I. Introduction and Context

Country Context

Djibouti is a small low-income country that is resource scarce with a rent economy that is overly dependent on its port and Foreign Direct Investments (FDI). The Government of Djibouti is exploring ways to diversify its economy through the development of the private sector and industries such as tourism, fishing, transport and financial services. In order to boost growth in these sectors, the Government aims to overcome the deep structural barriers such as the lack of basic infrastructure, the high labor cost and the lack of skilled workers through greater investments in infrastructure, private sector development and human capital.

Djibouti is endowed with a large young population which could be the engine for economic growth and social development. Almost 40 percent of its 850,000 population are under the age of 15. Poor in natural resources and with a relatively young population, Djibouti’s development will have to depend on its human resources. According to the latest UNDP rating, Djibouti ranks 150 out of 172 countries in its Human Development Index. Nonetheless, according to national reports and the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Monitor, Djibouti is on track and very likely to meet the MDGs for achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment, and reducing child mortality. The Gross Enrollment Rate in Primary Education increased from 40 percent in 1999/2000 to 75 percent in 2010/11. Secondary enrollments tripled during the same period.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

While access and coverage in education have improved, Djibouti still faces serious challenges in the quality of its education and relevance to the country’s development needs. The unemployment rate among youth is estimated at over 60 percent. Learning outcomes are weak in terms of quality and relevance to the economy. While the small size of the private sector and a saturated public sector may explain the demand side constraints to employment, there is wide consensus among all stakeholders that young people do not have the required skills for the labor market.

Cognizant of these challenges, Djibouti’s National Development Initiative (INDS) highlights improvement in access, quality and relevance of education as a priority. The INDS aims to ensure equitable access to quality education, in conformity with the requirements of the market. The second pillar of the INDS aims to develop human resources and improve access to basic services, in particular (i) improving access to education, while increasing the quality of education services, reducing gender and geographic disparities in the sector, and improving the management of the sector.

Moreover, the Government’s Education Strategy Schéma Directeur (2010-2019) focuses on ensuring access to education for all, guaranteeing quality and relevance of education and training, and establishing an efficient system that focuses on results. The strategy has six objectives: (i) strengthening access to and participation in education; (ii) reducing education and training disparities; (iii) improving the quality and relevance of teaching and learning; (iv) strengthening the professional development of teachers; (v) building planning, management, and guidance capacities at all levels; and (vi) supporting and improving financial sustainability. All of these objectives would be supported by the proposed Project. While acknowledging progress in the sector to date, the strategy underscores the need to put greater effort into expanding access; improving the quality and relevance of the education system vis-à-vis recent changes in the economic, scientific and technological context; and more efficient and effective use of public resources in the education sector. To this end, the strategy has three main strategic directions: Reinforce access and coverage of education; improve quality and relevance of teaching and learning; and reduce disparities in schooling and training.
Relationship to CAS

The Bank’s Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) also highlights improvements in the education sector as one of the key areas. The 2009 CAS is framed around three themes: Supporting growth; supporting human development and access to basic services; and supporting governance and public sector management. The CAS identifies the weaknesses in the education system and specifies planned assistance through an education and vocational training project (about $6 million) to further expand school access, improve retention, reduce repetition and dropout rates, and strengthen the capacity of the public training system to build the types of skills needed by employers.

II. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s)

II. Proposed PDO/Results

A. Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Development Objective of the project is to strengthen institutional capacity for improved management of the education system. This would be carried out through reinforcement of the institutional organization and systems, applying management tools and training of human resources.

Key Results

The key results are: (i) an improved planning and management system through the implementation of results-based work programs; (ii) the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation system that provides systematic reporting on school performance and learning outcomes; (iii) the adoption of a new institutional framework for the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) directorate that facilitates effective implementation of the TVET strategy and action plan; (iv) the establishment of a system for the distribution and management of textbooks.

III. Preliminary Description

Concept Description

The Project would have two main components:

Reinforcing institutional capacity. Capacity constraints in management as well as monitoring and evaluation of the education system have been identified and acknowledged at the highest level and are part of the country’s development strategy as well as the Education Strategy. Therefore, the Project would aim to reinforce the capacity of the Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MNEVT) through the following areas: (i) strengthening management, monitoring and evaluation by introducing management tools such as annual work programs, helping the ministry organize and coordinate its activities between the various departments and levels, and clarifying roles and accountability structures; (ii) provide technical assistance and tools to improve collection and reporting of education outputs and learning outcomes; (iii) strengthening the management structure of the TVET Department through material resources and capacity building activities and supporting the establishment of a governance structure that will have better links with the private sector. The Project may also pilot some activities to develop skills required by the labor market; and (iv) supporting the development of a strategy and system for improved distribution, maintenance and management of textbooks. The Project may also support the piloting of digital textbooks in some schools, including incorporating a strong impact evaluation mechanism to measure the effectiveness of the digital approach.

Consolidating efforts in increasing quality to education. The Government of Djibouti has expressed the need to continue its efforts in expanding access and quality in basic education. The Bank, through earlier projects in the education sector, has invested in building primary and middle schools. The government has asked the Bank to assist in providing computer classrooms and other necessary rooms in one of the IDA financed middle schools to further enhancing quality in learning and fostering a better school environment. This component will therefore focus on supporting activities in improving quality at the lower secondary level. It will include the provision of school equipment and learning material and some construction work within the school compound that would enhance the school environment.

IV. Safeguard Policies that might apply

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