



1. Project Data

Project ID P107772	Project Name EDUC QUAL & REL (APL#2)	
Country Armenia	Practice Area(Lead) Education	
L/C/TF Number(s) IDA-45650	Closing Date (Original) 30-Nov-2014	Total Project Cost (USD) 31,260,000.00
Bank Approval Date 12-May-2009	Closing Date (Actual) 30-Nov-2015	
	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	25,000,000.00	0.00
Revised Commitment	24,115,767.20	0.00
Actual	24,775,642.33	0.00

Sector(s)
General education sector(47%):Tertiary education(30%):Public administration- Education(13%):Pre-primary education(10%)

Theme(s)
Education for the knowledge economy(72%):Education for all(28%)

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The project constituted a second phase of an APL supporting a 10-year program whose overall program objective was to improve the quality and relevance of the Armenian school system to meet the challenges of the knowledge society. (See note on progress toward the overall program objective in the discussion of outcomes under Objective 1.)

The objective of this project was "to support the second and third phases of the Recipient's Program through: (a) enhancing school learning in general education and improving the school readiness of children entering primary education; and (b) supporting the integration of the tertiary education system into the European higher education area" (Financing Agreement, 6/05/2009). The Project Appraisal Document's statement of development objectives is consistent with the statement in the Financing Agreement (PAD, p. 5).



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

No

- c. Components

Component 1: Enhancing the Quality of General Education (Appraisal US\$15.73 million; Actual US\$16.59 million)

Subcomponent 1.1: Promoting school readiness and equal opportunities at the start of general education by developing and/or enhancing kindergarten (KG) classes for children, and training of preschool teachers.

Subcomponent 1.2: Supporting further improvements in the quality of education through improved teacher in-service training and professional development by establishing a national system for the professional development of teachers and school principals, creating a school improvement network, and provision of school improvement grants.

Subcomponent 1.3: Support to the integration of information and communications technology (ICT) in the teaching and learning process by equipping all schools with up-to-date technologies, connecting them through the internet; and providing technical assistance and training to the schools to use these technologies effectively to deliver the curriculum and to enhance and facilitate student learning.

Subcomponent 1.4: Supporting the implementation of high school reform, including through the establishment of resource centers in high schools (libraries plus computer labs); training of high school librarians, school teachers, and principals; curriculum and syllabi design; capacity building of education departments; and design of counseling guidance services.

Component 2: Supporting Tertiary Education Reforms in the Context of the Bologna Agenda (Appraisal US\$6.02 million; Actual US\$6.48 million)

Subcomponent 2.1: Establishment and strengthening of the National Quality Assurance System by developing quality assurance policy, standards, and guidelines; planning and implementation for orientation sessions for external evaluators; organizing study tours to learn from similar activities at other agencies; piloting the accreditation of selected universities and expanding to other universities; disseminating progress of quality assurance activities in Armenia and abroad; coordinating public awareness campaigns related to quality assurance and the Bologna process; and capacity-building of stakeholders, mainly university units and student representatives.

Subcomponent 2.2: Developing a tertiary education management information system to serve as a unifying system among universities (TTL clarification, 5/24/2016)

Subcomponent 2.3: Strengthening the capacity to implement a sustainable financing system

Subcomponent 2.4: Reforming pre-service teacher education through technical assistance and twinning arrangements between the Armenia State Pedagogical University and the Consortium of Pedagogical Institutes with an international higher education institution; and upgrading teaching facilities and equipment in these institutes to support modernization of primary school teacher education.

Component 3: Project Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation (Appraisal US\$3.25 million; Actual US\$1.71 million)

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

Project Cost. At appraisal, the total project cost was estimated at US\$31.25 million, out of which US\$30.97 million was disbursed (99%). The remaining balance was cancelled. A level-2 restructuring on 8/7/2012 introduced small re-allocations among the components through the reduction of US\$1.5 million from the Project Management and Monitoring Component in order to expand preschool education and to include additional universities.

Financing/Borrower Contribution. The project was financed through an IDA credit of US\$25 million, and a Borrower contribution of US\$6.25 million.

Dates. The project was appraised on 02/09/2009, became effective on 10/02/2009, and underwent a mid-term review on 2/14/2012. The project was amended twice. A level-2 restructuring on 07/07/2012 revised the activities, reallocated resources among the components, and adjusted the results framework. A second level-2 restructuring extended the project closing date from 11/30/2014 to 11/30/2015 to pilot the Competitive Innovation Fund, and to complete grant audits and project activities.



3. Relevance of Objectives & Design

a. Relevance of Objectives

Relevance of objectives is rated High. Since the 1990s, the Government has increased access and improved the quality of general secondary education while boosting public spending on the secondary sub-sector. The focused investment has considerably contributed to the development and improvement of general secondary education, but has also resulted in the relative neglect of other education sub-sectors. Therefore the government has embarked on a reform program supported by two APLs to improve the education sector as a whole, including tertiary education. The project's priorities were consistent with the government's priorities, the Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (6/30/2004), and the Sustainable Development Program (12/02/2008). The Country Assistance Strategy aimed at supporting the government in improving the quality and efficiency of basic public services and at reducing poverty through education, health and infrastructure reforms. The Sustainable Development Program further prioritized the efforts to reduce poverty and to ensure universally accessible quality education from pre-school to higher education. Also, the Bank carried out a Public Expenditure Review in 2008 with a focus on Tertiary Education, and followed up with technical assistance in the areas of quality assurance and higher education financing, thus providing a strong foundation to the expanded agenda for APL2. The Country Partnership Strategy for FY2009–2012, highlighted the Bank's support to Armenia's education sector as a key priority, and placed particular emphasis on improving the quality and accessibility of preschool education, improving the quality of high school education, and strengthening higher education through integration with the European Higher Education Area in line with the Bologna Process. Continuity was also maintained as the project pursued the above priorities to improve education quality and relevance that were initiated under APL1, while also extending the APL2 agenda to incorporate preschool education and higher education (PAD, p. 1). The project objectives remain relevant to the Country Partnership Strategy for FY2014–2017, and to the country's development priorities specified in the Armenia Development Strategy for 2014–2025. Also, the Employment Strategy 2013–2018 of the Republic of Armenia aims to improve education and training to address constraints to job creation and bottlenecks for relevant skill formation.

Rating
High

b. Relevance of Design

Relevance of design is rated Substantial. Overall, the project design lays out a coherent results chain reflecting a plausible pathway to attain the stated objectives. Improvements in teacher training, professional development, and supportive environment through ICT use, connectivity, libraries, computer labs, and networking arrangements would contribute to the desired learning improvements. Pre-school education contributes to improved school readiness for children as documented in the global experience. The activities promoting quality assurance in tertiary education, knowledge management, and twinning arrangements among universities would be expected to support tertiary education reforms in the context of the Bologna agenda. However, the design of the Tertiary Education Component was less logical, in that it called for the introduction of the Tertiary Education Management Information System (MIS) in 183 higher and vocational education institutions, but it did not provide for a mandate, requirements, or incentives for universities to actually use the system.

Rating
Substantial

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

Objective 1

Objective
Enhance school learning in general education.



Rationale

Outputs:

The project provided technical assistance and grants to support quality improvements in teachers' in-service training and professional development, and supported the integration of ICT in teaching and learning processes; developed a Teacher Professional Development System and a School Leadership Development System; and developed a network for National School Improvement through the creation of a Union of School Centers to provide a supportive professional environment. Learning opportunities were provided to 12,165 teachers in professional and pedagogical development and in innovative teaching methods. Internet connectivity was provided to 459 schools, resulting in the inter-connection of all 1,459 public schools in the country. 30 remote schools were connected through a General Packet Radio Service. 1,400 schools received hardware for school management purposes. Laboratories for four subjects, including mathematics and natural sciences, were developed for middle and high schools, and were accessed by the schools through a server. The project provided training to 1,400 teachers in 105 high schools. Teachers also received training in subject-specific use of ICT. The project trained 1,388 school representatives, mostly principals, on the use of the school management information system that was installed in all public schools and some private schools; and established resource centers (libraries and computer labs) in 105 high schools and provided training to all 105 high school librarians. A School Directors Training Manual was published and distributed to all schools, and the material was used for receiving school director certification. Curriculum and syllabi design for each stream facilitated a better pathway between high school and tertiary education. The project supported refurbishment improvements in 195 schools. Technical assistance was provided to design and train on counseling and guidance services in high schools.

Outcomes:

At project closing, the PDO indicator "share of test-takers passing the 9th grade graduation exam" increased from 96.7 percent to 99.8 percent, exceeding the target of 99 percent. The "gross graduation rate in upper secondary education" increased from a baseline of 85.95 percent to reach its target of 90 percent. The teaching style and behavior of teachers in the classroom have changed (ICR, p.13). By project closing, the majority of trained teachers were applying innovative teaching methodology in the classroom; and the percentage of teachers solely using the presentation/recitation mode of teaching decreased to 32 percent in 2012. By 2015, 74 percent of teachers were using computer and other digital materials, as compared to 25 percent in 2008. The project helped with the development of Article 26 of the Law on General Education of Armenia regarding the provisions of teacher attestation in the country, as well as the Decree on Awarding Ranks to School Teachers. In addition to teachers' skills, the laboratories, libraries, connectivity, and the efforts of school principals in designing and implementing school development plans have all contributed to learning improvements.

Note on the overall Program supported by the two APLs: The objective of the overall program was to improve the quality and relevance of the Armenian school system to meet the challenges of the knowledge society. Progress was substantial under both APL phases, based on the outcomes achieved. The first phase (APL 1) enhanced the efficiency of sector management, upgraded the quality and relevance of education, and improved the evaluation of sector performance. APL1 developed a National Curriculum Framework, standards, and syllabi, created an Assessment and Testing Center, established the National Center of Education Technology, expanded in-service teacher training, increased student-teacher ratios, and enhanced school autonomy. The second phase (APL2) continued to focus on the reforms of the general education system, and also addressed key issues in both preschool and higher education. Also, several aspects of the program's progress were reflected in the triggers that were met, such as: minimum standards approved by ministerial decree; implementation of a comprehensive teacher education and professional development strategy; national plan for educational assessment adopted by decree; policy for addressing the needs of special education students adopted by law; and implementation of a plan for school management and inspection. While being aligned with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Program and the Country Partnership Strategy, the program was responsive to the government's request for support on an expanded sector agenda.

Rating

Substantial

Objective 2

Objective

Improve school readiness of children entering primary education.

Rationale



Outputs:

The project supported 280 micro-projects to enhance preschool education for 280 disadvantaged communities. The project allowed children aged 5-6 years to participate in a kindergarten (KG) class, either through the establishment of a KG classroom in the local primary school, or through an enhanced existing preschool. The project provided training for all teachers of preschool institutions and administrative staff in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, and the Step-by-Step Foundation.

Outcomes:

The project was able to support a preschool in each of 280 disadvantaged communities, exceeding its initial plan to serve 140 communities. It has benefited 35,451 pre-school children, exceeding its initial plan to reach 8,750 children, as it was possible to complete micro-projects with less financing and therefore expand coverage to other communities. At project closing, all of the preschools continued to be operational, and pre-school education activities have been sustained through the Strategic Program for Reforms in Preschool Education of the Republic of Armenia (2008–2015), which includes per-student financing arrangements that would promote the sustainability of preschools beyond the project.

The Early Development Index (EDI) score was 19% higher in children reached by the project compared with a control group. The PDO indicator “Improved EDI scores of students in KGs and schools receiving the grants with regard to students in the control group” did not provide a quantitative target, but anticipated a higher score in the treatment group.

Rating
Substantial

Objective 3

Objective

Support the integration of the tertiary education system into the European higher education area.

Rationale

Outputs:

The project established an External Quality Assurance mechanism, and provided for awareness campaigns related to quality assurance and the Bologna Process through workshops, public talks, and mass media. The project supported the development of quality assurance policy, standards, guidelines, orientation and briefing sessions for external evaluators, and study tours to the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Belgium. The project developed a Tertiary Education Management Information System in 183 higher and vocational education institutions and provided training to participating universities for using the system. The project supported twinning arrangements between the Armenia State Pedagogical University and Oulu University in Finland, and the reforming of pre-service teacher education. The project provided teaching facilities, equipment, technical assistance and training.

Outcomes:

Overall, progress towards the objective was limited. The PDO indicator “Standings of Armenia in the Bologna Scorecard improving from Orange and Yellow to Green” was partially achieved. It tracked the implementation of the Bologna Process using indicators that carry value judgment expressed through colors, reaching a score of 56% compared with a target of 75%. The Tertiary Education Management Information System was not operational. There was no mandate for universities to use this system. While the precise reasons for the lack of such a mandate in the design are unknown (TTL clarification, 5/24/2016), there were several possible explanations. Each university operated according to its own needs, on an ad hoc basis, and it may have been difficult to require the use of a unifying system. Also there were capacity constraints at the university level, notably in human resources; and the MIS technical assistance may not have been fully effective. Related training was more theoretical than practical (ICR, p. 27). Therefore, universities did not produce the annual strategic plan or self-assessment reports that were expected to use the system’s data. Low use of the system has also impacted the national report on higher education statistics that was envisaged to be available at the end of the academic year 2015–2016. Only some institutions had started data entry, and in many cases, the data entered was incomplete. The information provided at project closing was also inadequate for the Ministry of Education and Science annual report on higher education for planning and budgeting purposes (ICR, p. 15). The planned committees of users to propose areas of priority to the software developers and to facilitate the exchange of information were not formed, but a feedback mechanism/help desk was developed.

There were areas where progress was noted, such as the accreditation of 15 higher education institutions, the establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Units in all 26 higher education institutions, and the piloting of the Competitive Innovation Fund. The government pursued support for student loan activities through different funding sources, and, by project closing, 14 commercial banks had been



selected to provide loans to students on various terms.

Rating
Modest

5. Efficiency

The PAD's economic and financial analysis provided limited data and did not attempt to quantify the Economic Rate of Return or the Net Present Value, or conduct expected benefit/cost analysis for the project components (ICR, p. 15). The economic and financial analysis provided a general discussion on the expected cost-effectiveness of investing in preschool education; cost-effectiveness of investing in the ICT network and its integration in the teaching and learning process; and cost-efficiency and quality improvement of high school reforms. The ICR team conducted a benefit/cost analysis for the investment in preschool education. The analysis reasonably assumed that the expansion and quality enhancement of pre-primary education leads to more years of schooling and progress to higher education, which in turn would lead to higher productivity and income. One year of preschool correlated with one half-year increase in further schooling. Using the 2013 Integrated Living Conditions Survey data, the returns to one more year of schooling were found to be 2.8 percent for males and 3.6 percent for females. A half-year increase in schooling -- the potential benefit of one year of preschool -- resulted in a benefit/cost ratio of 5.04 for males and 6.83 for females. These estimates were close to the benefit/cost ratios of preschool interventions in other countries. According to the ICR, the benefit/cost analysis was not conducted for other subcomponents as they were primarily capacity building in nature, and a quantifiable analysis would have required making many arbitrary assumptions (ICR, p. 16 and TTL clarification 5/24/2016). At the same time, positive trends were noted in the efficiency of implementation. Administrative costs were half of the original projections, and preschool coverage expanded to more beneficiaries than originally anticipated. However, since the efficiency of a number of key project investments was not evaluated (ICR, p. 17), and because of inefficiencies in the implementation of the Tertiary Education component, overall project efficiency is rated Modest.

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		0	0 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

The relevance of objectives is rated High. The objectives remain responsive to the country's priorities and to the Bank's Country Partnership Strategy while providing strategic continuity to APL1. Improving the quality and relevance of education at all levels remain key priorities contributing to accelerated poverty reduction and economic growth. Relevance of Design is rated Substantial as the project's design was consistent with its objectives and with the results framework, but with some shortcomings in the results chain of the Tertiary Education



Component. Objective 1 to enhance school learning in general education is rated Substantial as demonstrated by related improvements. Objective 2 to improve school readiness of children entering primary education is rated Substantial as the project has enhanced pre-school education and children's readiness. Objective 3 to support the integration of the tertiary education system into the European higher education area is rated Modest as progress was limited. Concurrently, the project has generated substantial institutional strengthening in the education sector. Efficiency is rated Modest as a number of key project investments were not evaluated and there were inefficiencies in the implementation of the tertiary education activities. Taken together, these ratings indicate 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

According to the ICR (p. 19), the follow-up Education Improvement Project continues to support the project objectives and APL2 activities. Preschool education has been sustained through the Strategic Program for Reforms in Preschool Education (2008–2015). Local communities have also absorbed some financial and implementation responsibilities. At the same time, certain financial risks remain. The macroeconomic risk in the region may affect the development outcome if funding decreases in the context of a tighter fiscal envelope, and universities may not be able to maintain innovative projects under the Competitive Innovation Fund.

- a. Risk to Development Outcome Rating
Modest

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

Overall quality at entry was adequate, but with some shortcomings. Project preparation was informed by extensive consultations with key stakeholders. Strategic relevance was high. The design drew on lessons learned from in-country experience, particularly regarding the piloting of the preschool micro-projects and the high school reform under APL1. Lessons from international experience were also useful in the areas of preschool education, student loan schemes, and the competitive innovation fund. The Bank had mobilized an adequate skill mix that represented a wide range of sector and technical expertise, including education economics, early childhood education, higher education, and ICT. A Quality Enhancement Review was conducted and the recommendations were integrated into project design, including the formulation of the PDO. Risk assessment and mitigation reflected a good understanding of the education sector. There were shortcomings in the M&E design, notably for baselines, targets, and indicator sharpness. The ICR notes that a disbursement condition requiring all the heads of components and subcomponents to be in place may have been a sign that the project was not fully ready for implementation upon signing (ICR, p. 8).

Quality-at-Entry Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

Overall, the extent to which the Bank fulfilled its fiduciary role, and identified and addressed challenges to the achievement of outcomes, was adequate. The decisions to restructure twice showed pro-activity and responsiveness. However, the Borrower noted that during the two years following effectiveness, the Bank team was slow in responding to communications from the Project Implementation Unit (PIU).



Quality of Supervision Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

9. Assessment of Borrower Performance

a. Government Performance

The government exhibited a high level of political commitment to the project, and was closely engaged in working with the Bank. The government has ensured a coordinated approach among partners. The education minister and deputy ministers guided the project cycle at all stages. The minister participated in the launch of multiple project activities, thus promoting stakeholder engagement and project visibility. Counterpart funding was consistently available despite fiscal pressures. The ICR notes that both the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education and Science fulfilled their roles as effective collaborative partners in project implementation. The government shifted some project activities, such as the student loan scheme, to other government funding sources, but these were effectively completed outside the APL scope. The government did not require the use of the Tertiary Education Management Information System, thus reducing the incentives for the universities to make it operational.

Government Performance Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

b. Implementing Agency Performance

The Ministry of Education and Science provided overall leadership to the project and to the reform process, while the Center for Education Projects (CEP) served as the day-to-day Project Implementation Unit. The CEP implemented project activities and resolved most implementation issues. The CEP was committed to its fiduciary responsibility. It handled several complaint cases effectively. Records were well kept and were consistent with procurement guidelines. Disbursement data was up-to-date. CEP specialists took part in training activities. The transition of CEP directors was seamless (ICR, p. 21). Despite challenges in the availability of skilled human resources, CEP was able to ensure that it had the necessary technical expertise and administrative capacity to capably perform its functions. However, moderate issues in procurement persisted during most of the implementation period.

Implementing Agency Performance Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Borrower Performance Rating
Moderately Satisfactory

10. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The project's design built upon the previous APL and expanded it. Overall, the indicators reflected the objectives by measuring school learning enhancement, school readiness for children entering primary education, and the integration of the tertiary education system into the European higher education area. The basic arrangements for data collection and results reporting were appropriate. Overall, the results framework was adequate. However, there were moderate shortcomings mainly in the intermediate outcome indicators, where baselines were not available and targets were set late during implementation (TTL clarification, 5/24/2016). Examples are the number of high school students who visited resource centers, and the number of teachers having participated in pedagogical programs. For the PDO-level indicators, the early development index (for the KG children level) remained without a target.



b. M&E Implementation

Excluding the issues related to the Tertiary Education Management Information System, which was not utilized (as discussed in Section 4), M&E was in general adequately implemented by CEP. Data collection was appropriate. Project indicators were regularly monitored. Initial measurement limitations were addressed during implementation. The PDO indicator “Improved EDI scores of students in KGs and schools receiving the grants with regard to students in the control group” was monitored using a series of studies that measured the development outcomes of children before and after their one-year participation in preschool and those of a control group of children, but the outcome of the control group was measured only once, .

c. M&E Utilization

M&E findings were regularly reported by the Borrower and documented in the Bank’s Implementation Status and Results Reports. The findings were effectively used to monitor and improve performance on the ground. M&E strengthening extended beyond the project, as the benefits have also accrued to the National Center for Education Technology, which has strengthened its capacity to collect, analyze, and report on sector performance indicators. Its portal provided up-to-date information on sectoral achievements and challenges. M&E arrangements, strengthened by the project, were sustained by CEP, which continues to carry out M&E under the Armenia Education Improvement Project (P130182), approved by the Board on March 13, 2014.

M&E Quality Rating
Substantial

11. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was classified under environmental category “C”. No safeguard policies were triggered by the project.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Fiduciary Management. Financial management arrangements at CEP were adequate overall, and acceptable to the Bank during the life of the project. This included organization and staffing arrangements, planning and budgeting, accounting, flow of funds, financial reporting, and external audits. The CEP maintained an adequate internal control system. The few secondary deficiencies in the internal control system were effectively addressed, and the project’s fiduciary management was consistently rated satisfactory during implementation. The Interim Financial Reports were submitted in a timely manner, reviewed, and found to be acceptable to the Bank. The auditor issued unmodified (clean) opinions on all financial statements, and no substantive issues were raised by the auditor in the management letters. Also, all of the financial statements of the Competitive Innovation Fund received unmodified opinions.

Procurement. The procurement process was generally considered moderately satisfactory for the majority of the project implementation period (ICR, p.11). There were delays, but notably in the early phases of implementation. Occasionally, a lack of competition resulted in rebidding. At times, difficulties were faced in filling staff positions, and responsibilities were additional to the primary job duties. The Borrower stated that there were delays in the Bank’s “no objection” during the first two years of implementation. As of 2011, the ICR notes that the procurement process improved, and proceeded more effectively than the initial phases.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

None observed.



d. Other

12. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	---
Risk to Development Outcome	Modest	Modest	---
Bank Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	---
Borrower Performance	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	The government did not mandate the use of the Tertiary Education Management Information System, thus reducing the incentives for the universities to make the investment fully operational. Procurement issues were noted throughout the project implementation period.
Quality of ICR		High	---

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

The project provided a number of lessons (ICR, p. 22), and the following lessons are drawn from the ICR and adapted by IEG:

- The Bank's long-term engagement in the education sector provides a robust platform for broader dialogue, and constitutes a catalyst for key sector reforms (IEG Note: The long-term engagement under two APLs has facilitated broad reform involving all sub-sectors of education).
- Teacher professional development can significantly benefit from acquiring best practices through collaborative settings and international partnerships (IEG Note: This lesson was demonstrated by the effective twinning arrangement between the Armenia State Pedagogical University and Oulu University in Finland).

14. Assessment Recommended?

No

15. Comments on Quality of ICR

The ICR is analytical and results-oriented. It candidly captures the experience of the operation with a thorough account of its implementation performance. The report is clearly written, well organized, and concise. The ICR adequately elucidates the links between the APL phases. The lessons derive from project experience and should prove useful throughout the sector and region. The ICR's overall quality is rated High.



- a. Quality of ICR Rating
High