



1. Project Data:		Date Posted : 09/25/2014	
Country:	Tajikistan		
Project ID:	P115343		
Project Name:	Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund Grant - 3	Project Costs (US\$M):	
L/C Number:		Appraisal	Actual
Sector Board :	Education	13.5	13.5
Cofinancers :		Loan/Credit (US\$M):	13.5
		Cofinancing (US\$M):	
		Board Approval Date :	04/16/2010
		Closing Date :	06/30/2013
Sector(s):	General education sector (84%); Public administration- Education (15%); Primary education (1%)		
Theme(s):	Education for all (100% - P)		
Prepared by :	Reviewed by :	ICR Review Coordinator :	Group:
Ann Elizabeth Flanagan	Judyth L. Twigg	Lourdes N. Pagaran	IEGPS2

2. Project Objectives and Components:

a. Objectives:

According to the Letter of Agreement dated December 23, 2009 (page 4) and the Project Appraisal Document (page 14), the purpose of the grant was "to contribute to an increased access to improved learning environments and a more efficient delivery of quality education services ."

The objectives were intended to support the Government's National Strategy for Education Development (NSED, 2006-2015) which aims "to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of education services and access to relevant and quality education for all" (p. 23).

This ICR Review is therefore organized around three project development objectives (PDOs):

- access to improved learning environments;
- efficient delivery of education services; and
- delivery of quality education services .

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

No

c. Components:

Component 1: Improving the learning environment (US\$ 10.31 million at appraisal; US\$ 11.0 million at completion). Improving the learning environment was to focus on physical infrastructure and necessary

pedagogical inputs. School construction and rehabilitation were to emphasize schools with the potential to consolidate class groups, increasing resource efficiency. This objective had three sub-components:

-
- Sub-component 1.1: School Buildings Upgrade. This sub-component was to finance the construction or rehabilitation of school buildings, classrooms, sanitation facilities at schools, and two rayon education departments. It also was to finance costs associated with safeguard monitoring and compliance.
-
- Sub-component 1.2: School Furniture Supply. This sub-component was to finance the supply of furniture, ensuring adequate furnishings for new, rehabilitated, and existing schools.
-
- Sub-component 1.3: Provision of Reading Materials. This sub-component began under FTI-2. It was to support the hiring of international experts to provide technical assistance to assist in the purchasing of reading materials for students in primary grades and the design of teacher's manuals.

Component 2: In-service training of pedagogical and managerial personnel (US\$ 0.85 million at appraisal; US\$ 0.86 million at completion). Training was intended to improve the quality and effectiveness of education. This objective had three sub-components:

- Sub-component 2.1: School Directors Training. This sub-component was to support the training of school directors on pedagogical leadership, financial management, and school administration.
-
- Sub-component 2.2: Mentoring. This sub-component was to support the expansion and improvement of a mentoring program begun under FTI-2, school-level mentoring support, methodological support, and refresher training for trainers.
-
- Sub-component 2.3: In-Service Training (INSET) System Review. This sub-component aimed to develop a policy to reform in-service teacher training and mentoring programs by supporting analytical reviews of all donor supported training programs.

Component 3: Policy reform, research and evaluation (US\$ 1.16 million at appraisal; US\$ 0.81 million at completion). This component was geared toward improving the Government's ability to plan for national level change to improve the quality and efficiency of the education system. This objective had three sub-components:

- Sub-component 3.1: Per Capita Financing. This sub-component was to support the roll-out of per capita financing in 24 school districts, scaling up of per capita financing, knowledge exchange between current per capita financing districts and those starting per capita financing under FTI -3, and technical assistance for implementation.
-
- Sub-component 3.2: Education Management Information System (EMIS). This sub-component was to support continued implementation of EMIS, collecting education data for improved policy making. It was to support the design and implementation of data collection modules for teachers, students, school libraries, school premises and equipment, demographics, students, infrastructure, textbook rental, construction, and financial management (PAD, page 45).
-
- Sub-component 3.3: Evaluation of Supply- and Demand-Side Schemes to Promote Enrollment and Attendance. This sub-component was to support: the development of evidence-based policies on access to basic education (including attendance) and a school bussing program through: (i) evaluations of a demand-side cash compensation program supported by the European Commission, a supply-side school meals program supported by the World Food Program, and a mixed approach outreach project supported by UNICEF for access to education; and (ii) a study of the demands, benefits, feasibility, operation, and possible pilot of a bussing program.

Component 4: Capacity building and Grants management (US\$ 0.79 million at appraisal; US\$ 0.83 million at completion). This objective had two sub-components:

- Sub-component 4.1: Fiduciary and Management Capacity Strengthening. This sub-component was to support improvement of fiduciary capacity in procurement and management capacity of the Ministry of Education by financing: (i) a facilitated and participatory exercise in organizational assessment and structuring; (ii) management capacity building for senior staff; (iii) an independent audit of the textbook rental scheme; and (iv) technical assistance to fill critical gaps in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation.
-
- Sub-component 4.2: Grant Management. This sub-component was to finance the management of Grant

activities, incremental operational costs to the Ministry of Education as a result of Grant implementation, and the Grant's annual financial audits.

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

Project Costs : Estimated project cost at appraisal was US\$ 13.5 million, identical to costs at closing.

Financing : The Tajikistan Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund 3 was financed through the Education For All -Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) Education Program Development Fund, delivered as a specific investment grant . Total financing was US\$ 13.5 million.

Borrower Contribution : There was no planned borrower contribution . The Grant was designed to finance the gap between available financing (national budget and donor funding) and programmed activities supporting the NSED.

Dates:

- On December 1, 2011, the project was restructured to reduce the scope of sub -component 3.3. Planned M&E activities covering three donor initiatives geared toward increasing enrollment in basic education were dropped. Cancelling these activities was justified given that enrollment in basic education was already high (exceeding 90%) in 2009; two of three of the initiatives had stopped; and USAID had launched a new pilot program on school dropout prevention, making the planned M&E activities redundant . Funds were reallocated to Component 1.
- On March 30, 2011, the project was extended by 15 months, from June 30, 2011 to September 30, 2012, in order to complete on-going activities in support of the project's development objectives.
- On May 29, 2011, the project was extended by another nine months, from September 30, 2012 to June 30, 2013, bringing the total number of extended months to 24. This extension was intended to allow the Government to complete on-going activities in support of the project's development objectives and avoid a funding gap between this project and approval of the next .
- The ICR reports that on June 5, 2012, cost-savings from civil works activities and favorable fluctuations in the exchange rate added an activity to Component 1: the rehabilitation and refurbishing of a dormitory at the Republican Institute for In-Service Teacher Training.

3. Relevance of Objectives & Design:

a. Relevance of Objectives:

Substantial . The project was consistent with Tajikistan's National Development Strategy (NDS) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2007). The Ministry of Education's National Strategy for Education Development (NSED) incorporated the five education goals of the NDS : to improve the management and performance of the education system; improve the effectiveness of the education system; ensure the quality of education services at all levels; ensure equitable access to basic education; and improve the physical infrastructure in the system (NSED, p. 25). At appraisal, the education sector suffered from poorly maintained and inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of basic furniture and other equipment, a lack of teaching and learning materials, and poor quality of teaching (PAD, p. 8). Small average class size, beyond what school size would predict, resulted in low teaching intensity and budgetary inefficiencies .

At project closure, the project's objective to improve the quality of education remained highly relevant . The 2010 CAS and the 2014 Country Partnership Strategy continue to prioritize improving the quality of education . Access objectives had been met; enrollment in basic education had reached 97% by 2011.

b. Relevance of Design:

Substantial . Project components and activities were plausibly linked to the objectives of improving learning conditions, efficiency, and quality of education in the targeted rayons (districts). Components were mutually reinforcing. New construction, furnishings, and reading materials directly supported improving the learning environment, which may increase enrollment, attendance, and learning . Focusing on rayons with potential for consolidation would contribute to efficiency gains . Efficiency in resource allocation was supported through the project's contribution to the nationwide roll-out of per capita financing, school autonomy, and training of School

Directors in school management. School-based resource decisions and the opportunity to combine classrooms can increase efficiency (increasing the ratio of pupils to full-time equivalent staff). The project appropriately identified outputs and intermediate outcomes given the duration of the project and the statement of the objectives.

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy):

The statement of project objectives clearly distinguishes contribution from attribution, which was reasonable given donor engagement in the education sector. The World Bank and UNICEF jointly lead the Local Education Donor Group, a formal arrangement designed to increase complementarities, reduce redundancies, and improve efficiency by allocating donor funds by comparative advantage. FTI-3 was implemented in an environment of donor's coordinating support around a common strategic framework, transferring funds to the Ministry of Education, much like a sector-wide approach (PAD, p. 22). Achievements made through FTI-3 support would be hard to distinguish from achievements obtained through other donor support.

The project's planned duration was too short to observe and measure behavioral changes (final outcomes). The project's objectives were pitched at the output level, and its Result Framework was limited to easily measured and monitored outputs or intermediate outcome indicators.

Contribute to increased access to improved learning environments : Substantial .

Outputs:

- 261 classrooms were rehabilitated or constructed, exceeding the target of 200.
- 2,840 classrooms were supplied with new furnishing.
- 1,000 schools received supplementary reading materials.
- The Institute for In-Service Teacher Training was rehabilitated.

Outcomes

- 14,720 students in 34 schools benefitted from new or rehabilitated school facilities, exceeding the target of 13,000 students in 25 districts.
- 106,000 students benefitted from new school furniture, exceeding the target of 67,000.
- 298,000 students benefitted from new reading materials, exceeding the target of 180,000.

Contribute to more efficient delivery of education services : Substantial .

Outputs

- Per capita financing was introduced in 24 districts and one city, meeting the target.
- 792 directors who took the FTI-3 financial management training course (97%) passed the course, exceeding the target of 540. 148 of the trainees were female.
- 100% of Ministry of Education staff passed training in financial management and procurement, exceeding the target of 90%

Outcomes

- The pupil:stavka (pupils per full-time equivalent staff) ratio in rayons introducing per capita financing increased from 12.9 to 14.9, exceeding the target.
- Class size in rayons introducing per capita financing increased from 19.4 to 20.4, meeting the target.

Contribute to the delivery of quality education services : Modest .

Outputs

- A review was conducted of Tajikistan's current teacher training opportunities, identifying the gap between existing training courses and training needs and a report completed, meeting the target
- Nine data collection modules completed for the EMIS (teachers; school library; premises; territory and equipment; demography; students; infrastructure and buildings; textbook rentals; and construction) and an additional module for financial management, exceeding the target of nine modules .
- 1,100 teachers received in-class mentoring support, exceeding the target of 1,000.
- 810 directors were trained in and passed the pedagogical leadership (100% pass rate) course, exceeding the target of 540. 140 of these trainees were female.
- 228 methodologists (rayon-level specialists in mentoring) were trained and passed the course (out of 253 trained), not meeting the target of an estimated 468.
- 327 of 397 teachers trained and successfully mastered mentoring course basics . 296 female teachers trained, no target given.

Outcomes

- No outcomes are reported for this objective . It is unclear how the teacher training and mentoring was applied in the classroom, and how it resulted in improved delivery of quality education services .
-

5. Efficiency:

Efficiency is rated Modest. An economic and financial analysis was carried out at project appraisal but not at closing. However, the analysis discussed increased efficiency in the education sector as a whole (e.g., per capita financing) and not project-level efficiency.

The project experienced cost savings in teacher training (lower expenses due to logistics) and procurement. Procurement efficiency suffered slightly from unsatisfactory quality of construction and furniture in some but not all cases. With no additional funding, output targets were surpassed (e.g., more directors trained) and additional activities were incorporated into the project, such as rehabilitation of the Republican Institute for In-Service Teacher Training (RIITT). Favorable exchange rate fluctuations and cancelled subcomponents also contributed to the additional funds available for new activities as well as cost savings. The ICR provided no information on the net effect of these factors on project efficiency.

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

	Rate Available?	Point Value	Coverage/Scope*
Appraisal	No		
ICR estimate	No		

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

6. Outcome:

Relevance of objectives and design was Substantial. Efficiency is rated Modest. The objective to increase access to improve learning environment is rated Substantial. Students benefited from newly constructed or refurbished classrooms and new materials supplied. The rating for improving the quality of education is Modest, as no information beyond the number of staff trained was provided. The rating for improving the efficient delivery of education services is rated Substantial. The project exceeded the targeted increase in pupil:stavka ratio at a time when the ratio was falling nationwide. Taken together, these ratings are indicative of moderate shortcomings in the project's preparation and implementation, and therefore an Outcome rating of Moderately Satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating : Moderately Satisfactory

7. Rationale for Risk to Development Outcome Rating:

The Government of Tajikistan remains committed to education reform. FTI-3 supported the Ministry of Education's National Education Development Strategy (which reflected the Government's National Development Strategy). In 2012, the second strategic framework (the NSED) of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2020 was fully approved by the Government June 2012. Aiding to sustainability, donors are well coordinated in Tajikistan working through the Local Education Development Partners Working Group (LEDG). However, risks remain. Significant funding gaps persist. Increases in the wage bill due to significant increases in teachers' salaries relative to non salary budget items has tended to increase the number of class groups. Oblasts have been granted authority to reallocate per capita funds between districts. Oversight and modifications of per capita financing are required to maintain gains in autonomy and efficiency at the school and district levels.

a. Risk to Development Outcome Rating : Moderate

8. Assessment of Bank Performance:

a. Quality at entry:

The FTI-3 continued the work undertaken by FTI-1 and FTI-2 in a programmatic-like approach to education reform in Tajikistan. The project constructed a realistic results framework given the constraint imposed by project duration, balancing realism with potential value added. Project components were well aligned to the

activities of other donors. Donors were closely coordinated through the Local Education Donor Group . Lessons learned from earlier grants were incorporated into FTI -3.

Risks were appropriately identified. Project preparation revealed shortcomings in the Ministry of Education's structure and capacity, especially its capacity for project financial management, and design appropriately incorporated fiduciary capacity building and technical support for financial management and procurement .

Quality-at-Entry Rating : Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision:

The Bank's supervision facilitated reallocation of resources for efficient use of project funds as the situation on the ground changed, such as reports of high enrollment rates (based on both EMIS and the Tajikistan Living Standards Survey) and cost savings in civil works. Findings from supervision of financial management arrangements were accompanied with action plans to correct shortcomings (e.g., proper handling of exchange rate conversion). The ICR (p. 25) reports that mid-term progress reviews and implementation progress updates were conducted, reporting on progress and providing actionable recommendations to address issues identified.

Quality of Supervision Rating : Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating : Satisfactory

9. Assessment of Borrower Performance:

a. Government Performance:

The Government of Tajikistan remained fully committed to the goals of FTI -3 and the broader goals to which FTI-3 contributed, issuing the second National Strategy for Education Development to 2020 and securing funding through GPE-4 for continued support to education reform . Over the project period, the Government was increasing spending on education; the percentage of education in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was increasing and the share of education in the Government's budget reached 20%.

However, some Government actions caused implementation delays . First, Ministerial level changes resulted in vacancies in high level positions and high staff turnover . Second, the State Investment Committee delaying the contracting of audits which delayed the project's financial reporting .

Government Performance Rating Moderately Satisfactory

b. Implementing Agency Performance:

The Ministry of Education was the implementing agency for this grant, building on capacity building efforts supported by FTI-1 and FTI-2. On the recommendation of the FTI-2 Mid-Term Review, responsibility for project implementation was transferred from the Project Implementation Unit to the Ministry . The project experienced implementation delays due to lags in hiring vacant staff positions . Minor shortcomings were present in project supervision, e.g., processes for technical specifications and supervision off civil works and failure to release funds for monitoring . Procurement was implemented satisfactorily with recommendations for some improvements (ICR, p. 14).

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 was, for the most part, designed appropriately given the short duration of the Grant and the limited scope of the objectives. Monitoring indicators were defined at the output level and/or intermediate outcome level, omitting longer-term outcome indicators. The framework lacked outcome indicators for the quality of education services.

The Grant financed an external M&E specialist to assist the Analysis and Education Sector Reform Unit and help build capacity of Ministry staff (which was weak at project start). The FTI-3 Grant also supported the completion of the EMIS, which allowed school-level reporting of educational, financial, and facilities data. Data collected from EMIS were to be supplemented by mid-term and final reviews conducted by the Ministry of Education, and M&E design included plans for third party verification with support from the donors' group.

b. M&E Implementation:

Regular reporting of monitoring data provided feedback on progress toward objectives. The Analysis and Education Sector Reform Unit, the Unit within the Ministry of Education responsible for monitoring, actively disseminated findings to decision makers. Implementation suffered toward project closure as the Ministry delayed release of budgeted funds for monitoring.

M&E was supplemented by third party verification of progress toward objectives, including an overall assessment of the three FTI grants. Independent assessments focused on assessment of maintenance and utilization of FTI-constructed and rehabilitated schools, delivery and utilization of furniture, equipment and reading materials, and activities of staff trained through project funds.

c. M&E Utilization:

The ICR reports several adjustments to implementation in civil works reporting and the delivery of quality training based on data collected through EMIS. A National School Census was also conducted, which contributed to the second National Strategy for Education Development to 2020.

M&E Quality Rating : Substantial

11. Other Issues

a. Safeguards:

School construction and major rehabilitation triggered OP 4.01 for Environmental Assessment, and the project was classified as Category B. Environmental risks were assessed as limited, primarily associated with the disposal of construction waste. Under the project's design, construction sites were chosen after project approval. An Environment Management Framework was developed which included the requirement of an Environmental Assessment once sites were determined. Supervision missions determined that adequate supervision and engineering expertise had been hired by the Ministry of Education and that the capacity of the Ministry of Education, including the Department of Capital Construction, was satisfactory (ICR, p. 14).

The project also triggered the Bank's policy on Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12). The ICR (p. 14) reports that the project did not result in any need for resettlement.

b. Fiduciary Compliance:

Financial risk at appraisal was significant. Hiring financial management and disbursement specialists and staff training were planned to mitigate these risks. Financial audits were generally unqualified. In 2010 and 2011, financial reporting was delayed due to factors external to the Ministry of Education. In 2012, Ministry of Education staff were unable maintain current project budgets, resulting in US\$ 1.5 million in uncommitted funds six months prior to project closing. The Bank reported inadequacies in the application of exchange rates and

cash transactions.

Procurement risk was considered high at appraisal . Training and hiring of procurement specialists helped mitigate these risks. Procurement was generally implemented as planned, and procurement was rated satisfactory throughout project implementation . Cost savings from efficient procurement are reported . Improvements in procurement processes have been recommended to address issues surrounding variable quality and technical specifications in procurement of civil works .

c. Unintended Impacts (positive or negative):

None reported.

d. Other:

12. Ratings :	ICR	IEG Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
Outcome:	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	The project's objectives and design are relevant. Efficacy is substantial in two objectives and Modest in one . The project's efficiency is rated Modest .
Risk to Development Outcome:	Moderate	Moderate	
Bank Performance :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Borrower Performance :	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Some actions taken by the Government and the Ministry of Education's capacity limitations hindered implementation.
Quality of ICR :		Satisfactory	

NOTES:

- 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:

The ICR (pp. 26-27) presents three generic lessons, summarized here :

- Low capacity environments may require longer time periods to achieve results . Restricting operations to shorter than needed duration creates incentives to design projects with ex ante expectations of project extensions.
- It is possible but challenging to transfer implementation from a PMU to an implementing agency with weak capacity. In order to support capacity building as well as project implementation, technical assistance is needed to guide and transfer implementation knowledge and capacity to the agency .
- Programmatic-like operations provide opportunities for the Bank to learn and improve its operations . Presenting lessons learned does not substitute for fully incorporating these lessons into future operations.

14. Assessment Recommended? ● Yes ○ No

Why? The implementation of Tajikistan's Education Modernization Project was concurrent with three FTI -CF

Grants, providing an opportunity for significant learning .

15. Comments on Quality of ICR:

The ICR is well written and concise . It provides relevant information on external influences impacting project objectives, such as national policies and counterpart funding . The analysis of the results chain was satisfactory, providing significant detail on project outputs . Given the short duration of the project, where objectives were pitched at a higher level the analysis lacked clarity .

a.Quality of ICR Rating : Satisfactory