



## 1. Project Data

<b>Project ID</b> P113435	<b>Project Name</b> BD: Primary Education Dev. Program III		
<b>Country</b> Bangladesh	<b>Practice Area(Lead)</b> Education	<b>Additional Financing</b> P150669,P150669	
<b>L/C/TF Number(s)</b> IDA-49990,IDA-55520,TF-A0977	<b>Closing Date (Original)</b> 31-Dec-2015	<b>Total Project Cost (USD)</b> 709,952,079.45	
<b>Bank Approval Date</b> 25-Aug-2011	<b>Closing Date (Actual)</b> 31-Dec-2017		
	<b>IBRD/IDA (USD)</b>	<b>Grants (USD)</b>	
Original Commitment	300,000,000.00	100,000,000.00	
Revised Commitment	659,706,055.66	90,833,333.36	
Actual	619,118,746.09	90,833,333.36	
<b>Prepared by</b> Eduardo Fernandez Maldonado	<b>Reviewed by</b> Judyth L. Twigg	<b>ICR Review Coordinator</b> Joy Behrens	<b>Group</b> IEGHC (Unit 2)

## 2. Project Objectives and Components

### a. Objectives

The objectives of the project were: (a) to increase participation and reduce social disparities in primary education; (b) to increase the number of children completing primary education and improve the quality of the learning environment and measurement of student learning; and (c) to improve effectiveness of resource use for primary education (Financing Agreement, Schedule 1, page 6).

For the sake of the assessment, IEG has parsed the Project Development Objective (PDO) into six objectives: 1) to increase participation in primary education; 2) to reduce social disparities in primary education; 3) to increase the number of children completing primary education; 4) to improve the quality of



the learning environment; 5) to improve the quality of measurement of student learning; and 6) to improve effectiveness of resource use for primary education.

Most outcome targets were increased, but they were increased commensurately with increased financing, hence a split rating is not required.

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

Yes

**Did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?**

No

**c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?**

No

**d. Components**

The Primary Education Development Program III (PEDP3) was to finance civil works, goods, non-consulting services, and recurrent costs through a Sector Wide approach (SWAp) with eight other development partners (DPs), to co-finance with the government the implementation of its primary education program (PEDP3) (PAD para 16, page 6).

As a full Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLI) approach was used to finance the PEDP3 SWAp, the project was designed with a single component entitled "Financing of the GoB PEDP3." In the government's program document, however, all eligible interventions under PEDP3 were grouped under three components (also called "Thrust Areas" in some of the documents) that were aligned with the program's objectives: Component 1: Improving the quality of the learning environment and the measurement of student learning; Component 2: Improving access and reducing social disparities; and Component 3: Improving program planning and management and strengthening institutions. During implementation, all interventions and sub-components (29 in total) were grouped into the following six *results areas* (ICR Annex 7a, page 49 Table a.) under the three components:

**Component 1: Improving the quality of the learning environment and the measurement of student learning.**

***Results Area 1: Learning Outcomes***

Subcomponents: 1) Each child learns; 2) School and classroom assessment; 3) Curriculum development; 4) Textbook distribution; 5) Information and communication technology (ICT) in education; and 6) Teacher education and development.

**Component 2: Improving access and reducing social disparities.**

***Results Area 2: Participation***

Subcomponents: 1) Alternative and second chance education; 2) Pre-primary education; 3) Inclusive education; 4) Education in emergencies; and 5) Communication and social mobilization.



**Results Area 3: Disparities**

Subcomponents: 1) Stipends (not financed with Bank funds); 2) School health and school feeding (not financed with Bank funds); 3) Needs-based school environment improvements; and 4) Needs-based infrastructure development.

**Component 3: Improving program planning and management and strengthening institutions.**

**Results Area 4: Decentralization**

Subcomponents: 1) Strengthening field-level offices; 2) Decentralizing school management and governance; 3) School-level leadership development; and 4) Organizational review and strengthening.

**Results Area 5: Effectiveness**

Subcomponents: 1) Strengthening of Grade 5 terminal examination; 2) Teacher recruitment, promotion, and deployment; 3) Annual school census; and 4) National student assessment.

**Results Area 6: Planning and Management**

Subcomponents: 1) PEDP3 management and governance; 2) PEDP3 financial management; 3) Sector finance; 4) Strengthen monitoring functions; 5) Human resource development; and 6) Public private partnerships.

The ICR did not offer any further description of the content of the subcomponents. It did, however, provide an overview of the DLIs linked to each Component, which gave a good indication of what the program was expected to achieve under each results area. In the PAD Annex 2, para 5, page 33, it was stated that "the DLIs, determined in partnership with the government and Development Partners, reflect priority elements in PEDP3, primarily to generate significant impact in the medium term (4-5 years) toward longer term sector objectives."

**The Disbursement Linked indicators (DLIs) were the following:**

For component 1: Increase participation and reduce social disparities in primary education, two DLIs were applied:

- Pre-primary education expansion in areas of greatest need; and
- Percentage of needs-based plans for infrastructure completed and implemented.

For component 2: Increase the number of children completing primary education and improve the quality of the learning environment, four DLIs were applied:

- Schools receiving textbooks on time and better-quality textbooks
- Diploma in Education (DPEd) – improving teacher training and effectiveness
- Improving quality of Grade 5 completion exams and regular assessment of learning
- Ensuring quality of new teachers hired and adequate number of teachers: percentage recruitment per the condition specified in the DLI



For Component 3: Improve the effectiveness of resource use for primary education, two DLIs were applied:

- Percentage of schools preparing school learning improvement plans (SLIPs) and receiving funds; and
- Number of months to administer and disseminate the annual primary school census (APSC).

#### **e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates**

##### **Project Cost**

The original allocated amount by the World Bank (two International Development Association (IDA) loans and one Trust Fund grant) was US\$800 million, the revised amount was US\$750 million, and the actual amount was US\$710 million. The total non-World Bank amount originally allocated to this project was US\$6.360 billion, the total non-World Bank revised amount was US\$7.725 billion, and the actual total non-World Bank disbursed amount was US\$6.730 billion.

##### **Financing**

This program was financed by multiple donors in addition to the borrower and the World Bank. The other donors were: the Asian Development Bank, Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canadian International Development Agency, United Kingdom Department for International Development, European Commission, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and UNICEF. The ICR (page 2) presented a clear and detailed overview of all the donors and the respective amounts allocated and disbursed from each of them. Additional Financing was provided as an IDA Credit on the amount of SDR 269.8 million (US\$400 million equivalent) in December 2014, in addition to a grant from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) of US\$100 million that was approved in December 2015 (ICR pages 9-10 para 15). A total of SDR 28.3 million in IDA funds and USD 8.3 million in GPE funds was cancelled, as three of the DLI targets for the program remained unmet, and the Bank approved a level 2 restructuring of the program accordingly on December 29, 2017 (ICR page 11, para 20).

##### **Borrower contribution**

The borrower originally allocated US\$4.950 billion to this program. It was revised to US\$6.2 billion, and the actual disbursed amount was US\$5.222 billion.

##### **Dates**

This sector program was approved on August 25, 2011 and became effective on December 7, 2011. The original closing date was December 31, 2015, and the actual closing date was December 31, 2017, i.e. a 24-month extension. The project received additional financing on December 16, 2014 and was restructured on December 29, 2017, i.e. two days before the closing date. Three of the five outcome targets were revised at this restructuring (ICR p. 10, footnote 4).

### **3. Relevance of Objectives**



## Rationale

At the time of appraisal, Bangladesh had made striking progress in the previous thirty years in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction. The number of children completing primary education had more than doubled, the participation of girls had accelerated remarkably in the past 15 years, and more girls than boys completed primary school at the time of appraisal. These results had been spurred by demand-side interventions such as school feeding and cash transfer programs in addition to school stipend programs for girls.

Despite recent improvements in the education sector, there were still some challenges that needed to be addressed. There were still pockets of out-of-school children of rural and urban poor and disadvantaged communities. In 2010, only 60 percent of school children completed primary school (grades 1-5) in 5 years, and of these, only 44 percent continued to lower secondary school (grades 6-8). The completion rate varied between geographical location and family income. Furthermore, there was a wide recognition that learning outcomes were low, and emphasis was placed on rote learning. Overcrowded and dilapidated classrooms, as well as insufficient sanitation facilities and drinking water, still constrained children's access to education in parts of the country and for some population groups. Management of the sector was also constrained by institutional capacity limitations.

This project (PEDP3) was the third in a series of large investments in Bangladesh's education sector over the previous twenty years, supporting a complex system of over 100,000 schools, 450,000 teachers and 16.5 million students. This new program was to promote accountability through a results-based program approach. It was to: i) focus on results rather than on the supply of learning inputs; ii) use the DLI approach to better align financial incentives with critical actions and their outcomes; and iii) use the SWAp approach for financial management, donor harmonization, and program scope.

## Rating

High

### 4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

#### Objective 1

##### Objective

To increase participation in primary education

##### Rationale

##### Theory of Change:

The PDO outcome indicator was "Number of children enrolled in primary education as measured by net enrollment rate (NER), disaggregated by gender," and the PAD stated that the objective of this focus on pre-primary education was to "strengthen children's readiness for learning" (PAD Annex 1 page 28). The output



indicator was "Provision of pre-primary education (PPE) in government primary schools (GPS) with teachers and PPE material available," and the inputs/activities were: "pre-primary education" and "school health and nutrition activities."

**Outputs:**

At program completion, 90% of the GPS provided PPE, exceeding the target of 75%. 27,500 additional classrooms were built, not achieving the target of 31,000.

**Outcomes:**

97.96% of all school-aged children were enrolled in primary education at the time of program closing, achieving the target of 98%, and increasing considerably from the baseline value of 84.7%.

**Rating**

Substantial

**Objective 2**

**Objective**

To reduce social disparities in primary education

**Rationale**

**Theory of Change:**

The PDO Outcome indicator for measuring the achievement of this objective was "Decreased disparity in access to schooling as measured by NER ratio of 20 percent poorest to 20 percent richest," and the output indicators were (a) "Needs-based infrastructure as measured by the number of additional classrooms built or rehabilitated at the primary level under PEDP3" and (b) provision of pre-primary education (PPE) in Government Primary Schools (GPS). The activities that were expected to lead to this outcome were: (i) pre-primary education; (ii) school health and nutrition; (iii) targeted stipends; (iv) needs-based infrastructure development; (v) inclusive education; (vi) education in emergencies; and (vii) second chance education programs for disadvantaged students. Except for (ii) and (iii) that were financed by the GoB, all the rest were financed by the DPs supporting PEDP3.

**Outputs:**

- 90% out of 37,000 Government Primary Schools (GPS) had teachers trained in the provision of pre-primary education and pre-primary education material available. Original and revised target: 75% (exceeded).
- 27,500 classrooms built or rehabilitated. Original target: 30,400 (mostly achieved). Revised target: 31,000 (mostly achieved)



**Outcomes:**

The disparity in access to schooling, measured by family income levels with a ratio of NER of the 20% poorest to the NER of the 20% richest, decreased from a baseline value of 0.72 to 0.89 at completion, exceeding both the original target of 0.77 and the formally revised target of 0.80.

**Rating**

Substantial

**Objective 3**

**Objective**

To increase the number of children completing primary education

**Rationale**

**Theory of Change:**

The project aimed to increase the number of children completing primary education through improvements in the teaching-learning environment paired with demand-side interventions such as stipends and school feeding financed by the GoB. To measure the achievement of the objective, the project chose "Completion rate to grade 5 (which is the end of primary education in Bangladesh) disaggregated by gender" as it outcome indicator and the following three key output indicators: (i) percentage of schools receiving textbooks within first month of academic year; (ii) percentage of schools meeting minimum quality standards per Primary School Quality Level Indicators (PSQL); and (iii) number of teachers recruited or trained

**Outputs:**

- 99% of schools received textbooks within first month of academic year. Target: 90% (exceeded).
- 2,032 teachers received a Diploma on Education (DPEd). Target: 3,600 (partially achieved). In addition, 92.7% of the teaching force received subject-based training under PEDP3 which represents a significant increase as compared to the baseline of 84.1% in 2010.
- 32.8% of schools met minimum quality standards per Primary School Quality Level Indicators (PSQL). Original target: 50% (partially achieved). Revised target: 35% (mostly achieved).
- Although not financed by the Bank, activities related to targeted stipends and school feeding covered around 13 million and 3 million children (ICR, p. 13).

**Outcomes:**

The percentage of children completing the primary school cycle (grade 5) increased from a baseline value of 54.85% to 80.8% at completion, exceeding the original target of 64.5% and achieving the formally revised target of 80%. The increase in primary completion rate hinged upon critical demand side interventions



supported by the GoB. For this reason, it cannot be solely attributed to the Bank support, but it can be plausibly argued that the Bank substantially contributed to the achievement of the objective.

**Rating**  
Substantial

## **Objective 4**

### **Objective**

To improve the quality of the learning environment

### **Rationale**

#### **Theory of Change:**

No PDO outcome indicator directly corresponding to improving the learning environment was included in the RF. The related output indicators were: Percentage of schools receiving textbooks within the first month of the academic year; Classroom environment more conducive to learning; Percentage of government primary schools meeting at least 3 of 5 minimum quality standards as measured by the primary school quality level (PSQL) indicators; and Number of teachers recruited or trained (who have completed the Diploma in Primary Education). The related inputs/activities were: Revision of the curriculum; Development and distribution of textbooks, teacher guides and other learning materials; Provision of an additional number of qualified teachers; Provision of teacher education and professional development for teachers; Introducing active learning methods and teacher support; and Introducing information and communication technology in education.

#### **Outputs:**

At program completion, 99% of schools had received textbooks within the first month of the academic year, increasing drastically from a baseline of 32.7% and exceeding the original target of 75%. More than 2,000 (2,032) additional teachers were recruited and trained by program completion, not achieving the target of 3,600. The percentage of GPS meeting at least 3 of 4 minimum quality standards (as measured by PSQL indicators) increased from a baseline of 17% in 2010 to 32.8% in 2017, very nearly achieving the target of 35%.

#### **Outcomes:**

Although the project's RF lacked an outcome indicator for this objective, the project delivered outputs that, according to the education research literature, are highly likely to lead to improved learning conditions. For this reason, the achievement of this objective is rated Substantial.

**Rating**  
Substantial





## **Objective 5**

### **Objective**

To improve the quality of measurement of student learning

### **Rationale**

#### **Theory of Change:**

The project sought to improve the quality of primary completion exam and to increase the frequency of learning assessments. The proposed outcome measure for this objective was "percentage of competency-based test items in PECE". Related activities intended to lead to this outcome were to strengthen the exams and assessments, making them more competency-based (as opposed to memory based, which they were previously), and to introduce school and classroom assessments, national student assessment, and grade 5 completion examination.

#### **Outputs:**

System for learning assessment at the primary level established as standardized sample-based National Student Assessments (NSAs) were administered to 3rd and 5th graders in 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2017. Primary Education Completion Exam (PECE) administered annually to 5 graders.

#### **Outcomes:**

The Grade 5 Completion exam was introduced to all students for the first time in 2009, and at that time it was testing memory more than ability to use subject knowledge. By 2017, at program completion, 65% of the PECE test items were competency-based, i.e. they were testing students' ability to use knowledge, exceeding by far the target of at least 25% competency-based items and piloting an additional 25%. Target: 25% (exceeded).

### **Rating**

Substantial

## **Objective 6**

### **Objective**

To improve effectiveness of resource use for primary education

### **Rationale**

#### **Theory of Change:**

The PDO outcome indicator was "Expanded coverage of decentralized planning and management at school levels as measured by proportion of schools preparing SLIPs and receiving funds." The output indicators were "Proportion of upazilas preparing Upazila Primary Education Plans (UPEPs) and receiving funds," and "M&E systems strengthened to improve monitoring and data utilization for program performance and planning as measured by Improved quality, timeliness and coverage of the APSC." The activities that were



expected to lead to this output and outcome were: Human resource development, capacity building, and SLIPs.

**Outputs:**

At program completion, 51% of the Upazilas (district/council) had prepared Upazila education plans and were receiving funds, exceeding the original target of 25% and achieving the revised target of 50%.

The number of months to administer and disseminate the Annual School Census was 11 at project closure, not achieving the original target of 8 but meeting the revised target of 12. Note that the target was revised two days before program completion.

**Outcomes:**

At program completion, 90% of the schools were preparing SLIPs and receiving funds, compared to a baseline of 27% and exceeding the original target of 75%.

**Rating**

Substantial

**Rationale**

All the objectives were rated Substantial and, therefore, overall efficacy is rated Substantial.

**Overall Efficacy Rating**

Substantial

**5. Efficiency**

**Administrative efficiency:** As reported in the ICR (paras 53 and 62), the PEDP3 design made extensive use of government financial management and monitoring systems as well as an agreed combination of government and DP systems for procurement and reporting. Under this financing model, DPs placed their contributions into a consolidated fund managed by the Ministry of Finance (MoF), where DP financing was integrated into funds from many sources. Financial processes followed regular government procedures, and PEDP3 was managed as any other government-funded program. For some tailored technical assistance, the design allowed DPs to provide funds and manage them directly. Extensive use of the government's own financial management and monitoring systems avoided parallel procedures, decreased transaction costs, and ensured that there was a single source of information not only for reporting purposes but, more importantly, also for the release of DLI and non-DLI-related funds. The program's financial management and procurement received Satisfactory and



Moderately Satisfactory ratings throughout implementation, an indication of implementation efficiency. Similarly, the M&E design ensured that parallel information systems were avoided, and both government stakeholders and DPs relied on a single source when disseminating M&E information, using the same reports (ICR para 74).

However, there was weak coordination between the Ministry and Directorate of Education and other stakeholders. Some of the sub-components were implemented without sufficient feedback, articulation, and synergy among them. For example, taking advantage of the strengthened assessment system under PEDP3, the findings of NSA for grades 3 and 5 could have been better utilized by other interventions such as "Each Child Learns," school and classroom assessment, curriculum development, textbooks, and Teacher Education and Development to enhance education quality. The ICR (para 56) asserted that a stronger coordination mechanism in DPED during preparation could have helped in better articulating the need for and approaches to ensuring adequate feedback and interactions across interventions. Nonetheless these shortcomings, implementation efficiency is rated substantial.

**Economic analysis:** The ICR rated the program’s efficiency as substantial based on an economic assessment of the benefits and costs of the six-year PEDP3. The assessment was based on assumed program benefits from three sources: (i) increase in basic education completers with higher wages (compared to non-completers); (ii) higher-wage premium because of increased quality of education for all basic education completers; and (iii) reduced dropouts and repetitions, which reduced wastage of resources, both private and public. This ex-post analysis indicated that the project was a sound investment decision since the present value of net benefits was positive (US\$1.1 billion) whereas the program’s ex-post IRR was 16%. The ICR argued that this return can be considered a lower bound estimate since many positive externalities associated with education were not factored into the analysis. However, the analysis is not without upward biases that, if accounted for, could decrease the stream of benefits. Specifically, the economic analysis carries the underlying assumption that the quality of education has increased and that children are learning. However, improving education quality and learning outcomes is a long haul process that may not materialize for the first cohorts of students benefiting from the project interventions. Evidence from the 2015 NSA shows that this is the case and that children’s learning outcomes declined during the program period. Several reasons could explain this decline. For instance, it could be that the move from memory testing to skills-based problem solving in the actual exams explains the temporary decline in learning outcomes. Nonetheless this shortcoming that may overestimate benefits for the first cohorts of students, the overall stream of benefits is likely to remain positive, and thus, justify the investment and, for this reason, efficiency is rated substantial.

**Efficiency Rating**

Substantial

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 (%)
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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

Relevance of objectives is rated High since the PDOs were well aligned with national and World Bank priorities at appraisal and at closing. Efficacy and Efficiency are rated Substantial. Therefore, the overall outcome is rated Satisfactory.

### a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

## 7. Risk to Development Outcome

The development outcome from this program is stated to be human capital development for sustaining economic growth and poverty reduction (as stated in the ICR's Theory of Change on page 6). Achieving "human capital development for sustaining economic growth and poverty reduction" is not going to be possible if children are not learning. "Improved learning outcomes" is therefore the logical final outcome that can plausibly contribute to achievement of the higher-level longer-term development objective. Evidence shows that despite the program's achievement of some of the program's intended outcomes, children's actual learning outcomes have declined during the program period. This is the opposite result of what would be expected from a program designed to improve the quality of learning and the completion rates. The underlying reasons for the decline in learning outcomes were not presented in the ICR, and the project team (meeting with IEG 10/11/18) stated they are not aware that any study has been undertaken to examine and address the reasons behind the sharp decline and low levels of learning outcomes. Without any concrete plans to examine and address the underlying reasons for this decline in learning outcomes, the overall risk to development outcomes is High.

**Institutional Risk:** Some policy decisions that were difficult to agree upon under the two previous education sector programs were implemented under PEDP3, for example: (i) third party verification of DLIs; (ii) results-based management and disbursement; (iii) textbook delivery monitoring; and (iv) the APSC verification by a qualified third party. These achievements are likely to be sustained.

Other elements likely to be sustained are the evidence-based decision-making environment strengthened by the program, such as: (i) improved information systems; and (ii) establishment of an adequately staffed evaluation unit in the M&E Division/DPEd. Furthermore, about 90 percent of all participating primary schools prepared SLIPs and received funds, which is another indication of strengthened institutions and improved decentralization. Institutional risk is therefore considered to be Low.



## 8. Assessment of Bank Performance

### a. Quality-at-Entry

The Bank team worked with the government and DPs to prepare a program intended to be relevant, comprehensive, and grounded in lessons learned from prior projects and programs in the education sector. According to the ICR (page 27), a well-articulated results chain was prepared as part of the design to ensure clarity regarding how the different activities, inputs, and outputs were linked to the achievement of the PDO. The M&E system was comprehensive and robust, and provisions were made for regular supervision by DPs and the national authorities. The program design also included action plans to address institutional implementation capacity issues. The Bank played a leading role in designing the results-based financing approach for the program. The Bank team, together with the government and DPs, engaged in extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure ownership and relevance. The Bank provided technical support in financial management, procurement, safeguards and M&E. The ICR (page 27) points out that in retrospect, more could have been done to ensure preparation of action plans prior to program start-up to address institutional capacity limitations.

### Quality-at-Entry Rating

Satisfactory

### b. Quality of supervision

The Bank team conducted 11 supervision missions over the course of the six-year program, and according to the ICR, consisted of the appropriate skills mix (page 28). There was stability in the task team leader (TTL) position; the first TTL was located in the Bank's Dhaka office and continued in that role until 2015, and an acting TTL was appointed until a new TTL, who was also located in Dhaka, took up office at the end of 2015. Two TTLs then jointly led the team until the closing of the IDA credit and the GPE grant at the end of 2017. This arrangement enabled stable Bank representation in the Working Groups, Joint Consultative Meetings, and Joint Annual Review Missions. According to the ICR (page 27), the Bank team provided consistent and timely implementation support (examples are provided on page 28 of the ICR) and established close communication with the government counterparts and the other DPs. These arrangements helped resolve implementation challenges, provided necessary technical assistance, and contributed to a mid-term review that led to a slight restructuring and additional financing of the program.

According to the ICR (page 28), Bank implementation support had concrete positive results: (i) defusing potential textbook misprocurements through a capacity building program for relevant government counterparts; (ii) conducting the NSA and analyzing results in time to use as a major substantive backdrop for policy dialogue at the Joint Annual Review missions; (iii) developing textbook monitoring software; (iv) transforming the Grade 5 PECE into a competency-based exam; and (v) strengthening



fiduciary oversight and building capacity of government counterparts on financial management and procurement.

### **Quality of Supervision Rating**

Satisfactory

### **Overall Bank Performance Rating**

Satisfactory

## **9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization**

### **a. M&E Design**

The M&E design considered the lessons learned from a relatively weak M&E system in the previous education sector program and was generally appropriate and comprehensive as it was designed to track implementation progress in all the subcomponents of the program through a comprehensive set of indicators (PAD Annex 1, pp 23-30, and ICR p 23). However, there were shortcomings. For example, under DLI 1 "Improving the timeliness of textbook distribution and quality of textbook content," only the first part (timeliness of textbook distribution) was followed up with indicators and targets, and no indicators were identified to assess the quality of the textbooks (PAD p 26). Similarly, for DLI 2 "Improving teacher training effectiveness and teacher quality," only the number of teachers trained was treated with indicators and targets, and no system to assess what was going on in the classrooms was included in the RF.

M&E design ensured that parallel information systems were avoided and that the government and all the DPs (including the Bank) relied on a single source of M&E information, using the same reports.

### **b. M&E Implementation**

According to the ICR (page 24), M&E activities were effectively implemented, and data were collected from a wide range of sources including the Annual Primary School Census; the National Student Assessment; the Primary Education Completion Exam; the textbook distribution database; Directorate of Primary Education administrative records and Annual Operation Plans; the Bangladesh National Census; Household Income and Expenditure Surveys; Household Education Surveys; and data obtained from national agencies including the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics and the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics.

### **c. M&E Utilization**



The ICR stated that M&E data was appropriately utilized to review program progress and in key decision-making processes, and especially for the restructuring and the additional financing of the program.

However, the results from the NSAs and PECEs were not used in the sense that (as far as IEG has been informed) the findings did not spur any investigations into the underlying reasons for the decline in learning outcomes, and the problem was also not addressed during implementation. The project team (IEG meeting 10/11/18) was not aware of any studies looking into the underlying reasons for the decline in learning outcomes undertaken after project closure and prior to the design of the follow-up program Q-LEAP, indicating that this situation might also not be directly and appropriately addressed under Q-LEAP.

### **M&E Quality Rating**

Substantial

## **10. Other Issues**

### **a. Safeguards**

The PAD (page 21, para 55) stated that OP 4.12 on Involuntary Resettlement and OP 4.10 on Indigenous Peoples were triggered. For environmental safeguards, the PAD stated the following (p 22, para 58): "The PEDPIII infrastructure program, to be implemented throughout Bangladesh, does not envisage any large scale, significant or irreversible environmental impact since the interventions foreseen are all relatively small scale. The program was reviewed during preparation and designated as environmental Category B which is appropriate and consistent with the provisions of OP/BP 4.01. The program requires partial environmental assessment of subprojects before their implementation." The ICR information on safeguards was scarce. It stated that environmental and social safeguard compliance was rated satisfactory during the entire implementation cycle (ICR page 26, para 95), but further detail was not presented in the ICR. It furthermore reported that textbooks were developed in five indigenous languages and that a gender-action plan was approved and put into action in 2015.

### **b. Fiduciary Compliance**

#### **Financial Management:**

Financial Management performance was consistently rated Satisfactory throughout implementation. The ICR reported that there were improvements in the annual and quarterly fiduciary reviews and their compliance with financial reporting requirements, although they were not always submitted on time. Timeliness improved toward the end of the program period. Annual audit reports were submitted on time, and the audit opinion was mostly unqualified except for FY12-13. The ICR also mentioned that there were some material audit observations pending resolution from earlier audit reports at the time of the ICR, and the project team stated (in its meeting with IEG (10/11/18) that this is still the case.





**Procurement:**

Procurement was rated between moderately satisfactory and satisfactory throughout the program period. Delays in contract awards were flagged in several Implementation Status Reports. The annual fiduciary review and the post-procurement review undertaken jointly by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank in late 2014 detected irregularities in 21 of 238 civil work contracts. Misprocurements were declared for these contracts, resulting in the cancellation of SDR 177,629 of the original IDA credit.

**c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)**

None reported.

**d. Other**

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**11. Ratings**

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	---
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	---
Quality of M&E	High	Substantial	The M&E system was generally good but had minor shortcomings and is therefore rated Substantial.
Quality of ICR		Substantial	---

**12. Lessons**

The following lessons are taken from the ICR, with some modification of language:

- **Community mobilization efforts encouraging bottom-up citizen’s engagement are important for advancing education reforms.** An effective communication strategy is an essential approach for ensuring the understanding and eventual buy-in of school stakeholders about the need, importance, and benefits of quality of education, and thus of the measures carried out to improve school effectiveness and increase learning outcomes. The school management committees and the wide stakeholder consultation processes established under PEDP3 are prominent ways of engaging citizens/civil society.





- **Lack of attention to learning outcome results may jeopardize an education program’s development outcomes.** Without an enhanced focus on ensuring foundational numeracy and literacy, especially in the first 3 grades of primary education, as an essential requirement in the ongoing education reform in Bangladesh, necessary improvements in learning outcomes might be jeopardized. Despite the remarkable progress made by Bangladesh in increasing access to pre-primary and primary education, and improving the primary cycle completion rate, the NSA results show that learning outcomes are alarmingly low and have been declining throughout the program period. Low and uneven learning outcomes, especially in math and Bangla in the first three grades of primary education, continue to be a key issue of concern. Improving school quality is a gradual and holistic process and a very lengthy endeavor contingent upon a number of additional interventions that need to strongly, timely, and effectively articulate and synergize at the classroom level, for example: (i) ensuring that teachers are able to teach effectively under the new revised curriculum and articulate the learning inputs provided by PEDP3; (ii) ensuring the adequacy of teacher-student contact hours in the classroom; (iii) carrying out periodic, systematic, random on-site monitoring to assess how the different learning-related interventions are being implemented in the classroom and, if warranted, to develop and implement appropriate remedial and preventive measures; and (iv) using findings of the various learning assessments (NSA, PECE, etc.) to design and implement appropriate preventive and corrective measures. The Q-LEAP design rightly focuses on improving education quality, as measured by learning outcomes in language and mathematics, especially in the first three grades of primary education.
- **A comprehensive intervention like PEDP3 requires more effective horizontal articulation among its key activities and timely vertical coordination across all the implementing entities at all levels of decision-making.** The key interventions/subcomponents of PEDP3 contributing to the PDO performed well on their own. But there was little interaction and feedback across these interventions, limiting their synergetic impact on teaching-learning practices, teacher training, and improving learning outcomes.
- **Capacity building is critical for successful program implementation.** Advancing and sustaining ongoing education reforms will require strengthened horizontal and vertical institutional linkages among key actors and greater clarification of their roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms. When limited institutional capacity is detected for implementing sound interventions, it is important to prepare an appropriate institutional capacity development time-bound action plan at the very beginning and ensure that that it is implemented in an effective and timely fashion.

### 13. Assessment Recommended?

No

### 14. Comments on Quality of ICR



The ICR was of high quality, candid, and well written and with an adequate results orientation. By and large, the quality of the evidence presented was good and from credible sources, appropriately referenced and presented in a parsimonious fashion. The ICR was particularly strong in its very well formulated Lessons Learned. Finally, the ICR was internally consistent and consistent with the guidelines.

**a. Quality of ICR Rating**  
Substantial