



Project Information Document/ Identification/Concept Stage (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 10-Jul-2020 | Report No: PIDC215709



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)	Environmental and Social Risk Classification	Project Name
P173601		Moderate	Enhancing the Foundation of Learning
Region	Country	Date PID Prepared	Estimated Date of Approval
EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	Kyrgyz Republic	10-Jul-2020	
Financing Instrument	Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency	
Investment Project Financing	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Education & Science	

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PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	4.80
Total Financing	4.80
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	4.80
Education for All Supervising Entity	4.80

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

The Kyrgyz Republic is a landlocked mountainous nation of 6.3 million people, with a gross national income (GNI) per capita of US\$1,220 (2018) and considerable economic potential based on its rich endowments. The annual population growth rate is 1.9 percent; 32.1 percent of the population and under the age of 15 and 63.6 percent of the population live in rural areas. The country has rich, largely unexploited, natural endowments in the form of minerals, as well as large potential to expand agriculture, hydroelectricity, and tourism. The Kyrgyz Republic is highly vulnerable to climate change, specifically to extreme precipitation, landslides,[1] floods,[2] and mudflow hazards, which occur frequently across the country. It sits at the



crossroads of the Chinese, South Asian, and Russian markets, with unfettered access to the Eurasian Economic Union (of which it is a member).

The GNI grew at an average annual rate of 4.6 percent over 2000–2018, largely driven by gold extraction and worker remittances from abroad. Growth in recent years resulted in only modest improvements in welfare among the bottom 40 percent coupled with falling incomes for the upper 60 percent. Nearly one-fifth of the population live below the international poverty line of US\$3.2 per capita per day (2017), with a larger proportion of households clustered just above the poverty line and therefore vulnerable even to small shocks. Economic growth and poverty reduction are below the country’s potential, due to a business environment inconducive to private investment and job creation, weak public institutions and services, and constrained human capital that lacks essential skills required for a more productive and dynamic economy.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

- **Basic schooling is nearly universal but access to preschool is low and inequitable.** The Kyrgyz Republic has achieved a near universal coverage in primary and secondary education. Enrollment rates for Grades 1–9 are high: above 99 percent for primary education, which is compulsory and covers Grades 1–4, and 98 percent for compulsory lower-secondary education.
- **Pre-primary enrollment** historically has been low, and the sub-sector suffered the most from the financial shock after independence due to the economic collapse of the collective farm sector, leading to the closing of 70 percent of the pre-schools, especially in rural areas, and a 75 percent reduction in the number of pre-school students in the system. The number of pre-school institutions decreased from 1,604 in 1993 to 416 in 1999 (MoES 2006).
- The enrolment in organized early childhood education programs has slowly increased over the past ten years: from 22.7 percent in 2014 to 39 percent in 2018, with almost no disparities between girls and boys (MICS 2014, 2018); the enrollment rate for children under the age of 3 years was roughly 4 percent in 2019.

The most common form of pre-school education up until 2011 was a full-day state kindergarten, which operated as a combination of education and daycare facility with four hours allocated for play/instructional time and four hours, for rest and meals. Stand-alone kindergartens would normally provide three meals a day and have separate sleeping and learning/playing spaces, being staffed with pedagogical and non-pedagogical personnel, where non-pedagogical staff would normally exceed the number of pedagogues.

The key element of expanding access to the pre-school education programs over the last decade was the introduction of alternative to full-day state kindergartens forms of pre-schools: Community-based



Kindergartens (CbKs) for children aged 3-5 years and the full-year school preparation program 'Nariste' for children in the year prior to starting Grade One.

Community-based Kindergartens (CbKs) for the group of 3-5-years of age are less expensive as operate on a shift basis three hours a day per group and focuses only on the instructional time with one teacher per group of children. CbKs do not offer sleeping and full canteen facilities as traditional full day kindergartens and have no non-teaching support staff. The model of CbK as an alternative for a more efficient use of the education budget could serve the poorest, hard-to-reach areas, offering the program to the most disadvantaged children in their mother tongue. The need for such facilities continues to grow, particularly responsive to the scarce public resources to finance full-day kindergarten services, though many parents, especially those working, would still prefer a full-day kindergarten.

The full-year school preparation program 'Nariste' focuses on increasing the school readiness of those children who are in the year prior to Grade One and have not been exposed to any kind of early education programs. The full-year preparation program was introduced starting from 2014, and 2019 reported the enrolment of six-year-old children in this program that was nearly universal.

The expansion of these programs was supported by GPE within the Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2020, where pre-school education was identified as one of the priority areas. Though access to pre-school services has been expanding, inequalities in access still represent a significant concern. Inequality exacerbates due to significant differences in ECD enrolment by household income level. Thus, state full-day kindergartens serve the interests of the better-off families with 57.4 percent of children enrolled from the richest 20 percent, while only 24.6 percent of the poorest 20 percent of the population could afford to send their child to a pre-school.

- **Quality of learning remains a key challenge**

The education system has been improving its performance with incremental gains in student learning results since 2010; however, there exist significant gaps in learning achievements, confirmed by the results of large-scale international and national assessments including the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), the National Sample-Based Assessment (NSBA) and the test for the OECD's PISA.

EGRA 2017 found that only 44 percent and 47 percent of sampled students in Grades 2 and 4, respectively, attained grade-level oral reading fluency. Those represented gains by 10/13 percentage points over the EGRA 2014 results. NSBA 2017 found that many Grade 4 students performed below basic level in reading comprehension (59.8 percent), mathematics (60.3 percent) and Motherland Studies (primary-level natural sciences, 53.1 percent).

Factors contributing to the deficiency in learning outcomes

- ***Children are not prepared for learning.*** The available data indicate that the relatively low early childhood education (ECE) coverage contributes to the education sector's poor performance. The



PISA-2009 results showed that students who received more than one year of pre-school education performed better than those who had not. Further, EGRA-2011 found that Russian-speaking students with pre-primary experience performed better compared to those without. At the same time, the quality needs to be enhanced with the standards for child development, effective teaching practice and enabling environment that stimulate children's physical and emotional growth and readiness for learning.

- ***The lack of essential and adequate materials for teaching and learning constrains child development.*** A representative sample of standardized classroom observations of the school preparation program 'Nariste' in 2016 found that 65 percent of classrooms had no book area assigned for reading, and more than 80 percent of classrooms had fewer than 15 books, and limited writing materials. Classrooms are not adequately equipped with teaching and learning materials. In some respects, this is an issue of quantity, with not enough materials to go around for all children. Many classrooms have poorly designed materials to promote basic knowledge and skills, or none are available. For instance, tactile materials that promote the understanding of basic mathematical/number concepts are often missing, while reading materials that are age-appropriate and/or in the child's mother tongue (particularly Kyrgyz and Uzbek) are in a very short supply. Age-appropriate teaching and learning materials have been developed and provided to target pre-schools under the previous GPE funded pre-school project. These resources need to be enriched by materials differentiated to special education needs of children.
- ***Outdated teaching and learning practices.*** It is widely acknowledged that many teachers rely heavily upon whole-group learning and a regimented day. This leaves insufficient opportunity for children to pursue and concentrate on their own interests, and entails having some children either bored (because they have already grasped what is being taught), baffled (because they cannot) or distracted (because they want to do something else). A representative sample of standardized classroom observations within 'Nariste' program in 2016 found that students spent roughly 60 percent of their classroom time in a whole-group setting, indicating that didactic rather than explorative or play-based lessons are the norm.
- Experts acknowledge that ***the country's pedagogical tradition and teacher training programs*** (pre-service and in-service) need to be modernized, particularly to incorporate more child-centered and active forms of learning, to ensure effective pre-school teaching, which requires specific pedagogy and competency to engage and interact with children to stimulate their curiosity and learning. In-service training and professional development opportunities for teachers are limited in number and quality. There are national in-service teacher training norms of 72 hours every five years, but in practice only about 10 to 20 percent of eligible teachers are covered. Much of this shortfall is due to a sheer lack of systemic capacity to train so many teachers, and some of it, to local authority's reluctance to pay for teachers' travel and per diems.
- ***Efficiency and equity in spending.*** The country spends heavily for the limited coverage it has achieved, because the most common form of public pre-school service is expensive, as it covers care as well as education. The average yearly cost per child for pre-school is nearly three times as great as the average per-child cost for primary and secondary education, due to the costly model used in state kindergartens. Between 2012 and 2017, public spending on pre-school education registered an



annual growth of 20 percent in nominal terms reaching 5.3 billion or 1 percent of GDP or 14.3 percent of overall education expenditures in 2017[3]. The structure of these expenditures is as follows: salaries and staff costs represent, on average, 52 percent of the total expenditure over the period of 2011-2016; nutrition costs make around 69 percent of the operational non-personnel expenditures, and within this parents contribute about 64 percent of the overall nutrition budget; costs associated with utilities & fuel and maintenance of the buildings report about 22 percent of the operational non-wage budget, and only about 4 percent of the operational non-wage expenditures are devoted to educational and material resources. Given its level of investments, Kyrgyzstan could have achieved better participation in pre-school education, as the international evidence suggests, if cost-effective models had been scaled up

- **Inclusion of children with special needs** is the largest weakness of the current system. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, about 28,000 children with disabilities at the age of 0-18 years were living in the country in 2016. Some 10,925 were enrolled in pre-school and school education, which makes 40 percent of the total population of children with disabilities[1]. The national statistical data for 2018 reported that the proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being was 71.7 percent.[2]
- The main challenges for the introduction and development of inclusive education refer to the lack of enabling learning environment that would take into account both physical and psychological aspects, lack of adapted teaching and learning materials, lack of professionals, and insufficient capacity and motivation of teachers in the identification and provision of teaching that would be responsive to individual learning and special educational needs of children, as well as the absence of solid monitoring systems and robust management in schools. Children with disabilities do not attend pre-schools, since inclusiveness has not been fully introduced at the level of school education, while the analysis of quantitative data for the last few years shows a trend of annual growth in the number of children with disabilities at 1-1.5 percent.[3]

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[1] Kyrgyz Republic, Education Sector Analysis 2007-2017, 2018, UNICEF

[2] National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, SDG, 2018

[3] Retrieved from Education Sector Analysis, 2018, UNICEF

Relationship to CPF

Government Strategy and Program

In 2018, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic approved the 'National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040 (Strategy-2040)'. Its focus is to create opportunities for human capital development,



including through education and the creation of highly productive quality jobs, particularly in strategic sectors. It is fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. The first phase of the Strategy-2040, the ‘Development Program of the KR for 2018–2022 (Program 22)’, acknowledges that the country’s education system is not yet effective in developing the required higher-order skills, and identifies several education sector priorities, including (a) improving the quality of education, (b) making the education system more effective in teaching skills required by the modern economy, (c) supplying schools with a broader range of modern TLMs and innovative technology, and (d) strengthening the professional capacities of teachers. In the latest development, the MoES’ draft of the National Education Sector Strategy 2040 addresses the following priorities: (a) expanding access to ECE, irrespective of gender, disability and ethnicity, and improving its quality; (b) strengthening teacher professional capacities to effectively teach skills, including transversal competencies (such as digital literacy) and providing flexible, accessible and affordable CPD; (c) improving the availability and use of digital TLMs at schools; and (d) strengthening assessment systems to ensure children are formatively assessed, while summative assessments are aligned with the curricular competencies, and sample-based learning outcome evaluations are carried out to identify and remedy system weaknesses. The Action Plan details the implementation plan for 2021-2023, the cost and financing, the implementation arrangements and key performance indicators.

Relationship to CPF & GPE’s Focus Area

The project is aligned with the World Bank’s Country Partnership Framework [1] Focus Area 3 (‘Enhanced economic opportunities and resilience’) and Objective 7 (‘Develop human capital’). The project will contribute to enhancing human capital development by improving children’s readiness and the foundation of learning through (a) increased and more equitable access to ECE with the establishment of additional CbKs; (b) enhanced quality and measurement of child growth and development by strengthening teacher effectiveness for rather productive and child-appropriate pedagogy, modernizing assessment tools and implementing policy reforms to improve the equity and efficiency in financing.

The project is closely aligned with the GPE’s broader goal to improve learning with equity and efficiency and contributes directly to one of the focus areas of early education through improved equitable access, quality and learning outcomes in the early years.

The strategic choice placed on expanding pre-school education under the project is based on a trade-off that considers the following: a). the available evidence, since both global and in-country assessment data suggest that the low coverage has contributed to Kyrgyzstan’s children being less prepared for learning, and one year of pre-primary education is not sufficient for school readiness; b). Government has prioritized the expansion of coverage as a key measure to boost pre-school enrolment in the next three years, seeking complementary support while increasing its financing incrementally; and c). child preparedness for schooling is the major cause of low learning outcomes in early grades and needs to be addressed urgently, while the support for tackling other constraints in learning outcomes is being mobilized through the implementation of the ESS-2040 and the EAP for 2021-2023 to be financed by the government and development partners. For example, through the WB-financed Learning for the Future Project and the contribution made by other development



partners and financiers (such as education sector loan from Asia Development Bank and budget support from the European Union).

[1] Report No. 130399, approved by the Board on November 13, 2018.

Sustainability

The proposed project will contribute to sustainable pre-school education in three ways: a). it will finance a cost-effective model of provision to increase access for the vulnerable communities within the support for the education sector strategy implementation that defines the policy goals and targets to be achieved in the immediate next three years and over a longer term of the next 20 years; b). the project will provide technical assistance in reforming the government's spending towards greater equity and efficiency for a more sustainable, equitable and efficient financing; and c). the project will assist in building the physical and technical capacity and structures laying the institutional foundation for a rather self-sustainable provision beyond the project. The proposed model also incorporates sustainability commitments and guarantees from the community and local government.

Building on the success of the Kyrgyz Early Education Project (KEEP) financed by a previous implementation grant from GPE and complementing the IDA's recently approved Learning for the Future Project (US\$50 million), the project, seeks to contribute to human capital development through enhanced foundation of learning. The project is aligned with one of the IDA project's objectives to increase school readiness by establishing additional 80 CbKs in low income and underserved communities which will increase the enrolment of 5,000 children aged 3-5 years . Together with the integrated support for teacher training, tracking and evaluating child growth and development and preschool financing reforms, the project will not only expand more equitable access but also raise the quality of the program to enhance the foundation of learning of the targeted beneficiaries. .

Lessons Learned

Community-based pre-schools constitute a low-cost and effective alternative, when the Government is determined to provide equitable access to education for children in remote, impoverished areas. The expansion of this pre-school model under KEEP, particularly in economically disadvantaged districts, has provided ethnic minorities and poor children with an equal start and demonstrated remarkable gains among children who had never been exposed to ECE pre-school education before.

The main lessons learned from KEEP show that it is important to: 1) establish proactive communication and advocacy from the start with various beneficiary groups (parents, teachers, local authorities) to create a trust relationship with the key stakeholders and beneficiaries and generate a shared ownership over the process of establishing community-based pre-schools; 2) practice advocacy for increasing awareness about ECE and the key interventions to be implemented within the project.



C. Project Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The proposed project development objective is to increase equitable access to quality pre-school education.

Key Results

The key results are expected in two specific areas:

- a. Increase in the number of children aged 3-5 years enrolled in an early education program in targeted communities. ;
- b. Improved development of children across four domains: physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and communication skills.

D. Preliminary Description

Activities/Components

The objective of the project is to increase access on an equitable basis to quality early education program through: expanding shift-based kindergartens (SbKs) in poor rural areas: enhancing the quality of the program through the training of pre-school teachers: institutionalizing measurement of services quality and effectiveness; and financing reforms to enhance efficiency and coverage. The proposed project will be organized around three components: (i) expansion of early education services for under-served children; (ii) improvement of the policy and financing framework for system effectiveness; and (iii) implementation support. All components would underpin the priorities delineated in the MoES' Education Strategy-2040 and Action Plan for 2021-2023.

Component 1: Expanding early education services for under-served children (US\$ 4,040,600). The aim of this component is to increase equitable access to early education services that meet quality standards for under-served children.

Sub-component 1.1: Expanded early education services

The objective of this sub-component is to increase equitable access to ECE in poor rural areas with no or low access through establishing CbKs. The project will support the creation of about 80 new CbKs enrolling approximately 5,000 children aged 3–5 years. For each CbK, the project will provide furniture, equipment and materials for playing and learning; an outdoor playground; minor rehabilitation works including access for children with physical disabilities; and water and sanitation facilities of a standardized design. The design for the water and sanitation facilities will consider vulnerability to climate change.



The project will seek to ensure a broad, regionally and ethnically balanced distribution of funds. It will target poor and rural communities, focusing where access to ECE services is below the national rural average and there are enough children to fill two classes with due regard for parity between girls and boys in the communities not covered by the IDA project. Ayil Okmoty (village) will provide premises that it owns and that meet the relevant national pedagogical, safety, hygiene and sanitation standards. It will provide suitable landscaping for the grounds and ensure there is a fence surrounding the property. It will maintain and operate the premises as a public pre-school education service for at least 10 years; this will include paying all recurrent, operational costs and maintaining the premises in good condition. Finally, it will hire and ensure the salary for a qualified teacher for each new group created (covering two groups). The CbKs will implement a play-based curriculum and engage parents actively in supporting the educational process and tracking child development and growth.

CbK will promote storybooks reading among the parents whose kids are enrolled therein and among other families in their respective community, building on the success of Aga- Khan Foundation supported 'Reading for Children Project'. Family literacy studies have shown that parental storybook reading has an impact on children's strengthening their communicative, cognitive, emotional and creative potential, as well as success in school-based literacy instruction[1]. The frequency of reading to children at a young age has a direct causal effect on their schooling outcomes regardless of their family background and home environment. And studies suggest that children read to more frequently at the age of 4-5 years achieve higher scores on the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests for both Reading and Numeracy afterwards in Year 3 of schooling (age 8 to 9 years). These differences in reading and cognitive skills are not related to the child's family background or home environment but are the direct result of how frequently they have been read to prior to starting school[2]. Thus, CbKs will be provided with a set of age-appropriate story books and guidance for teachers and parents in the mother tongue on effective technics of story books reading with children. Parents will take story books from CbKs to read and interact with their children during storybook reading at home, while teachers will facilitate and guide these practices.

[1] Retrieved from <https://go-gale-com.tc.idm.oclc.org/ps/i.do?p=AONE&u=new30429&id=GALE%7CA571977517&v=2.1&it=r&sid=summon>

[2] Retrieved from <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/documents/about/research/readtoyoungchild.pdf>

Sub-component 1.2: Increased effectiveness in teaching practice

The project will finance a start-of-service training program for approximately 160 newly hired teachers at the CbKs established under Sub-component 1.1. It will be delivered through the RIITT and the OIITTs, using master trainers who will receive project-supported training on the program. Teacher training program that was developed and rolled out during the previous project (Kyrgyz Early Education Project [KEEP] funded by GPE) will be enhanced with the content on how to teach children with special needs through differentiated and multi-modal approach to learning and teaching (audio, visual, kinesthetic, etc.), how to create areas for individual, group and collective activities, how to promote story books reading through effective technics,



and how to ensure post- COVID crisis management. The training program will also be enhanced with children’s development monitoring and measurement tool.

The training programs will be integrated into the existing systems of teacher training and support at both the pre-service and in-service levels. The project will finance the capacity building of instructors to deliver the programs at the RIITT and six OIITs, and of methodologists working at the local level, as well as at the 13 universities and 8 pedagogical colleges where pre-service teacher education is offered.

Teachers of state kindergartens will be invited to take part in the training program on the new early development standards and programs, and methodology of teaching children with special needs through differentiated and multi-modal approach to learning and teaching (audio, visual, kinesthetic, etc), as well as approaches to creating areas for individual, group and collective activities, promoting story books reading through effective technics and measuring children’s development .

Moreover, the training programs will be designed in a digital format, so that teachers from all existing pre-schools could follow the program using an on-line or off-line digital version. A platform for on-line training courses has been established in RIITT and 30 training centers with relevant equipment provided to 30 schools to serve as resource centers for on-line trainings countrywide. An on-line training for teachers on basic digital literacy will be made available through Learning for the Future project (IDA) to enable pre-school teachers to gain basic digital skills.

All CbKs and state kindergartens, regional education bodies, as well as in-service and pre-service teacher training institutes will be provided with the copies of pre-school education standards, program and teacher guides.

Component 2: Improving policy & finance for the system effectiveness (USD 295,718). The objective of this component is to improve policy and system effectiveness. To that end, it would finance technical assistance, materials and the monitoring of child development at the level of institutions and the whole system.

- Enhancing policy for equity and efficiency.* The project will finance technical assistance in a range of pre-school education areas, where the MoES is pursuing reforms that promote equitable access to pre-school education. The financed activities will include *inter-alia*: dissemination of the revised regulations and improved practices on rather efficient use of physical space in full-day pre-schools that have been developed by the MoES and other stakeholders with UNICEF’s support; revision of the per-capita financing model, building on the prior work done under the Kyrgyz Early Education Project (GPE); technical assistance on the scaling up of the per-capita financing model countrywide; the review and analysis of the legal and regulatory framework pertaining to pre-school financing; development of public-private partnership mechanisms for pre-schools; enhancement and expansion of the Government’s ‘Social contract’ initiative; and revision of pre-school teacher competencies framework linked to the National Qualification Framework.

- Enhancing measurement.* The project will finance technical assistance to improve the monitoring and evaluation of ECED. It will support the scaling up of the M&E Framework for ECED that has been developed by the MoES and other stakeholders with UNICEF’s support through the GPE Better Early Learning and



Development at Scale (BELDS) initiative, as well as the training for education bodies and pre-school institutions on how to collect ECED data and make data compilation in EMIS.

The project will finance technical assistance to establish a system of monitoring and evaluation of children development through pre-schools to the system level. A roll out of child development measurement tool, such as the Early Development Instrument (EDI), will be supported as well. This will generate data on child development trends and evidence on the effect of ECE, and build technical capacity for measurements in the MoES and pre-school institutions. A national sample-based survey of pre-school children's development across four domains will be conducted to get knowledge regarding the effectiveness of ECE and build technical capacity in the system for further regular surveys.

The instrument is a teacher-completed questionnaire that assesses children's development across four domains: physical health and well-being; social competence and emotional maturity; language, communication skills and general knowledge. The instrument has been contextualized and piloted under the previous Kyrgyz Early Education Project (GPE). Pre-school teachers will be trained on how to use the Early Development Instrument in their practice within teacher training courses.

Component 3: Ensuring citizen engagement and implementation support (USD 463,682). The objective of this component is to ensure that all stakeholders are engaged into the project implementation and monitoring.

Sub-component 3.1: Stakeholders' engagement

- Stakeholders will be engaged in the implementation of activities across the project, building on the mechanisms already in place to involve parents, particularly fathers, and community members. Specifically, this includes (a) the production of information for parents and (b) community monitoring through community score-cards. Currently, parents provide feedback through regular household visits from teachers and participation in ad hoc pre-school activities. Building on this, the project will raise awareness about ECE in communities and local governments having expressed interest in opening an SbK. The project will produce information for pre-school users and community members to enable an informed monitoring process. This will include information on the benefits of ECE programs and detailed descriptions of the scope of activities. The project will prepare awareness-raising materials such as posters, pamphlets, brochures or videos to inform/empower school users and local communities as to what they should expect to receive if they participate, and also what they need to monitor during implementation.

- The project will also build on the community score-card tool piloted through the Engaging Communities for Better Schools in the Kyrgyz Republic Project (P159699). This will give communities the opportunity to monitor and provide feedback on the CbKs. Parents and community members will provide feedback on the progress of rehabilitation works and on whether the inputs have been supplied and are being used. The output from the community score-card process will be an action plan for the staff, community members and pre-school users to help improve performance. To ensure a constant stream of feedback and monitoring, the score-card will be implemented semi-annually in a half of the target schools each time. The related citizen



engagement indicators measuring beneficiary feedback are included in the Results Framework – ‘schools where communities report the CbKs meeting their needs (%)’.

Sub-component 3.2: Evaluation. To assess the project impact, some randomized control trials will be conducted to determine if participation in the ECE program having been provided at the project- supported CbK improves children’s development. The evaluation design will use a randomized phase-in approach, where communities receiving the early childhood intervention earlier will serve as the ‘treatment group’, and communities receiving the intervention later in the project cycle will serve as the ‘control group’. The project will administer the EDI before the intervention is implemented to gather base-line data and again later to collect an end-line measurement, in the respective treatment and control groups. The impact of the ECE programme, including the CbKs, will be assessed at the project end using a ‘difference-in-difference’ approach. The project will measure the difference in EDI scores at the end-line compared to the base-line within the treatment and control groups separately. The project will then compare the magnitude of change between the two groups. Positive changes are expected in both groups as children’s test scores increase with age. The hypothesis is that the positive change in the treatment group will be larger than in the control group as a result of the children’s participation in the CbKs.

Sub-component 3.3: Implementation support. This component will support the coordination, technical quality and fiduciary integrity of implementation, as well as the monitoring, evaluation and reporting on project processes and results. It will also support systems for collecting beneficiary feedback to inform project implementation. It will finance activities to inform stakeholders about education sector reforms relevant to the project and ensure that any grievances or issues emerging during implementation are addressed in a timely, effective and fair manner. It will finance project operating costs, including translation and interpretation, equipment, supervision costs, staff salaries for project coordination, technical support to MoES departments and affiliated institutions, and fiduciary functions. It will also finance the MoES’ incremental operating costs.

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Environmental and Social Standards Relevance

E. Relevant Standards

ESS Standards		Relevance
ESS 1	Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	Relevant
ESS 10	Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure	Relevant



ESS 2	Labor and Working Conditions	Relevant
ESS 3	Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management	Relevant
ESS 4	Community Health and Safety	Relevant
ESS 5	Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 6	Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 7	Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 8	Cultural Heritage	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 9	Financial Intermediaries	Not Currently Relevant

Legal Operational Policies

Safeguard Policies	Triggered	Explanation (Optional)
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No	

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The project is designed to support the enhancement of child readiness and teacher effectiveness in pre-school and secondary education through increasing access to early childhood education, measuring quality and effectiveness and reforms to preschool financing, and increasing teacher effectiveness, providing teaching-learning resources and improving measurement of cognitive and non-cognitive skills at a countrywide scale. The Enhancing the Foundation of Learning (EFL) project is a grant from GPE that is a scale up activity of the IDA's recently approved Learning for the Future project (LFF) and will complement LFF. The EFL grant will support the creation of an additional 80 new community-based kindergartens (CbKs) throughout the country enrolling approximately 5,000 children aged 3-5 years under Subcomponent 1.1. It will target poor and rural communities, focusing where access to ECE services is below the national rural average and there are enough children to fill two classes in the communities not covered by the LFF project. Both, the LFF project and the EFL grant will finance the installation of indoor water toilet and sanitation facilities designed for children in the premise of existing school buildings under Subcomponent 1.1, as well as improve access to children with disabilities, which will involve small-scale building renovations. However, no new building construction is expected. Renovation activities will not generate adverse environmental impacts or substantial risks on the human population, and the predictable impacts are expected to be temporary, reversible, low in magnitude, and site-specific. Environmental risks, including noise and air pollution, waste handling can be well managed in due course of the project. Due to the nature of proposed works and associated environmental risks, and the limited capacity of MoES in the understanding and application of Bank's ESF and relevant Standards, the project is classified as Moderate risk from an environmental perspective and as defined under the Bank's ESF. It is expected that the social impacts associated with the project activities will be beneficial for the Kyrgyz society. Social risk is rated as Moderate based on the



information available at the concept stage, project activities will be site-specific, without the likelihood of impacts beyond the project footprint, low in magnitude and easily mitigated in a predictable manner. Presently, no land acquisition and no new building construction are expected under the proposed project. However, this may change during project preparation if the external water supply and sanitation infrastructure will be necessary for the above-mentioned renovations. Risk related to labor-management including influx is not substantial given the nature of small-scale nature of school rehabilitation works. The distribution of project benefits across geographic areas within the country is particularly sensitive given the complex inter-ethnic relationships which led to social upheavals in 2005 and 2010 and the eruption of violent inter-ethnic clashes in the South of the country. There is also a risk that children with disabilities or developmental delays may be excluded from project benefits. Beneficiary (school and kindergarten) selection criteria need to be carefully elaborated to ensure inclusive access to the poorest communities, children with disabilities, equitable regional and ethnically balanced distribution of funds.

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