



1. Project Data:		Date Posted : 12/06/2004	
PROJ ID: P057959		Appraisal	Actual
Project Name: Educ Ref Lil	Project Costs (US\$M)	5.00	5.28
Country: Azerbaijan	Loan/Credit (US\$M)	5.00	5.00
Sector(s): Board: ED - Tertiary education (62%), Central government administration (14%), Primary education (12%), Secondary education (12%)	Cofinancing (US\$M)		
L/C Number: C3220			
	Board Approval (FY)		99
Partners involved :	Closing Date	12/31/2002	03/31/2004
Prepared by :	Reviewed by :	Group Manager :	Group:
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2. Project Objectives and Components			
a. Objectives			
The development objective of the Education Reform Project was to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning in selected grades of general schools in Azerbaijan through (i) supporting innovations in curriculum content and development, (ii) piloting new teacher education content and delivery mechanisms, and (iii) evaluating the impact of project interventions.			
b. Components			
There were three components: (a) curriculum reform support that provided (i) international and local consultant support on main areas of curriculum development, including syllabus, teaching methods, institutional issues, and assessment (including textbook development) with an overall focus on greater subject integration and on increasing optional courses in the upper grades; (ii) training, fellowships, and study tours; (iii) civil works, covering the refurbishment of two curriculum development institutions; (iv) resource materials, equipment, and supplies; (v) syllabi, textbooks, and supplies; and (vi) operating costs (US\$1.5 million); (b) teacher education capacity building and reorientation in pilot regions that focused on (i) teacher training and teaching methods, training of trainers, (ii) pilot schools in five proposed regions including minor rehabilitation, and financing training materials, equipment, materials, textbook supplies (US\$3.0 million); (c) project management that supported training and outreach activities aimed at strengthening parent and community involvement in school operations of pilot schools (US\$0.6 million).			
c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates			
The project was implemented in 4.5 years rather than the planned 3 years, and it disbursed fully. It was a learning and innovation loan, the first educational operation in Azerbaijan.			
3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:			
- Supporting innovations in curriculum content and development - not achieved. Activities to renew primary school curricula (language, math, foreign languages, and social studies) took place only in the last year of the project, and the new curricula were not adequately piloted. Some subjects lacked updated information; 7 textbooks and 3 teacher guides were produced rather than a target of 12 textbooks and 6 teacher guides. The new facilities built for curricular development were satisfactory.			
- Piloting new teacher education content and delivery mechanisms - achieved. 239 curriculum developers received training on active and interactive teaching and learning (target was 96); also 180 trainers were trained (target was 120). However only 1212 teachers were trained, while the target was 1500. Much of the training was demand-driven.			
- Project management and impact evaluation of project interventions - not achieved. Only monitoring activities took place rather than an impact evaluation.			
4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:			
The project strengthened policy and institutional frameworks to produce teachers with updated knowledge and content and methodology and curricula to teach materials more relevant to labor-market needs. Observation missions ascertained empirically that teachers and students learned a lot of new material through project inputs. Enrollment in the pilot schools increased by as much as 30% as a result of the improved instruction given therein.			
5. Significant Shortcomings (including non-compliance with safeguard policies):			
Curriculum reform was compromised by the choice of an unsuccessful consultant, whose contract was terminated after a period of inactivity. Little progress was made on the project during the first two years, until local experts were recruited who believed in its concepts. The LIL concept implied comparing and piloting alternative models of curricula and instruction, but a suitable research and evaluation design was not applied early on in the process.			

6. Ratings :	ICR	OED Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
Outcome :	Satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	The curriculum development component and evaluation subcomponent had unsatisfactory outcomes. The main project benefit was training in interactive teaching. It is unclear how much was learned through this LIL on how to improve instruction, and alternative approaches were not tested.
Institutional Dev .:	Modest	Modest	
Sustainability :	Likely	Likely	
Bank Performance :	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Borrower Perf .:	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of ICR :		Satisfactory	

NOTE: ICR rating values flagged with '*' don't comply with OP/BP 13.55, but are listed for completeness.

7. Lessons of Broad Applicability:

- Implementing learning and innovation loans is difficult when the borrower has limited experience with Bank lending as well as with this type of instrument. It is furthermore difficult to pilot and compare alternative models to solve a given problem if experiments and evaluation methodology have not been carefully designed.

- Unless staff in charge of implementation have sufficient comprehension and belief in project goals, they may neglect the project. More client-oriented and needs-based supervision may identify and allay some of these problems early on.

- Innovative educational concepts must be clearly defined. Vague concepts, such as 'student-centered learning' may result in a lack of agreement on how they must be implemented, and compromise outcomes as well as quality at entry.

8. Assessment Recommended? Yes No

Why? This is the first education project in Azerbaijan, and its objectives were unusual. It is important to find out if and how good teaching practices can be institutionalized in a country facing severe financial constraints.

9. Comments on Quality of ICR:

The ICR is generally satisfactory. Since only monitoring data were gathered under the project, the report has little hard evidence to report on outcomes and impact (e.g. statements that teachers learned a lot, feel more responsibly for the teaching-learning process, feel influenced by students' behavior, etc. (Annex 1). The project financing by component table is incomplete.