



1. Project Data

Project ID
P114847

Project Name
MW-Proj to Improve Education Quality in

Country
Malawi

Practice Area(Lead)
Education

L/C/TF Number(s)
IDA-47530,TF-97559

Closing Date (Original)
30-Jun-2015

Total Project Cost (USD)
256,000,000.00

Bank Approval Date
17-Jun-2010

Closing Date (Actual)
30-Jun-2015

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	50,000,000.00	90,000,000.00
Revised Commitment	49,485,551.75	90,000,000.00
Actual	49,276,590.58	90,000,000.00

Sector(s)
Primary education(47%):Public administration- Education(37%):Secondary education(16%)

Theme(s)
Education for all(100%)

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The stated objective of the project was "to increase access and equity and enhance the quality of teaching and learning environment in basic education" (Fast Track Initiative Grant Agreement, TF097559, pg. 6; Specific Loan Investment Financing Agreement, Credit Number 4753-MW, pg. 5; Project Appraisal Document, report number 53051-MW, pg. viii).

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



No

c. Components

The project comprised three components, as described below (summarized from the Project Appraisal Document [PAD], pp. 12-14 with information on actual expenditure from the ICR, pp. 3-4).

Component 1: Improve access and equity (Original: US\$ 96M; Actual: US\$ 81.9M). This component included two subcomponents.

Subcomponent 1.1: This subcomponent was to improve a wide range of education facilities, including teacher training centers, and update the 2001 school mapping exercise. This subcomponent was to have been targeted especially in areas with marginalized children.

Subcomponent 1.2: This subcomponent was to provide direct support to disadvantaged children. The financing was for in-kind transfers (e.g., school uniforms, exam fees, etc.) for primary students; secondary school bursary packages; a communication strategy for informing parents and communities about the transfers and bursaries; and an evaluation to identify incentive packages that were cost-effective and would lead to improved school participation and outcomes.

Component 2: Improve the teaching and learning environment (Original: US\$ 59M; Actual US\$ 87.3M). This component included two subcomponents.

Subcomponent 2.1: This subcomponent was to support printing and distribution of textbooks and learning materials and provide pedagogical aids for basic education. In addition, it was to implement a communication strategy to inform schools and parents about the textbook strategy.

Subcomponent 2.2: This subcomponent was to focus on increasing the number of qualified teachers in basic education. It was to support an open distance learning (ODL) program by financing the printing and distribution of ODL materials, supervision of ODL students (purchasing of vehicles), upgrading of teacher development centers, and evaluation of the effectiveness of ODL to improve education quality in underserved areas.

Component 3: Improve management capacity at all levels(Original: US \$90M; Actual: US \$44.9M). This component included 3 subcomponents.

Subcomponent 3.1: This subcomponent was to focus on supporting teacher management reforms through implementation of a program on continuous professional development and teacher management, and development of a Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS).

Subcomponent 3.2: This subcomponent was to support improved education service delivery by financing the development of school improvement plans and provision of grants to schools to implement the plans.

Subcomponent 3.3: This subcomponent was to support activities to strengthen central and district capacity for planning and financial and technical oversight. Specifically, it was to include workshops in financial management (FM) and procurement for staff at all levels; monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the sector-wide approach; and help to improve the education planning capacity at the central and district levels based on the strategies prepared by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

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

The International Development Association (IDA) credit (US \$50M) and a Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Grant (US \$90M) were provided for a pooled funding mechanism for a set of objectives and activities under the Program to Improve Education Quality in Malawi (PIEQM). (The IDA and the FTI financing are called the "Project to Improve Education Quality in Malawi," contributing to a program with the same name.) Both the IDA Financing Agreement and the FTI Grant Agreement were signed on November 22, 2010. Other donors in the pooled funding mechanism included: UK Department for International Development (DfID, US \$90M), Germany (US \$25M), and the United Nations Children' Fund (UNICEF; US \$1M), for total financing of US \$256M. No government contribution is noted in the PAD. However, the component-level financing noted in the PAD summed to US \$245, or US \$11M less than the total amount. This discrepancy was due to estimates, not firm figures, of the financing the other donors were expected to provide (information from project team).

The funding was within a sector-wide approach (SWAp) based on Malawi's 2008-2017 National Sector Education Plan (NESP). A joint financing arrangement that described the eligible expenditures (activities carried out under the seven project subcomponents described in the PAD), structures, and institutional mechanisms for the SWAp was signed by all partners contributing to the pool (ICR, p. 6). At the end of the project, approximately 87% of planned financing, or US\$ 214M, was actually spent. This is because financing was withdrawn by other funding partners in the wake of a financial management scandal in 2013 (which, however, the ICR notes, did not affect the education sector, pg. 8). DfID ultimately provided US \$40.1M, Germany US \$7.5M, and UNICEF US \$0.75M. The Government



added US \$25.75M.

The Bank was responsible for fiduciary aspects of the Program to Improve Education Quality in Malawi (PIEQM) under the pooled fund. The Bank was also the supervising entity for the FTI grant under the Global Program for Education (ICR, p. 6).

By the end of the project, the Bank had disbursed US \$49.28M (ICR, pg. i) of the IDA funds, and all US \$90M of the FTI Grant funds (ICR, pg. 24). Some of the funds from subcomponent 1.2 (direct support to disadvantaged children), and subcomponent 3.2 (improving service delivery at the school level), were reallocated for training of rural teachers, subcomponent 2.2 (ICR, pg. 5). The expenditure of subcomponent 1.2 was almost half of the expenditure planned due to delayed start to the program (ICR, pg. 5). Although 93% of the target was met for providing support to students, an evaluation that was planned was not completed. It is unclear from the ICR whether support to the same students would have been provided over multiple years (and therefore the underrun was due to students receiving support for a shorter period of time), or whether the costs were overestimated initially, or a combination of the two factors. Expenditure on school improvement plans was also just about half of what was planned, due to phasing in of the grants. On the other hand, the reallocation to training of rural teachers led to exceeding the training target by 96 percent.

The FTI grant was to have closed on June 30, 2013, but was extended twice, first to December 30, 2014, and then to June 30, 2015. The extensions were to allow for the full utilization of funds, consolidation of lessons learned, and aligning the FTI Grant closing date with the closing date for the IDA credit, which was June 30, 2015.

3. Relevance of Objectives & Design

a. Relevance of Objectives

The project was aligned with the reform agenda articulated in the Government's National Education Sector Plan (NESP, 2008-2017), which was translated into an Education Sector Implementation Plan 2009-2013, with objectives, strategies, and financing for education (ICR, pg. 1). The NESP identified relatively broad objectives and the strategies to achieve them by addressing key constraints in the sector, including lack of adequate education infrastructure, high pupil:teacher ratios, dearth of pedagogical resources, and weak management and accountability (ICR, pg. 1). The project objectives were relevant to addressing these key constraints, especially in the poor, rural areas that were particularly affected. The project thus was designed to address equity with respect to rural/urban differences (PAD, pg. 3).

The project was also broadly consistent with the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS, 2007-2010) for Malawi at appraisal, which supported the Bank's engagement in education programs as a way to address poverty and inequality (ICR, pg. 2) and to focus on the educational system (CAS, 2007-2010, pg. 21), but noted that the rationale for remaining engaged would be re-examined in the CAS progress report. Thus, the CAS did not specifically outline a strong rationale for its support to primary education, although it mentioned the current project in its list of planned new activities (CAS 2007-2010, pg. 30).

The project remains consistent with the current Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for FY13-16 (Report No: 74159-MW), which notes that only 55 percent of boys and 45 percent of girls finish primary school (pg. 15), and that quality of education is weak by regional standards, with low student learning outcomes (pp. 5, 24). The CPS thus continues the Bank's focus on enhancing human capital with improved access to quality education and continued support to the NESP (pg. 34). The project also remains relevant to the Malawi Development and Growth Strategy II, 2014-2016, as well as the Global Partnership for Education's goals of access and learning for all.

Rating

High

b. Relevance of Design

There was a plausible link between the project's inputs, activities, and expected outcomes. The project's design was based on the country's sector strategy and aimed to address supply-side constraints: infrastructure, pedagogical materials, and qualified teachers, all factors that were affecting access and retention in basic education (ICR, pg. 6). The design also addressed institutional capacity at both the central and district levels in order to facilitate improved planning and management of the sector and of the project and therefore address access, equity, and teaching and learning environment.

The project was to address equity as defined primarily by the differences in rural and urban areas. It was to target the constraints in rural areas and provide secondary school bursary support to marginalized children as an incentive for participation in basic education. The process to define and identify marginalized children was included in the PAD (pg. 55). However, although the design took into account previous pilot studies showing that enrollment and attendance are positively affected by such incentives, other factors, such as repetition and completion, should also have been addressed and tracked (ICR, pg. 13).

The high pupil:teacher ratio (PTR) in rural areas was to be addressed through teacher training, but efforts to redistribute teachers among



geographical areas, schools, and grades were not considered, a strategy that would have addressed the high variations in pupil:teacher ratios (ICR, p. 13).

Several activities were focused on enhancing management capacity to contribute to all three objectives. Some activities were highly relevant for improving teaching and learning (e.g., training of personnel to develop school improvement plans, and the design of the school improvement plans based on previous lessons). However, other activities envisaged to support overall sectoral development (and therefore contribute to all three objectives) did not take into consideration the capacity of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). The ICR notes that these institutional strengthening activities (e.g., teacher management and learning assessments) were beyond the capacity of MoEST to manage and implement and therefore were not carried out. The risk for implementation capacity was rated as high and was to have been addressed through technical advisors (PAD, 19). Despite this support, however, and despite the mechanisms put in place for joint reviews by the Sector Working Group, key reform components were not completed and implementation capacity remained an issue (ICR, pp. 6, 7). In addition, while the project design made sense broadly, several project features were innovative or relatively untested (e.g. incentive packages, the Open Distance Learning approach for teachers), and therefore whether, and how much, they would contribute to the project objectives was an open question. Testing of how precisely these features would or would not work was also built into the project, but ultimately it was not carried out (as further discussed in Section 10).

Rating
Modest

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

Objective 1

Objective
Increase access in basic education

Rationale

The objective of increased access to basic education was measured through three indicators: net enrollment rate in primary education, gross enrollment rate in primary education, and direct project beneficiaries.

Outcomes

The ICR shows that the net enrollment rate increased from a baseline of 79% in 2010 to 88% in 2014, well above the target of 83% (ICR, pg. iii) (data based on the 2014 Welfare Monitoring Survey [conducted every two years]). The number of children enrolled in primary schools increased from 3.67 million to 4.67 million in 2014. The ICR notes that the enrollment in schools with construction saw an average increase of 30% in enrollment in contrast with 8% increase in enrollment in schools with no construction (ICR, pg. 14).

The gross enrollment rate increased from a baseline of 119% in 2010 to 126% in 2014, also above the target of 114% (ICR, pg. iv).

The direct project beneficiaries were approximately 4.7M, above the target of 3.7M, and 50% were females. Project beneficiaries included all students enrolled in public primary schools, disadvantaged students in lower secondary schools, and rural teachers (ICR, pg. 3).

Focus group discussions in six schools showed that stakeholders were aware of improvements at their schools and that these improvements, in their view, had yielded higher enrollments (ICR, pg. 18/19). However, it would have been useful to have had these data disaggregated by region to assess the equity dimension with respect to access.

Key Outputs

Key outputs included: the construction or rehabilitation of 14 boarding facilities for girls (ICR, pg. 15), 3 above the target of 11; and the building or rehabilitation of 2,936 classrooms, slightly short of 3,000 target. Classroom construction was shifted from the Education Infrastructure Management Unit (EIMU) to the Local Development Fund (LDF), due to delays, which may explain the shortfall.

Based on these accomplishments, the achievement of this objective is rated high.

Rating
High



Objective 2

Objective

Increase equity in basic education

Rationale

This objective was measured through: primary completion rate disaggregated by rural and urban areas and by sex (using Household Survey data from 2010 and 2013; the ICR does not use the baseline values provided in the PAD, pg. 46, because of greater reliability of the household data); and the percentage of students receiving grants still in school.

Outcomes

The rural primary completion rate decreased by one percentage point, from 25% in 2010 to 24% in 2013, and stayed well below the target of 32%, largely driven by declines in the completion rate for rural girls. The completion rate to 5th grade increased from 50% to 55%. The Borrower's ICR notes that the rural completion rate increased from 28% to 56%, data quite different from those reported in the Bank's ICR (ICR, pg. 49).

The urban primary completion rate increased from 51% in 2010 to 53% in 2013, but stayed well below the target of 62%. The completion rate to 5th grade increased from 77% to 83%.

The primary completion rate for boys increased from 25% to 27%, but it declined for girls from 33% to 30% between 2010 and 2013.

The changes in rates for grade 8 between 2010 and 2013 disaggregated by locality and sex are as follows:

- Urban males: not much change, from 48% to 47%
- Urban females: increase from 54% to 60%
- Rural males: increase from 21% to 23%
- Rural females: decrease from 29% to 24%

The changes in rates for grade 5 between 2010 and 2013 disaggregated by locality and sex are as follows:

- Urban males: stable at 75%
- Urban females: increase from 79% to 87%
- Rural males: increase from 48% to 54%
- Rural females: increase from 52% to 57%

(All information is from ICR, pg. 15.)

The increases in rates at the lower level, at grade 5, potentially foreshadows improvements in grade 8 in the future. These outcomes are likely affected by the activities conducted under all three components.

The percentage of students receiving grants still in school was 99% in 2015, above the target of 94%.

Key Outputs

In terms of key outputs, the project provided transfers to 70,052 students, approximately 5,000 less than the target of 75,000. Sixty-four percent of the recipients were girls (information provided by the project team). Given that the decline in the basic completion rate was largely for rural girls, information disaggregated by area and grade level on the provision of transfers would have been useful to understand how this activity was being targeted.

The ICR mentions an evaluation (Primary School Improvement Program National Evaluation Report, 2010/2011 to 2012/2013) and a study (Primary Education in Malawi: Expenditure, Service Delivery and Outcomes, World Bank, 2015), which found that the non-staff inputs acquired by schools as part of their school improvement plans had a positive effect on improving the internal efficiency of the schools (reduced repetition and dropout rates, and increased promotion rates) (ICR, pg. 15). Stakeholders also mentioned the availability of girls' hostels as a key factor for keeping girls in school.

It is possible that the inputs were more effective at the lower primary levels, but it is not clear why the inputs were not as effective at the upper primary grade levels. It is also possible that the inputs were targeted primarily at the lower grades, but this information is not available in the ICR.

Based on this lack of information and the level of achievement lower than the targets defined, the achievement of this objective is rated modest.

Rating

Modest



Objective 3

Objective

Enhance the quality of the teaching and learning environment in basic education

Rationale

This objective was measured through two indicators: pupil:teacher ratio and pupil:classroom ratio.

Outcomes

The pupil-to-qualified teacher ratio improved from approximately 100:1 in 2010 to 66:1 in 2015, better than the target of 87:1. In rural areas, the ratio decreased from 95:1 to 68:1, and in urban areas it declined from 68:1 to 64:1.

The pupil:classroom ratio did not decline; on the contrary, it increased from a baseline of 100:1 in 2010 to 127:1 in 2015. The target was 97:1. The ICR notes that this unexpected result is due to a combination of higher-than-expected enrollments (the net enrollment increase exceeded the target by 5 percentage points); flooding in 2014, which had a negative impact on infrastructure (with damage to about 500 classrooms, ICR, pg. 7); and high repetition rates (ICR, pg. 16). However, according to the evaluation mentioned under objective 2, the repetition rate actually decreased, and so the contribution of this factor to increases in the pupil:classroom ratio is unclear. The ICR also notes that the schools were able to procure inputs that led to improvements in internal efficiency, although the full data are not provided (ICR, pg. 15).

According to the project team, the two indicators (pupil:classroom ratio and pupil:teacher ratio) moved in opposite directions due to classes being held outside of built classrooms.

Focus groups showed stronger parental and community involvement in schools and focus on disadvantaged students. However, stakeholders also noted that the school improvement guidelines were too prescriptive to enable schools to address their own needs (ICR, pg. 19).

Key Outputs

26 million textbooks were provided, well above the target of approximately 10 million. The student-textbook ratio improved from 2.6:1 to 1.1:1 for grade 3 English; 2:1 to 1.1:1 for grade 3 math; 1.7:1 to 1.0:1 for grade 7 English; and 1.5:1 to 1.1:1 for grade 7 math. The target for both grades and subjects was 1.5:1.

About 23,500 additional teachers were trained to become qualified teachers, almost double the target of 12,000.

2,100 managers were trained in strategic planning, well above the target of 100.

An annual statistics abstract was prepared on an annual basis, although late at times and with some key data missing.

One hundred percent of primary schools received school grants and developed strategic and annual work plans and budgets.

Several key planned outputs (assessment of teacher management system, development of a teacher management action plan, and development of a human resources management plan) were not completed. A planned learning assessment was not established, although early grade reading and mathematics assessments are being implemented in some schools.

Although the pupil:classroom ratio worsened (due to external factors, such as flooding and unprecedented enrollments), key aspects of the teaching-learning environment improved (pupil:teacher and pupil:textbook ratios). Therefore the achievement of this objective is rated substantial.

Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

The project construction costs compare favorably with comparator projects, with unit cost of US\$ 173 per classroom undertaken by EIMU (20% of the construction total construction costs) and US\$ 107 by the LDF (80% of the total construction costs), in contrast with US\$ 161 by UNICEF, US\$ 479 by JICA, and US\$ 421 by the Africa Development Fund (ICR, pg. 16). The initial quality of project construction was uneven, although the average was satisfactory (ICR, pg. 16). In addition, 26.9 million books were purchased instead of the planned 9.6 million, but at 81% of the planned budget, resulting in lower unit costs.

On the other hand, there were also substantial delays to key activities, which means that the benefits did not accrue to the beneficiaries in a timely manner. Project construction was delayed during the first year of implementation due to unavailability of technical assistance expected



from the donor partners and heavy rains (ICR, pp. 7, 8). Over 70% of the books were delivered only in the last month of implementation. In addition, support for disadvantaged children and school grants were delayed, caused by delays in the submission of statements of expenditures by the districts.

Many of the institutional strengthening activities did not take place because of the lack of requisite capacity in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and weak coordination among MoEST units (ICR, p. 8).

Finally, the pace of implementation was also affected by the suspension of the Integrated Financial Management and Information System and subsequent manual processing of interim financial reports in the aftermath of a 2013 public financial management scandal in Malawi. The education sector was not directly affected (ICR, p. 8), but nonetheless the suspension led to cost increases under the EIMU contractors, who started charging interest 45 days after submitting their paperwork.

The ICR conducted a cost-benefit analysis for the first component of the project only (construction and bursaries to children) (ICR, p. 36). It calculated the net present value at MK 57.9 billion and the internal rate of return at 26.9 percent, based on reasonable cost and benefit assumptions (although not including social benefits). These calculations, however, are not directly comparable to the information provided in PAD, due to a different methodological approach. The analyses in the PAD show that those completing primary education earn 7.8 percent more annually compared with those with no schooling, and the figure jumps to 154 percent for those completing upper secondary education (PAD, p. 108). The PAD also cites a 2002 study that showed the rate of return to be 5 percent for those with lower primary education and 15 percent for those with upper primary education, but the PAD does not provide details on the factors taken into account in the analysis.

Efficiency Rating
Modest

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	26.90	38.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

The project was aligned with the reform agenda articulated in the Government's National Education Sector Plan (NESP, 2008-2017) and was broadly consistent with the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS, 2007-2010) for Malawi. It remained consistent with the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for FY13-16 (Report No: 74159-MW). The relevance of objectives is therefore rated high. There was a plausible link between the inputs, activities, and expected outcomes. The project included testing for some innovative elements in its theory of change for achieving intended outcomes. However, it did not fully take into consideration additional important elements, such as repetition and completion, and teacher redistribution to address quality issues. In addition, the capacity required to implement a key set of activities needed for overall sectoral and institutional strengthening was overestimated. The relevance of design is therefore rated modest.

In terms of efficacy, the project exceeded its goals for improving access to basic education and is rated high for this objective. However, it fell short of its targets in improving equity in basic education; the completion rates improved for urban females and rural males, but decreased for rural females and stayed flat for urban males, with all remaining below targets. On the other hand, 99% of students receiving grants stayed in school. Achievement of this objective is rated modest. In terms of enhancing the teaching and learning environment, the project exceeded the target set for student:teacher and book:student ratios, but fell short of the target set for pupil:class ratio due to higher-than-expected increases in enrollment and the 2014 floods that had a negative impact on infrastructure. In addition, a number of key activities for strengthening the management of the sector, which would have contributed to strengthening teaching and learning (as well as equity) were not completed. Achievement of this objective is rated substantial. Finally, the efficiency of the project is rated modest due to delays in key activities, including provision of 70 percent of the textbooks only in the last six months of the project, delays in construction, and cancellation of a number of activities for institutional strengthening.

Due to shortcomings in the project's preparation and implementation, the project's outcome is rated as moderately satisfactory.



- a. Outcome Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

7. Rationale for Risk to Development Outcome Rating

Malawi's uncertain economic outlook and dependence on aid may affect continued funding of school grants, employment of school teachers, and development of education infrastructure. Demographic trends may also continue to affect student:teacher ratios, and therefore the quality of education, although this is not explicitly clear from the ICR. On the other hand, the government has prioritized education and allocated significant budget to it in 2014/15, second only to agriculture. A new grant is scheduled for approval in July 2016, focused on continuing the strategies implemented during the current operation (ICR, pg. 12). However, the efficacy of the various components, including the school improvement grants and the incentive packages, will need to be tested to ensure that in fact these interventions lead to the desired results. In addition, institutional capacity will need attention if sectoral reforms and appropriate management are to be implemented for achieving sustainable results.

- a. Risk to Development Outcome Rating
Substantial

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

- a. Quality-at-Entry
Project preparation included attention to prior lessons, technical analysis, and fiduciary aspects and safeguards. Preparation also involved an institutional capacity assessment for the sector to gauge implementation readiness, and to put in place activities to strengthen implementation capacity. Nonetheless, the risks were underestimated with respect to implementing activities related to strengthening systemic improvements, many of which were ultimately not carried out (see Section 4), and some design and data elements important for achieving and measuring the objectives were not included (see Sections 3b and 10a).

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Moderately Unsatisfactory

- b. Quality of supervision
The Bank engaged in regular supervision of the project and identified and addressed issues in a timely manner (ICR, p. 21). Technical support was provided on procurement, and attention was paid to safeguard and environmental issues. Following the government's financial management scandal, the Bank proactively undertook an in-depth financial management assessment to ensure that no issues arose in the project. The team also helped the government identify additional funding, including from the government's own budget, when some of the donors withdrew from the pooled fund following the financial management scandal in 2013. However, the team did not follow up sufficiently on a number of key activities that could have served to guide the project better, such as evaluations, student assessment, and the teacher management information system.

Quality of Supervision Rating
Moderately Unsatisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating
Moderately Unsatisfactory

9. Assessment of Borrower Performance



a. Government Performance

The government showed strong ownership of the program. It provided additional resources when donors withdrew from the program, and it lifted the wage ceiling to allow recruitment of teachers to rural schools. Implementation of agreed priorities continued during the political and fiscal crises (ICR, p. 21).

Government Performance Rating
Satisfactory

b. Implementing Agency Performance

MoEST, the implementation agency, showed strong commitment to the project as an integral part of the education sector plan (ICR, p. 22). It implemented a large program to achieve most of the project objectives, and complied with the Bank's safeguard policies. However, there were delays in complying with FM covenants, deployment of teachers in rural areas, and procurement, which led, for example, to considerable delays in procurement of books. Audit reports were submitted with a delay of 6-12 months (ICR, p. 11). In addition, a number of key activities for improving management were not implemented, as detailed in Section 4.

Implementing Agency Performance Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Borrower Performance Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

10. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The results framework covered key aspects of the program: access (enrollment and completion rates), equity (completion disaggregated by rural/urban), and teaching and learning environment (student/qualified teacher ratio; student/classroom ratio; and student/textbook ratio). It also included a number of output indicators for key activities, covering construction, teacher training, and textbook procurement. Baselines and targets were established for key outcome indicators, a mid-term evaluation was planned, and there was focus on strengthening systems and capacity for collecting and using data. However, it is not clear why disaggregated data were not included for access indicators, given the more challenging supply side constraints in rural than urban areas.

The PAD mentioned plans to conduct impact evaluations to test innovative programmatic and policy interventions (e.g., incentive packages and open distance learning) (pp. 18, 44), but the ICR notes that these evaluations were not completed and therefore did not inform project design and implementation. Student assessment, a planned activity, would also have served to provide a more accurate measure of the quality of the teaching and learning environment, with the other related indicators serving as proxies. This activity, however, was not completed.

b. M&E Implementation

The EMIS was the main tool for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data, with capacity built at all levels (school, district, and central) for producing data. The EMIS required district education managers to review data prior to forwarding to the Ministry. Although the project focused on strengthening the EMIS, data quality was insufficient for reporting on outcomes, as identified by a public expenditure tracking survey undertaken in 2014. For example, the completion rate was not tracked regularly. The project therefore used more reliable data from other sources (2013 Household Survey and 2014 Welfare Monitoring Survey). However, the timing of the data collection by these two surveys means that accurate end-of-project information is not recorded in the ICR.

The ICR includes a stakeholder discussion, a valuable input into the final evaluation of the program. A public expenditure tracking survey was also undertaken in 2014. The mid-term review was conducted in a timely fashion.



c. M&E Utilization

Joint Annual Reviews were undertaken to discuss project progress, and Sector Working Group quarterly monitoring meetings were based on quarterly monitoring reports on financial, procurement, and activity implementation aspects of the project. These reviews identified the slow pace of construction by the EIMU and led to the change over to the LDF. In addition, the EMIS was used to plan activities for each year. The ICR also mentions an evaluation of the school grants that was used to change how the grants were provided to schools (ICR, p. 10). However, it is unclear from the ICR whether, and how, the findings from the mid-term review were utilized.

M&E Quality Rating
Modest

11. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified as a Category B project and triggered two safeguard policies: environmental assessment (OP 4.01) and involuntary assessment (OP 4.12). The project complied with the safeguard policies (ICR, p. 11). Environmental and Social Management plans were prepared for all classroom projects, and a consultant provided follow-up field visits and advisory services on safeguards in project activities. The project also used environmentally friendly materials in construction. OP 4.12 was triggered in the case of a teachers' college construction, but all project-affected people were compensated by the government and resettled in line with the resettlement action plan (ICR, p. 11).

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial management (FM): FM supervision was conducted on a regular basis, which confirmed that all financial covenants were complied with, although with delays, and adequate FM controls were in place. Audit reports were submitted with a delay of 6-12 months (ICR, p. 11). The 2013 and 2014 audit reports were qualified with respect to undocumented transactions; however, both expressed a clean audit opinion on the use of pool funds for eligible expenditures (ICR, p. 11). The Bank team conducted an in-depth audit for 2013 and agreed on specific actions, which were implemented by the government. An in-depth audit for 2014 was completed and non-qualified (information from project team). An audit for 2015 is underway.

Procurement: An assessment during project preparation found that government practices were not in compliance with international practices. The covenants related to procurement were complied with, and guidelines were generally followed, in some cases with delay. An annual procurement audit was conducted, which showed weak capacity initially but gradual improvement as a result of capacity building provided by the Bank.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

The ODL was noted to have supported rural employment, although no specific data are provided.

d. Other

12. Ratings



Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	---
Risk to Development Outcome	Modest	Substantial	Uncertain economic outlook; lack of data on how key components are likely to work in the new project, although an evaluation is being completed.
Bank Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Some design and data elements important for achieving and measuring the objectives were not included in the design stage, and these shortcomings were not adequately addressed during implementation.
Borrower Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	---
Quality of ICR		Modest	---

Note

When insufficient information is provided by the Bank for IEG to arrive at a clear rating, IEG will downgrade the relevant ratings as warranted beginning July 1, 2006.

The "Reason for Disagreement/Comments" column could cross-reference other sections of the ICR Review, as appropriate.

13. Lessons

This ICRR endorses the following lessons (summarized and reworded from the ICR, p. 22):

- The ODL can be a rapid way of improving availability of teachers in rural or remote areas, but the approach should be comprehensive to achieve this objective, including provision for a teacher wage bill for recruitment and deployment, and a functioning personnel management system to ensure that teachers are recruited and deployed to areas where there are shortages to achieve desired pupil:teacher ratios.
- Although the net enrollment rate and primary completion rate are usual measures of project outcomes, they may not work in situations where age-specific data for the school-going population is not readily available. This underscores the importance of careful consideration of data quality and collection modalities while determining outcome indicators.

In addition, this ICRR notes that a key lesson is to implement evaluations in a timely way to understand whether and how investments in relatively new and innovative interventions contribute to desired outcomes. In the case of this project, two interventions were new – ODL and student bursary packages – but neither was evaluated rigorously in a timely manner to assess the effectiveness of these interventions or to take stock of implementation challenges.

14. Assessment Recommended?

No

15. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR is succinct and mostly well written. It attempts to identify evidence for its conclusions, although at times the information is insufficient (i.e., impact evaluation mentioned on p. 15) and statements are contradictory or not backed by evidence and data referenced in the document itself (e.g., high repetition rates mentioned on p. 16, but improved internal efficiency mentioned on p. 15; high enrollments but improved pupil:teacher ratios). However, the ICR is to be commended for pulling data from sources more reliable than the monitoring system put in place by the project, upon the realization that the project data was not robust. The ICR also integrates information from the stakeholder consultations and identifies useful lessons. However, it should have noted that the year of the end-line data limited the ability to draw conclusions about



achievement as of project closing.

- a. Quality of ICR Rating
Modest