

1. Project Data:		Date Posted : 02/03/2015	
Country:	Uzbekistan		
Project ID:	P107845	Appraisal	Actual
Project Name:	Second Basic Education	Project Costs (US\$M):	36.0 26.4*
L/C Number:		Loan/Credit (US\$M):	28.0 25.5
Sector Board :	Education	Cofinancing (US\$M):	
Cofinanciers :		Board Approval Date :	06/23/2009
		Closing Date :	03/31/2014 03/31/2014
Sector(s):	Primary education (50%); Pre-primary education (20%); Secondary education (20%); Public administration- Education (10%)		
Theme(s):	Education for all (40%); Rural services and infrastructure (20%); Participation and civic engagement (20%); Public expenditure; financial management and procurement (20%)		
Prepared by :	Reviewed by :	ICR Review Coordinator :	Group:
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2. Project Objectives and Components:

a. Objectives:

According to the Financing Agreement (page 4) and the Project Appraisal Document (page 9), the objective of the project was as follows:

- To continue to support the government's efforts to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning through (i) targeted interventions in selected general secondary schools and preschools in poor, rural areas; (ii) development of institutional capacity to assess student learning; and (iii) adoption of predictable and transparent school budgets in selected oblasts .

Due to a project restructuring in December 2012 in which key outcome indicators and targets were revised, a split outcome rating is required for this project.

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

Yes

If yes, did the Board approve the revised objectives /key associated outcome targets?

No

c. Components:

For the components below, the "appraisal" amount represents the total project cost for the component (i.e. Credit + counterpart financing). However, the ICR does not provide data on the actual counterpart financing amount per component, and therefore the "actual" amount represents the Credit portion of the component only .

1. Providing Learning Materials and Resources for Grades Five through Nine of General Secondary Schools
(Appraisal: US\$ 29.9 million; Actual: US\$ 22.5 million): This component aimed to improve the quality of teaching

and learning through the effective use of new learning materials . Activities were to include the preparation of proposals by school boards to request specific learning materials for grades 5 to 9, according to a list of eligible items (including books, science equipment, and some information technology equipment). 1,501 schools in poor, rural areas were expected to benefit from these activities .

2. Strengthening School-Based Training for Teachers and Directors in Preschools and General Secondary Schools (Appraisal: US\$ 1.4 million; Actual: US\$ 0.2 million): This component aimed to change teaching approaches toward a more interactive, student-centered approach, in order to improve learning outcomes . Activities were to include the development of teacher training strategies and materials; provision of training to school directors and teachers; and conducting of study tours to other countries .

3. Strengthening School Boards and Providing Competitive Grants to Selected Schools for School Improvement (Appraisal: US\$ 2.7 million; Actual: US\$ 2.0 million): This component aimed to increase involvement of school boards to improve the learning environment . Activities were to include support to school boards to develop proposals for school improvement plans, including libraries and after -school programs . 500 schools were expected to benefit from these activities .

4. Improving Education Financing, Budgeting and Management (Appraisal: US\$ 0.5 million; Actual: US\$.002 million): This component aimed to improve education financing in six oblasts, through implementation of a per-capita financing approach . Activities were to include provision of training on school budget planning and establishment of a school financing management system .

5. Supporting Project Management and Results Management (Appraisal: US\$ 1.5 million; Actual: US\$ 0.8 million): This component aimed to support national capacity to assess learning outcomes and evaluate project effectiveness . Activities were to include support for project management; conducting of national student learning assessments for Grades 4 and 8; and a classroom observation study .

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

Project Cost :

- The appraised project cost was US\$ 36.0 million. The actual project cost is reported in the ICR (page 21) as US\$ 26.4 million; however, this does not include the entire counterpart contribution . The appraised amount included government contributions in the form of tax and custom privileges .
- For Components 2 and 5, some project activities were dropped (study tours, national student assessment for Grade 8), and therefore project funds for these components were partially unspent .
- For Component 4, the planned project activity was to implement per-capita financing in six oblasts . However, the government decided to implement the activity in all oblasts using its own budget . A planned evaluation of the per-capita financing approach was not conducted . Therefore, the project funds for this component were largely unspent .

Financing :

- The project was to be financed by an IDA Credit of US\$ 28.0 million. The actual disbursement was US\$ 25.5 million.
- US\$ 2.5 million was cancelled from the Credit due to savings in the procurement of learning materials for schools.

Borrower contribution :

- The planned Borrower contribution was US\$ 8.0 million, most of which was allocated to Component 1 for distribution of procured learning materials to schools, and taxes and duties for the materials . The ICR does not provide information on the actual Borrower contribution, as the costs incurred were largely taxes and duties.

Dates:

- *December 2012*: The project was restructured following the mid-term review. Two of the three key outcome indicators were revised, including the associated targets . Outcome indicator 2 originally included student assessments for both Grade 4 and Grade 8; however, due to delays in procuring materials for Grade 8 students (and therefore the short time period remaining to impact Grade 8 learning), the indicator was revised to assess only Grade 4. Outcome indicator 3 originally included only six oblasts in a per capita financing pilot activity; however, due to the government's decision to implement this activity nationwide, the indicator was revised to encompass all oblasts .

3. Relevance of Objectives & Design:

a. Relevance of Objectives:

Relevance of the project objective is rated **High**. While the basic education enrollment rate is nearly universal, the quality of education has remained low, as reflected by poor learning outcomes. The school environment is considered inadequate, due to outdated teaching approaches, lack of proper learning materials, and inadequate school facilities. Inequitable school financing has also had a particular detrimental impact on rural schools. At the time of project appraisal, the project objective was highly consistent with the government's education sector plan - the School Education Development Program - which aimed to improve conditions of school facilities and learning materials, as well as provide teacher training. The project objective remains highly relevant to current country conditions and strategies, as the Bank's current Country Partnership Strategy (FY 2012-2015) highlights improved quality of basic education as a key results area.

b. Relevance of Design:

Relevance of the project design is rated **Substantial**, as planned project interventions were likely to lead to improved effectiveness of teaching and learning. The provision of learning materials (determined by schools themselves through a proposal process), particularly to less well-equipped rural schools, was likely to improve teaching and learning, alongside school-based teacher training interventions (to change teaching to a more student-centered approach) to improve teaching practices. Broader measures such as building capacity to assess student learning and improving school financing were also likely to have an impact through improving the overall school environment. The learning assessments, while a valuable activity in and of itself to build capacity, were not properly sequenced with key project outputs, and thus represent a missed opportunity to more clearly assess project impact.

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy):

To continue support the government's efforts to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning

Outputs

Targeted interventions in general secondary schools and preschools in poor rural areas

- Provision of learning materials, requested through grant proposals, to 2,198 schools. This surpassed the original target of 1,501 schools. The ICR (page 14) reports that the bulk of Grade 5-9 learning materials were received in the second half of the third year and at the beginning of the fourth year; the impact on learning outcomes during the project period was therefore limited.
- Development of teacher training materials. The materials were "widely lauded for their quality and usefulness, and broadly disseminated beyond the confines of the project," and the training course financed by the project was redesigned during implementation so that it could be used to satisfy formal in-service training requirements as mandated by the government (ICR, page 23).
- Training to 59,147 general secondary teachers, kindergarten teachers, and school directors on student-centered teaching approaches. This surpassed the target of 50,000 teachers trained. According to an independent evaluation, the "quality of the direct teacher training was high" (ICR, page v); however, only the first round of training (covering approximately 21,000 teachers) had been fully completed before the Grade 4 learning assessment was conducted. The impact of the training on learning outcomes during the project period is therefore unclear.
- Provision of school improvement grants to 500 school boards. This achieved the target of 500 school boards. However, 197 schools received only the first tranche, while the other 303 schools secured both tranches.
- Conducting of classroom teaching observations and school grants evaluation to assess impact.

Institutional capacity to assess student learning

- Conducting of national standardized assessments of student learning for Grade 4. The original activity also included Grade 8, but this was dropped in a project restructuring. The ICR (pages 13 and 27) reports that the Grade 4 assessment was "carried out but was not institutionalized," as the work was done mostly by consultants (with limited involvement of regular Ministry staff), and that there is no institutional niche for conducting this exercise.
- Study tours to other countries were not carried out as planned.

Adoption of predictable and transparent school budgeting

- Implementation of per capita financing approach nationwide. The original activity aimed to implement the approach in only six oblasts, but the government scaled up the activity nationwide in 2010 through its own

- funding and did not use project funds for this activity .
- An evaluation of the per-capital financing approach was not conducted as planned .

Outcomes

During the project restructuring, the project activities (and indicator) related to conducting a Grade 8 learning assessment were dropped. The original indicators included a Grade 8 assessment, but the revised indicators do not. A split rating is thereby assessed for project outcomes .

Achievement of the objective to improve the effectiveness of teaching is rated **Substantial** under both the *original* and *revised* targets, due to evidence of improved teaching practices . Achievement of the objective to improve the effectiveness of learning is rated **Modest** under both the *original* and *revised* targets, due to mixed outcomes in Grade 4 test scores (improvements in math, but no improvements in reading) and no evidence for impact on Grade 8 test scores (particularly as learning materials were not received by the schools until late into the project period). Also, the delivery of learning materials and the bulk of teacher training took place during the latter part of the project period, and therefore attribution to improved learning outcomes is weak .

Improved Teaching

Original target: **Substantial**

Revised target: **Substantial**

- 76.2% of general education teachers and 84.8% of preschool teachers in project schools were using the student-centered teaching approaches learned in training, surpassing the target of 60%. As the teaching approach was introduced by the project, the baseline is considered 0%.
- 93.8% of general education teachers in project schools were using the acquired learning materials effectively in the classrooms, surpassing the target of 50%. As the learning materials were provided by the project, the baseline is considered 0%.

Improved Learning

Original target: **Modest**

Revised target: **Modest**

- Standardized math test scores for Grade 4 students in project schools increased from 478 in 2009 to 514 in 2014. This compares favorably to scores for students in non -project schools, which increased from 487 to 496.
- Standardized reading test scores for Grade 4 students in project schools were 485 in 2009 and 482 in 2014. Although this represents essentially no change, students in non -project schools experienced a decrease from 511 to 485.
- There were no outcomes reported for Grade 8 students, although the bulk of direct interventions (Component 1) were provided to Grades 5-9.

5. Efficiency:

Efficiency is rated **Modest** due to insufficient information to demonstrate cost -effective use of project resources . Neither the PAD nor the ICR calculated an economic rate of return or net present value for the project . The ICR (page 15) suggests that the national implementation of per capita financing led to more efficient spending in the education system; however, as project funds were *not* used for this activity (the government decided to use its own resources), it is not considered evidence of efficient use of *project* resources.

For Component 1, savings of US\$ 9.53 million were realized in procurement of learning materials; therefore, an additional 694 schools were selected to receive school materials, for a total of 2,198 schools. However, there were significant delays in delivering the materials, and the benefits derived from this project intervention are not known due to lack of data . This implementation shortcoming also contributed to the dropping of a key project activity: the Grade 8 learning assessment.

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:

Outcome under the original targets: **Moderately Unsatisfactory**

Relevance of the project objective is rated High and relevance of the project design is rated Substantial . Achievement of the objective to improve the effectiveness of teaching is rated Substantial due to evidence of improved teaching practices . However, achievement of the objective to improve the effectiveness of learning is rated Modest due to mixed outcomes on Grade 4 learning outcomes and the lack of data collected on Grade 8 learning outcomes . Also, the delivery of learning materials and the bulk of teacher training took place during the latter part of the project period, and therefore attribution to improved learning outcomes is weak . Efficiency is rated Modest.

During the project restructuring, the project activities (and indicator) related to conducting a Grade 8 learning assessment were dropped . Therefore, the original indicator included a Grade 8 assessment, but the revised indicator did not . The project outcome under the revised indicator is as follows :

Outcome under the revised targets: **Moderately Unsatisfactory**

Relevance of the project objective is rated High and relevance of the project design is rated Substantial . Achievement of the objective to improve the effectiveness of teaching is rated Substantial due to evidence of improved teaching practices . However, achievement of the objective to improve the effectiveness of learning is rated Modest due to mixed outcomes on Grade 4 learning outcomes and weak attribution to project interventions . Efficiency is rated Modest.

According to OPCS/IEG harmonized guidelines, when a project is restructured such that outcome indicators and/or associated targets are revised, a split rating determines the project's overall outcome rating, according to the amount of the Credit that disbursed before and after the restructuring . In the case of this project, as the ratings were the same for the period before and after the restructuring, the combined outcome rating is also the same.

a. Outcome Rating : Moderately Unsatisfactory

7. Rationale for Risk to Development Outcome Rating:

The government has demonstrated strong support for the overall approaches to improving teaching and learning in the schools, as well the per capita financing approach included in the project design . Although an institutional "niche" for learning assessments has yet to be firmly established, the ICR (page 16) reports that an upcoming operation under the Global Partnership for Education will continue to implement standardized assessments for Grades 4 and 9 . Also, while classroom observations showed that teachers were using the training and materials provided through the project, the extent to which the teacher training activities will be incorporated into national in-service training programs is unclear .

a. Risk to Development Outcome Rating : Moderate

8. Assessment of Bank Performance:

a. Quality at entry:

The project design and implementation arrangements built directly upon experience from the prior Basic Education Project I (2006-2011), which was the first of a series of two projects in basic education and included triggers for progressing to the second phase . Lessons drawn from this experience included the longer time frame needed for decision-making and procurement processes, the preparation of the list of eligible learning materials for Component 1 ahead of project effectiveness, and development of institutional capacity to follow Bank fiduciary procedures . The risk assessment addressed substantial governance risks; however, other specific institutional capacity risks such as institutional ownership of student assessments or capacity to launch multiple activities in a timely manner were not identified and subsequently materialized as implementation shortcomings . The original M&E design did not include clear baseline or target figures for the key outcome of improved learning .

Quality-at-Entry Rating : Moderately Unsatisfactory

b. Quality of supervision:

The Bank team conducted an in-depth mid-term review that resulted in a project restructuring, including a revision of the key outcome indicators . The restructuring aimed to increase development impact by using project savings to broaden coverage of key project activities (Component 1). Most project activities under the revised project were implemented, albeit with delays due to weak capacity of the implementing units .

During the project period, the government made a decision to implement per -capita financing nationwide, using its own resources rather than project funds . The ICR does not discuss whether this was an outcome of Bank policy dialogue and support, and the activity remained a part of the key project indicators . Also, as noted in the ICR (page 6), the rationale for dropping the national Grade 8 assessment "may not have been fully valid in that the exercise was not meant to be linked to the provision of teaching and learning materials for Grades 5 to 9"; in other words, conducting the assessment was in and of itself a valuable project activity regardless of whether other project activities would directly impact the results of the assessment .

Implementation Supervision and Results reports reflect ratings almost entirely in the satisfactory range, which suggests lack of candor in supervision reports, given the final moderately unsatisfactory rating given in the ICR itself. There were no problems reported with fiduciary compliance .

Quality of Supervision Rating : Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating : Moderately Unsatisfactory

9. Assessment of Borrower Performance:

a. Government Performance:

The government demonstrated strong support for the project, as reflected by its fulfilling of triggers to progress from the prior Basic Education phase 1 project to this phase 2 project. A In addition, the government made the decision to expand the per -capita financing approach nationwide using its own resources, rather than implement the originally planned pilot in six oblasts using project funds . While the government provided counterpart funds to cover taxes and duties, it did not fund overseas study tours as planned.

Government Performance Rating Moderately Satisfactory

b. Implementing Agency Performance:

There was no separate project implementation unit established for this project; rather, implementation responsibility lay with the Ministry of Public Education, with the Deputy Minister acting as project director . Although most project activities were implemented as planned, there were some significant shortcomings, as reported in the ICR (page 10): slow resolution of issues related to School Boards led to only 303 of 500 targeted schools receiving their full grants; the Grade 8 assessment was not conducted; teacher training took place later than expected; and procurement delays resulted in learning materials arriving later than scheduled. According to the ICR, fiduciary compliance was overall satisfactory . although there were significant delays in procuring and delivering the learning materials to schools .

Implementing Agency Performance Rating : Moderately Unsatisfactory

Overall Borrower Performance Rating : Moderately Unsatisfactory

10. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization:

a. M&E Design:

The original M&E design included relevant and measurable indicators, although the key indicator on improved learning outcomes did not have clear baselines or targets established prior to project period . However, the revised M&E design had several shortcomings . The impact of one of the major project activities - provision of learning materials for grades 5-9 - was not captured in the revised results framework . Also, while the implementation of per-capita financing was expanded nationwide and reflected in the revised project indicator, the government financed this expansion with its own resources, rather than project funds, and therefore the relevance of this indicator was low . The ICR (page 11) also notes that funding allocation for assessments was inadequate.

b. M&E Implementation:

Project monitoring was conducted regularly, and one of the assessments of Grade 4 learning outcomes was carried out as planned. However, significant shortcomings included the following :

- The Grade 4 learning assessment was only conducted once (in year four) rather than twice (in years two and four).
- The Grade 4 learning assessment was conducted *before* the teacher training was completed .
- The Grade 8 learning assessments were dropped in the project restructuring .

c. M&E Utilization:

The ICR (page 11) cites the following examples of how M&E information was utilized :

- Monitoring data on teacher training was "regularly reviewed with the Ministry of Public Education, leading to improvements in model design, revision of materials, reinforcement /replacement of trainers, and decisions on how the training would be incorporated into national systems ."
- Monitoring data on school improvement plans "highlighted difficulties in releasing the final tranche representing 30 percent of grants' allocation to school boards benefiting from the first wave of school grants. These were discussed and eventually resolved ."

M&E Quality Rating : Modest

11. Other Issues

a. Safeguards:

The project was classified as an Environmental Category "C" project, and therefore neither environmental safeguards nor any other safeguard policies were triggered .

b. Fiduciary Compliance:

Financial management: Financial management was rated in the satisfactory range throughout the project period, with no major problems reported in the ICR . One issue was the identification of ineligible project expenses in relation to income tax expenses, but the ICR (page 12) reports that this issue was eventually clarified, and a reimbursement from the borrower to the Bank is pending .

Procurement: Procurement performance was rated moderately satisfactory throughout the project period, with no major problems reported in the ICR . While procurement capacity improved over time and even led to significant procurement savings for learning materials, there were considerable delays in the delivery of those materials. The ICR does not provide a clear reason for the long delay .

c. Unintended Impacts (positive or negative):

None reported.

d. Other:

12. Ratings:	ICR	IEG Review	Reason for Disagreement /Comments
Outcome:	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	
Risk to Development Outcome:	Moderate	Moderate	
Bank Performance :	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	
Borrower Performance :	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	There were significant implementation shortcomings, including the failure to conduct assessments for Grade 8, significant delays in conducting teacher training, and significant delays in procuring and delivering learning materials to the target schools.
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:

Lessons drawn from the ICR (pages 19-20):

- Sustainable institutional arrangements should be built into project design for key innovations that are introduced by the project. In the case of this project, there was insufficient attention given to ensuring that the student-centered teacher training and the learning assessments would be owned and sustained by the government after project closing. Project activities such as an analysis of existing systems and their shortcomings, and identification of institutional and financial requirements for scaling up, could have been included to ensure sustainability.
- A properly designed results framework is essential for project evaluation. In the case of this project, the project indicators were not clearly linked to the project interventions, nor were assessments properly aligned with the implementation schedule.

14. Assessment Recommended? Yes No

15. Comments on Quality of ICR:

The ICR has a strong focus on results and outcomes, as evidenced by the detailed discussion of the results framework and M&E. It is candid in discussing implementation shortcomings. Due to the revised outcome indicators/targets, a split rating should have been conducted to determine the overall outcome rating.

a. Quality of ICR Rating : Satisfactory

