective/Outcome: Improved quality of primary education (in mathematics)

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Percentage of teachers implementing at least three pedagogic practices in which they have received Project-supported training	Percentage	0.00 03-Dec-2013	80.00 30-Jun-2017		82.10 28-Nov-2018

Comments (achievements against targets): Target achieved with data updated since last ISR.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Enhanced versions of grade 2 math and French exams administered	Yes/No	N 03-Dec-2013	Y 30-Jun-2017		N 15-Jun-2018



**Comments (achievements against targets):** Target not achieved. Although the exam was evaluated and recommendations made on this basis of this evaluation, the exam was not formally approved in time by responsible government entity outside of Ministry of Education.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Percentage of school directors implementing at least three management practices in which they have received Project-supported training.	Percentage	0.00 03-Dec-2013	60.00 30-Jun-2017		60.00 15-Jun-2018

**Comments (achievements against targets):** Target achieved.

**Unlinked Indicators**

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Direct project beneficiaries	Number	0.00 03-Dec-2013	1200.00 30-Jun-2017	1200.00 30-Jun-2018	1687.00 15-Jun-2018
Female beneficiaries	Percentage	0.00 03-Dec-2013	0.00 30-Jun-2017	46.00 30-Jun-2018	46.00 15-Jun-2018

**Comments (achievements against targets):** Target for beneficiaries largely exceeded. Target for female participation achieved. The beneficiaries include students using the new and rehabilitated classrooms and the teachers, school directors, school counselors and inspectors, as well as Ministry officials who have been trained.



**A.2 Intermediate Results Indicators**

**Component: Component 1: Access to Primary Education**

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Number of additional classrooms built or rehabilitated at the primary level resulting from project interventions.	Number	0.00	47.00		47.00
		03-Dec-2013	30-Jun-2017		15-Jun-2018

**Comments (achievements against targets):** Target achieved.

**Component: Component 2: Quality of Primary Education**

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Person days of training provided to primary school teachers, Pedagogic Counselors, School Directors and Inspectors (by gender)	Number	0.00	9000.00		19284.00
		03-Dec-2013	30-Jun-2017		15-Jun-2018

**Comments (achievements against targets):** Target vastly exceeded.

Indicator Name	Unit of	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised	Actual Achieved at
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	Measure			Target	Completion
Percentage of teachers providing evidence that they have conducted classroom-based assessments of student learning	Percentage	0.00 03-Dec-2013	80.00 30-Jun-2017		80.00 15-Jun-2018
<b>Comments (achievements against targets):</b> Target achieved.					

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
2nd grade national math exam revised	Yes/No	N 03-Dec-2013	Y 30-Jun-2017		N 15-Jun-2018
<b>Comments (achievements against targets):</b> Target not achieved. Exam revised but final approval by government authority outside of Ministry of Education not received in time.					

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Unified teacher observation form adopted for all primary school inspectors	Yes/No	N 03-Dec-2013	Y 30-Jun-2017		Y 15-Jun-2018
<b>Comments (achievements against targets):</b> Target achieved.					



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Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Comit� de Pilotage des Projets (CPP) meets at least two times per year and validates Project progress report	Yes/No	N 03-Dec-2013	Y 30-Jun-2017		Y 15-Jun-2018

**Comments (achievements against targets):** Target was formally achieved. ICR main text has lesson learned on this item.

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**B. ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PDO**

<b>Objective/Outcome 1</b> was to improve the learning environment and instructional practices of teachers in the first three years of primary education	
Outcome Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Percentage of teachers using improved teaching practices</li> <li>2. Enrollment in pre-schools</li> <li>3. EGMA scores (math, not in results framework)</li> <li>4. Revised math exam implemented – OTI (not achieved)</li> <li>5. Number of higher quality student places in primary schools (not in results framework)</li> <li>6. Number of direct project beneficiaries, of which female</li> </ol>
Intermediate Results Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 47 new and/or rehabilitated primary school classrooms</li> <li>2. 577 enrolled pre-schoolers</li> <li>3. Revised math exam – OTI (not achieved)</li> <li>4. Unified teacher observation form adopted for all primary school inspectors</li> </ol>
Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 19,284 training days</li> <li>2. 47 new and/or rehabilitated primary school classrooms</li> <li>3. 577 enrolled pre-schoolers</li> <li>4. Semi-annual meetings by CPP</li> </ol>



**ANNEX 2. PROJECT COST BY COMPONENT**

<b>Components</b>	<b>Amount at Approval (US\$M)</b>	<b>Actual at Project Closing (US\$M)</b>	<b>Percentage of Approval (%)</b>
Component 1: Access to Primary Education	1.6	1.83	113.1
Component 2: Quality of Primary Education	1.9	1.53	79.5
Component 3: Project Monitoring and Management	0.3	.44	140.0
Contingency	0	.00	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>100.00</b>



### **ANNEX 3. RECIPIENT, CO-FINANCIER AND OTHER PARTNER/STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS**

#### **Summary of Borrower's Final Evaluation (translated)**

The government of Djibouti, through the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training, has obtained a grant from the Global Partnership for Education (SME) for the implementation of the Access to Quality Education Project (PAEQ) to: (1) promote equitable access to quality primary education while improving the physical learning environment in the selected rural schools in the four targeted regions of Dikhil, Arta, Ali-Sabieh and Tadjourah, and (2) improve student learning outcomes through the training of teachers, principals, school counselors and inspectors, combined with support for the most vulnerable children in school health and pre-school education. PAEQ project started its activities in 2014 and closed on June 30, 2018.

During the implementation process of this project, two evaluations were planned: a mid-term evaluation and a final evaluation of the project. This document focuses on the final evaluation of the PAEQ project whose main objective is to make an overall judgment on the implementation by: (1) assessing the relevance of the project and its objectives and expected changes, (2) determining the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation, and (3) measuring the level of achievement of objectives and the magnitude and sustainability of their impacts.

#### **Relevance**

The implementation of the project remains compatible with the country's national priorities and development policies. The two components of the project are relevant because they respond to the needs of the country and the orientations of the national education system. It is important to emphasize that the project also responds to the policies of partners and donors, including the World Bank whose country assistance strategy (CAS) puts the improvements in the education sector at the forefront of its priorities. The information collected in the field confirms that the activities planned in the implementation of the Project constitute a relevant response to the beneficiaries' expectations. The planned activities in each of the two components of the project are in line with the defined objectives.

#### **Efficiency**

At the start of the PAEQ project, 31 activities had been scheduled and during the implementation of the project 18 new ones were added. A total of 48 activities including 14 for component 1; 25 for component 2; and 09 for component 3. As of June 26, 2018, the execution status of the activities is as follows:

Component 1: The execution rate is 100 percent;

Component 2: The execution rate is 100 percent;

Component 3: 8 activities have been completed, i.e, 89 percent execution rate and 1 is in progress.

Despite the delay in starting project activities, as of June 26, 2018, the results of the four (04) PDO indicators are satisfactory. All construction and rehabilitation of classrooms, teacher housing, school canteens and toilets has been completed.

The seven (07) intermediate outcome indicators have reached satisfactory levels.

The level of resource consumption compared to the results achieved at the end of the project is satisfactory. The



disbursement and commitment rates as of June 26, 2018 are:

- Disbursement rate as of June 26: 74.13 percent;
- Likely disbursement rate (including procurement packages currently being paid at the bank level): 92.32 percent; and
- Engagement rate: 100 percent

It is important to note that as of June 26, 2018, there are no outstanding balances and undisbursed balances are currently being paid in direct majority. Although there were delays in the execution of some construction and rehabilitation works, all were completed before the closure of the project.

### **Effectiveness of project implementation and management**

Despite the fact that the project team was small staff and vacancies of certain essential positions could not be filled before project closing, the project implementation and management were satisfactory. The project management team demonstrated flexibility and responsiveness to adjust planned activities based on the realities on the ground. The recommendations of World Bank experts from headquarters or after the Bank's supervision missions have been taken on board.

### **Sustainability and sustainability of the project**

The support provided by the project will have a lasting impact in the Djiboutian education system. These include: improving the learning environment and teaching practices of teachers in the first three levels of primary education.

It is undeniable that the following benefits of the project will be sustainable:

- Renovated classrooms, canteens, sanitary facilities and teacher housing;
- The construction of classrooms, canteens, sanitary facilities and teacher housing;
- The ability of teachers to provide quality training; and
- The ability of school directors, school counselors and inspectors to ensure quality training in schools.

### **Beneficiary satisfaction**

The survey of the project's main beneficiaries, teachers and students, revealed that: unanimously, the pupils and teachers interviewed are satisfied with the rehabilitation and construction of classrooms, canteens, housing teachers and toilets recognize that the work improves their learning conditions, and appreciate the work done. CFEEF officials stated that thanks to the project's interventions: (1) teachers have started to have clear notions, postures that are better suited to teaching mathematics, (2) the school project is a good intervention that has created an emulation within schools that has changed the way schools are run because it is designed in a participatory way by parents, students and teachers, and (3) the operational and technical capacities of the CFEEF have improved.

The main strengths of the project are:

- The relevance of project activities; the involvement of beneficiary services resulting in the choice of activities and the drafting of terms of reference for all types of procurement packages;



- project flexibility;
- a satisfactory commitment rate for activities in view of start-up difficulties;
- an significant disbursement rate; and
- all regions benefited from project activities.

The main weaknesses of the project are:

- Initial delays before the actual start of activities;
- The lack of motivation of certain project staff;
- The difficulty of finding work contractors with the experience and financial capability required for the proper execution of the work. There is generally a low capacity of bidders to strictly comply with the conditions laid down in bidding documents;
- Slow administrative procedures for the payment of work and service providers: Invoice settlements and payment of salaries, hotel costs and per diem of consultants usually take too long. The different signatories took a long time to sign, which delays all payments to be made;
- The slowness in the preparation of the bidding documents and especially those for works contracts;
- A high number of objections from the Bank on different procurement documents due to non-adherence to Bank guidelines; and
- The relatively long time taken by the World Bank to give certain non-objections.

#### **Recommendations for the sustainability of project achievements**

The main recommendations to be formulated for the sustainability of the project achievements are:

- Ensure the maintenance of the infrastructure built;
- Erect fences around schools that do not have them to secure them;
- Rehabilitate and build new classrooms, housing, canteens, toilets in other schools across the country;
- Continue to improve the school environment. As part of the school project, thirty (30) schools were selected. Given the enthusiasm generated by the school projects, it is important to expand it to all schools in the country;
- Continue to improve mathematics education by addressing geometry and measurements;
- Continue production of didactic materials; and
- Support and equip CFEEF to periodically strengthen the capacity of school teachers.

The ICR was shared with the government for comments on December 19, 2018 but no comments have been received by the time of document submission.



**ANNEX 4. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (IF ANY)**

*Evaluation des apprentissages de base en mathématique des élèves et des pratiques pédagogiques des enseignants en salles de classe au Djibouti*, Atabanam Simbou, and Annie Savard, June 2018.

*Evaluation Finale du Projet D'Acces a une Education de Qualite (PAEQ), Rapport Final*, June 2018 (Borrower ICR).

Project Paper for a Proposed Global Partnership for Education Grant of US\$3.8 million to the Republic of Djibouti for an Access to Quality Education Project, December 11, 2013

ISRs, financing agreement, and other documents from the project files.