Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-Level Support to Education

Batch 5, Country 20: Tajikistan

FINAL REPORT | MARCH 2020

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RESULTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CA	Coordinating Agency
CEQ	Country Evaluation Question
CLE	Country-level Evaluation
CLO	Country-level Objectives
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
CSEF	Civil Society Education Fund
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCC	Donor Coordination Council
DCP	Developing Country Partner
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DLI	Disbursement-linked Indicator
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Child Education
EFA	Education for All
EGRA	Early Grades Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESP	Education Sector Plan
ESPDG	Education Sector Plan Development Grant
ESPIG	Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant
EU	European Union
FTI	Fast Track Initiative

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GA	Grant Agent
GBAO	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrollment Rate
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GNI	Gross National Income
GoT	Government of Tajikistan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPI	Genuine Progress Indicator
GPIA	Adjusted Gender Parity Index
GRA	Global and Regional Activities
HDI	Human Development Index
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
INGO	International Nongovernmental Organization
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
ITRP	Independent Technical Review Panel
JSR	Joint Education Sector Review
KIX	Knowledge and Innovation Exchange
KQ	Key Question
LAS	Learning Assessment System
LEG	Local Education Group
MABA	Main Administrators of Budget Allocations
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MTEAP	Medium-Term Education Action Plan

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NER	Net Enrollment Ratio
NFM	New Funding Model
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NSED	National Strategy for Education Development
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
OOSC	Out-of-school Children
PCR	Primary Completion Ratio
PDG	Program Development Grant
PIG	Program Implementation Grant
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
QAR	Quality Assurance and Review
RF	Results Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US$	United States Dollar
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

Terminology

Alignment	Basing support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures.[1]
Basic education	Pre-primary (i.e., education before Grade 1), primary (Grades 1-6), lower secondary (Grades 7-9), and adult literacy education, in formal and non-formal settings. This corresponds to International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011 levels 0-2.
Capacity	In the context of this evaluation we understand capacity as the foundation for behavior change in individuals, groups or institutions. Capacity encompasses the three interrelated dimensions of *motivation* (political will, social norms, habitual processes), *opportunity* (factors outside of individuals e.g., resources, enabling environment) and capabilities (knowledge, skills).[2]
Education Management and Information System (EMIS)	A system for the collection, integration, processing, maintenance and dissemination of data and information to support decision-making, policy-analysis and formulation, planning, monitoring and management at all levels of an education system. It is a system of people, technology, models, methods, processes, procedures, rules and regulations that function together to provide education leaders, decision-makers and managers at all levels with a comprehensive and integrated set of relevant, reliable, unambiguous and timely data and information to support them in fulfilling their responsibilities.[3]
Education systems	Collections of institutions, actions and processes that affect the educational status of citizens in the short and long run.[4] Education systems are made up of a large number of actors (teachers, parents, politicians, bureaucrats, civil society organizations) interacting with each other in different institutions (schools, ministry departments) for different reasons (developing curriculums, monitoring school performance, managing teachers). All these interactions are governed by rules, beliefs, and behavioral norms that affect how actors react and adapt to changes in the system.[5]
Equity	In the context of education, equity refers to securing all children's rights to education, and their rights within and through education to realize their potential and aspirations. It requires implementing and institutionalizing arrangements that help ensure all children can achieve these aims. [6]

[1] OECD, Glossary of Aid Effectiveness Terms. http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/aideffectivenessglossary.htm. GPE understands 'country systems' to relate to a set of seven dimensions: Plan, Budget, Treasury, Procurement, Accounting, Audit and Report. Source: Methodology Sheet for Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Indicators. Indicator (29) Proportion of GPE grants aligned to national systems.

[2] Mayne, John. *The COM-B Theory of Change Model*. Working paper. February 2017

[3] GPE 2020 Results Framework Indicator 20 Methodology Sheet.

[4] Moore, Mark. 2015. Creating Efficient, Effective, and Just Educational Systems through Multi-Sector Strategies of Reform. RISE Working Paper 15/004, Research on Improving Systems of Education, Blavatnik School of Government, Oxford University, Oxford, U.K.

[5] World Bank. 2003. World Development Report 2004: Making Services Work for Poor People. Washington, DC: World Bank; New York: Oxford University Press.

[6] Equity and Inclusion in Education. A guide to support education sector plan preparation, revision and appraisal. GPE 2010; p.3.

Financial additionality	This incorporates two not mutually exclusive components: (a) an increase in the total amount of funds available for a given educational purpose, without the substitution or redistribution of existing resources; and (b) positive change in the quality of funding (e.g., predictability of aid, use of pooled funding mechanisms, co-financing, non-traditional financing sources, alignment with national priorities).
Gender equality	The equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women, men, girls, and boys, and equal power to shape their own lives and contribute to society. It encompasses the narrower concept of gender equity, which primarily concerns fairness and justice regarding benefits and needs.[7]
Harmonization	The degree of coordination between technical and financial partners in how they structure their external assistance (e.g., pooled funds, shared financial or procurement processes), to present a common and simplified interface for developing country partners. The aim of harmonization is to reduce transaction costs and increase the effectiveness of the assistance provided by reducing demands on recipient countries to meet with different donors' reporting processes and procedures, along with uncoordinated country analytic work and missions.[8]
Inclusion	Adequately responding to the diversity of needs among all learners, through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion from and within education.[9]

[7] GPE Gender Equality Policy and Strategy 2016-2020. GPE 2016, p. 5f. Available at: http://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2016-06-gpe-gender-equality-policy-strategy.pdf

[8] Adapted from OECD, Glossary of Aid Effectiveness Terms http://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/aideffectivenessglossary.htm, and from Methodology Sheet for Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Indicators. Indicator (30) Proportion of GPE grants using: (a) co-financed project or (b) sector pooled funding mechanisms.

[9] GPE 2010, p.3.

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This final version of the report was completed in March 2020. As per the agreed process for summative reports, feedback on draft versions of this report was solicited from the GPE Secretariat, members of the GPE Independent Technical Review Panel (ITRP), and the education sector Coordinating Agency (CA). All feedback was considered by the evaluation team and, as appropriate, incorporated into this final version. Any remaining mistakes and inaccuracies are ours.

[10] The Dushanbe mission was led by Mr. Dale E. Thompson, accompanied by Mr. Luc Franche and Mr. Jovidsho Juraev. The overall team leader for the consortium is Dr. Marie-Hélène Adrien. Quality-assurance was conducted by Dr. Nicholas Burnett.

Executive Summary

Evaluation purpose and approach

This evaluation is part of a larger study of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) that comprises 30 country level evaluations (CLE). The overall study runs from 2017 until 2020. It aims to assess (i) GPE contributions to strengthening national education systems and, ultimately, education results related to learning, equity, equality and inclusion; and hence (ii) the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of GPE's theory of change (ToC) and country-level operational model. The assessment is based on a theory-based, mixed social science research methodology known as contribution analysis.

This study was conducted between October 2019 and February 2020 and focuses on GPE support to the Republic of Tajikistan from 2012 to 2019. It draws on document, database and literature review, as well as on consultations with a total of 43 governmental, multilateral, bilateral, and non-governmental stakeholders in Tajikistan.

Education in Tajikistan

The Republic of Tajikistan is a Central Asian country with a total population of 9.1 million. The country's population increased by 40 percent between 2000 and 2016, one of the most rapidly growing in Central Asia. Its population is also relatively young; 34 percent of the population is below 15 years old. While Tajikistan remains a low-income country, its GDP grew consistently between 2000 and 2017, from US$0.86 billion to US$7.15 billion, which was accompanied by a reduction in the poverty rate, as the proportion of people living under the national poverty line declined from 83 percent in 2000 to 29.5 percent in 2017.

Tajikistan's education system is composed of preschool education, general secondary education (term used in country to refer to both primary and secondary levels of education), vocational and technical education, and higher education, all of which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES).

Since 2005, Tajikistan's education sector has been guided by three sector-wide strategic plans, with the National Strategy for Education Development (NSED) 2005-2015 standing as the country's first comprehensive sector-wide strategic plan, which was subsequently updated in 2009 and integrated into the NSED 2009-2015. Education sector development is currently guided by the NSED 2012-2020 which the MoES operationalizes through three-year Medium-Term Education Action Plans (MTEAPs). **This evaluation focuses on the period covered by the 2012-2020 NSED, which includes the process of developing the 2021-2030 NSED up through February 2020.**

GPE in Tajikistan

Tajikistan joined GPE in 2005 and has since received eight grants from GPE: three education sector plan development grants (ESPDG), two program development grants (PDG), and three education sector plan implementation grants (ESPIG), two of which were through the Fast Track Initiative (FTI). The country is in the process of preparing an ESPIG application with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) as grant agent (GA). The GA for the five previous ESPIGs was the World Bank. UNICEF was the coordinating agency (CA) for the CLE review period (2012-2019). This evaluation includes a review of the latest ESPIG (2013-2017), the PDGs in 2013 and 2019, and the ESPDGs in 2013 and 2017.

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Tajikistan received a grant through the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) III, directed to the Alliance of CSOs for Education in Tajikistan, a coalition of six nongovernmental organizations working in the education sector in Tajikistan. Finally, one GPE Global and Regional Activities (GRA) grant has financed activities specific to Tajikistan, GRA 13 (Assessment Systems and Learning Outcomes).

GPE contributions to sector planning

State of sector planning in Tajikistan, 2012-2019

The quality of sector planning has improved over the 2012-2019 review period, especially seen in terms of measures in place for sector plan monitoring and evaluation, and the extent to which sector plans are evidence-based.

With regards to evidence-based sector planning, while the 2012-2020 NSED was not informed by an education sector analysis (ESA), the 2021-2030 NSED is informed by an ESA prepared by a consultant hired by UNICEF and funded by an ESPDG. The ESA is seen as a consolidation of different studies, most notably the 2019 revision of the 2017 Joint Education Sector Review, which was funded by the EU, and updated data from the EMIS.

In relation to monitoring and evaluation of sector plans, both the NSED and 2012-2014 and 2015-2017 MTEAPs included vague performance measures with no clear baselines or dated targets. The 2018-2020 MTEAP, however, includes indicators for monitoring the implementation of expected results, and for increasing the accountability of relevant partners, illustrating increased capacity and awareness within the MoES to monitoring plan implementation.

Despite these improvements, however, areas of mixed progress in sector planning were also noted in terms of the level of participation in planning processes among teachers' union and private sector representatives, and in terms of the level of MoES ownership of sector plans. With regards to stakeholder participation in plan development, the process of developing the NESD 2012-2020 involved consultations through the creation of five working groups, comprised of education professionals, development partners, and civil society organizations (CSOs), and led by an MoES official. It is unclear, however, based on documentation and consultation with stakeholders, whether membership in the working groups has changed, and to what extent teachers' associations and private sector actors were involved in the planning process.

While MoES stakeholders indicated that sector planning has strong government ownership, most development partners disagreed and felt that government ownership of planning processes was weak, particularly for developing the MTEAPs. They stated that while the MoES consulted actors for planning, the development partners led the discussions and the development of the plans. This was in large part due to: capacity challenges at MoES; domestic perceptions that the ESP process was something separate from the normal activities of the ministry; and, paradoxically, the effectiveness and commitment of the development partners themselves to the planning processes - leading and doing what in other circumstances might have been ministerial responsibilities.

The MoES is in the process of developing the 2021-2030 NSED, which was drafted in the fourth quarter of 2019, and is expected to be completed in January 2020. While it is not possible to do a full-scale analysis of the draft sector plan, however, based on triangulated testimony, it is highly likely that the level of statistical information in the upcoming NSED will fill many of the performance and accountability related shortcomings that were identified in the independent assessment of the 2012-2020 NSED. More specifically, the draft 2021-2030 NSED improves on the 2012-2020 NSED through: inclusion of an assessment of achievement of

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NSED 2012-2020 objectives to inform future actions; identification of key priorities for each subsector with accompanying performance indicators (to be included in final draft); inclusion of a fully detailed financial plan; and the setting out of baseline and annual targets up to 2030 which provides a more viable framework to measure progress.

GPE contributions

Overall, GPE financial and non-financial support likely contributed to improved quality in the development processes of the 2012-2020 NSED.

ESPDGs supported the development of the 2015-2017 and 2018-2020 MTEAPs in terms of financing a consultant to facilitate consultations with key stakeholders, analyze the implementation of preceding MTEAPs, and finalize draft MTEAPs for submission to the MoES. ESPDG funding also contributed to the development of the 2021-2030 NSED by providing financing for the conducting of the ESA, developing an ECE roadmap for inclusion in the NSED, and the developing an analysis of scenarios for the education sector to transition to a 12-year basic education system.

GPE guidelines on sector planning made significant contributions to the development of both the 2012-2020 and 2021-2030 NSEDs, in providing a clear roadmap for sector planning processes. In particular, MoES and development partner stakeholders noted that they are in the process of developing a holistic sector-wide theory of change with the objective of meeting GPE standards for quality educations sector plans (ESPs), as part of the 2021-2030 NSED development process, with such an exercise having the potential to solve the problem of lack of prioritization, seen in previous sector plans.

ESPIG funding requirements in relation to data availability provided an incentive to conduct the ESA for the 2021-2030 NSED, as well as to include the development of learning assessment systems as an objective within the upcoming sector plan, a long time gap in the overall education system.

Implications for GPE

The Tajikistan experience demonstrates the benefits of long-term participation in GPE as a contributing factor to improvement in the quality of sector planning. Tajikistan's participation in the FTI/GPE has generated a degree of acceptance of the benefits of sector-wide planning, despite the 2012-2020 NSED scoring somewhat low with respect to achievability and being sufficiently evidence-based, both of which tend to reflect prior planning practices that focused on top-down resource control mechanisms not uncommon in former Soviet republics. Indeed, the degree of acceptance of the multiplier and variable tranche provisions by government stakeholders was unexpected, likely a result of their long-term familiarity with GPE.

A further implication derived from the Tajikistan experience relates to the combination of longer-term ESP development, in this case decade long NSEDs, with medium term MTEAPs. While the GPE model is predicated on the longer-term, or singular ESP effective for the duration of the planning period established by the government in question, in Tajikistan's case the three MTEAPs, notwithstanding the limitations, provided a mechanism for ongoing organizational learning and thus acceptance of new planning techniques.

The upcoming 2021-2030 NSED appears to have considerably benefited from the lessons learned through the implementation of the previous NSED. Crucial planning characteristics such as improved goal setting, more precise prioritization, retrospective analysis of the implementation of the prior NSED, and a comprehensive monitoring framework all serve to qualitatively differentiate the upcoming NSED from its predecessor. Equally, there is sporadic evidence to show some degree of change from the prior largely top-down and non-participatory approaches to plan development. However, this

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tentative and somewhat positive assessment needs to be viewed in light of the fact that this NSED has yet to be appraised; and, matters related to financing its commitments appeared to remain unsettled at the time of writing.

GPE contributions to sector dialogue and monitoring

State of sector dialogue and monitoring in Tajikistan, 2012-2019

Tajikistan has well-established mechanisms for **sector dialogue** namely: (i) the Local Education Group (LEG), co-chaired by UNICEF and the MoES and which includes representatives from MoES, development partner agencies, INGOs, and Economics and Education as the one national civil society representative; and (ii) the Donor Coordination Council (DCC), co-chaired by UNICEF and the EU, for which membership is the same as the LEG, minus government and civil society representatives. While MoES had not participated systematically in LEG meetings, it now participates in almost every meeting; the specific MoES representatives vary based on the LEG agenda. While development partners do not perceive the government as the primary driver of sector dialogue, consulted MoES stakeholders value their participation in the LEG and see the ministry as an equal partner in the LEG.

However, the LEG is not yet a body that truly represents the education sector and all of its stakeholders, and notably absent from LEG membership are civil society organizations representing different stakeholder groups (e.g., national NGOs and associations involved in education service delivery or representing the needs of special interest groups, private sector schools, teacher associations and unions). While CSOs expressed interest to participate in the LEG and consulted MoES stakeholders noted that they were receptive to development partners' advocacy efforts to increase membership in the LEG, the MoES has not been open to including teachers' union representatives in the LEG. The LEG is supposed to meet quarterly but, in practice, averages two or three meetings per year. The frequency of meetings depends largely on whether there are issues related to GPE grants up for discussion.

Nevertheless, positive developments resulting from LEG meetings include: i) MoES inclusion of new priorities as a result of development partners advocacy (e.g. increased attention to early childhood education); ii) the alignment of development partner interventions with MoES priorities and MTEAPs; and iii) increased coordination among development partners, and reduced overlap and duplication of respective programs. While sector dialogue has facilitated alignment and coordination, however, there is no evidence that issues regarding harmonization of reporting and elimination of planning/accountability duplication have been discussed in sector dialogue meetings.

Improvements in **sector monitoring** between 2012 and 2019 were limited, overall, with the exception of recent improvements seen in the preparation of an M&E plan for the 2018-2020 MTEAP with clearly articulated and measurable performance indicators, defined baseline and time-bound targets, and linkages between expected results and resources--significant improvements compared with the previous two MTEAPs and the 2012-2020 NSED.

With regards to EMIS, while data from EMIS covers all public and private schools in the country, the use of such data is limited to the MoES and development partners, with data collected from schools not subsequently shared to schools or other stakeholders via a feedback loop. In relation to Joint Sector Reviews (JSRs), several weaknesses limit the application of JSRs as useful tools for monitoring sector progress: (i) JSR reports are developed by consultants and informed by limited consultation with education stakeholders; (ii) JSR reports do not track progress in implementation of NSED and MTEAPs; and (iii) JSR reports do not provide

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recommendations on the implementation of the NSED or MTEAPS.

GPE contributions

GPE contributed significantly to strengthening sector monitoring through **funding from the 2013-2017 ESPIG** which (i) provided technical and financial support for the development of the 2018-2020 MTEAP M&E plan; (ii) provided training which increased MoES capacity in use of EMIS data for decision-making, notably in the preparation and use of analytical reports for JSRs; and (iii) upgraded the EMIS to include data on three sub-sectors (ECE, TVET and higher education) and increasing the quality and quantity of data.

The **LEG** served as a dialogue mechanism between development partners and the MoES, giving development partners the opportunity to speak with one common voice and additional leverage to lobby on behalf of priority policy issues. Furthermore, **discussion of the upcoming ESPIG application within the LEG** encouraged greater donor coordination, as seen in the mapping of respective initiatives in the education sector by development partners to inform the application.

Increased communication and outreach efforts by the **CA** (UNICEF) with the MoES played a central role in improving dialogue between development partners and the MoES, and in increasing government participation in LEG meetings in recent years.

Implications for GPE

GPE ToC assumptions regarding the capabilities, motivations and opportunities of country-level stakeholders for sector mutual accountability held only partially true. Much of why these assumptions are not holding as strongly in Tajikistan is likely due to the notion that such assumptions reflect Eurocentric cultural or political values commonly shared across OECD countries, and may not be shared by a country which is emerging from decades of top-down Soviet rule, with a centralized approach to governance and little, if any, dialogue with civil society. In terms therefore of the overall GPE ToC, assumptions about what constitute appropriate levels of sectorial dialogue may need to be viewed more in context with the overall governance history and patterns of the country in question.

GPE contributions to sector financing

State of sector financing in Tajikistan, 2012-2019

Total domestic education expenditures increased in absolute terms by 85 percent, from US$226 million to US$419 million, between 2010 and 2017, and in relative terms, from 15.3 percent to 17.7 percent of total public expenditures between 2010 and 2018, somewhat below the 20 percent international benchmark.

The share of education expenditure allocated to capital investments decreased substantially, from 21 percent in 2010 to nine percent in 2017. However, the proportion of the capital expenditure budget dedicated to building new schools increased from 77 percent to 100 percent between 2010 and 2017, reflecting government commitments to increasing access to education via the refurbishment/ construction of school facilities.

By sub-sector, the share of education expenditure dedicated to basic education decreased from 74 to 58 percent between 2010 and 2017, while that of tertiary and professional education increased from 13 to 23 percent.

Education official development assistance (ODA) to Tajikistan fluctuated between 2012 and 2017, increasing from US$370.6m in 2012 to US$481.8m in 2015, before decreasing to US$381.3m in 2017. The share of ODA allocated to basic education decreased significantly, from

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51.6 percent in 2010 (US$8.5 million) to 28.8 percent in 2017 (US$4.9 million).

Regarding the quality of international education financing in Tajikistan, most development partner initiatives in Tajikistan are project-based, with the exception of IsDB, which offers a mix of grant and loans to the government, and the World Bank, which offers an IDA credit. While development partner participation in the LEG and DCC reduced duplication of efforts among donor-led initiatives and brought greater alignment with MoES priorities, harmonization has not been addressed in either sets of meetings.

GPE Contributions

GPE has contributed to the overall quality and quantity of international financing for Tajikistan's education sector. **ESPIG funding** (US$16.2m) represented 18.8 percent of all education ODA, and 35.9 percent of basic education ODA, for the 2012-2017 period. Furthermore, the application of the **multiplier mechanism**, beginning with the announcement of GPE's granting of an additional US$10m to Tajikistan in 2018, brought about additional International contributions from the IsDB (US$30m), UNICEF (US$750k) and the government (US$6m).

With regards to quality of international financing, GPE's second ESPIG project (FIT-2, 2010-2013) stood as the first initiative that used a project implementation unit (PIU) within the MoES, resulting in development partners working more closely with the MoES, and bringing about increased ownership of development partner initiatives on the part of the MoES.

Notwithstanding GPE contributions to increased international financing, there is no evidence that GPE's requirements had significantly influenced the level of domestic education financing.

Implications for GPE

Before the introduction of the New Funding Model (NFM) by a Board decision in 2015, GPE had very little effect on either the quantity or quality of domestic education financing. The introduction of the NFM, however, and its acceptance by government and development partners, has resulted in increases in international financing quality from at least one new ODA partner (IsDB). The Tajikistan experience demonstrates relatively traditional patterns of how development partners making financial contributions attempt to coordinate their activities and given the small pool of such partners in Tajikistan and the tightly knit nature of the LEG, ad hoc coordination could be achieved. However, GPE support did not promote funding harmonization mechanisms to any significant degree.

GPE contributions to sector plan implementation

State of sector plan implementation in Tajikistan, 2012-2019

Given current monitoring and reporting systems, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the 2012-2020 NSED and MTEAPs have been implemented. Available information indicates that key interventions likely delivered according to target during the review period include, among others: construction of preschools; approval and delivery of school feeding in 2015; piloting of new models for Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers and kindergartens; development of ECE curricula and learning materials; implementation of a strategy on teacher training and management; and the introduction of a per capita financing system for ECE, primary and secondary levels of education.

All three MTEAPs within the 2012-2020 period covered by the NSED note that the financial gap

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for the 2012-2014, 2015-2017, and 2018-2020 periods were, respectively, 25.6, 10.8, and 56.7 percent of total resources required. However, available documents do not report committed vs disbursed amounts for the implementation of the NSED and MTEAPs, and as such there is no information on the actual funding gap in the implementation of the NSED.

GPE Contributions

GPE's **ESPIG 2013-2017**, which funded the GPE-4 project, contributed to filling gaps in what consulted stakeholders perceived as the most important areas in the education sector plan. More specifically, the GPE-4 contributed towards the implementation of a competency-based curriculum at the primary level, increasing access to ECE, and the introduction of per capita financing. In terms of performance against planned objectives, GPE-4 met planned targets for all of its intermediate results indicators.

Outside of indirect support (e.g. development partners encouraging MoES to increase its focus and capacity on M&E via the LEG), however, neither the ESPIG nor other modalities of GPE support directly strengthened MoES plan implementation capacities.

Implications for GPE

While government actors had the motivation to implement the NSED, and country-level stakeholders had the motivation and opportunity to align their own activities with the priorities of the sector plan, limited domestic resources and inadequate sector monitoring hindered the achievement of planned interventions. JSRs do not contribute to a better understanding of the extent to which the sector plan is being implemented, and as such do not produce actionable recommendations. It is important to underscore that the current gaps and shortfalls in the joint sector review process result in risks that implementation may not be sufficiently evidence-based and that necessary midcourse corrections may not occur.

Factors other than GPE contributions affecting change

Factors that positively influenced change in the above described areas included (i) financial and/or technical contributions of several development partners to sector planning, sector financing and 2012-2020 NSED implementation; (ii) development partners contributions to sector dialogue through the LEG and DCC, as well as to generating education sector data, such as the financing of the 2017 JSR by the EU; and (iii) an increase in the government's nominal allocations and expenditures to the education sector, despite economic downturns.

Factors that negatively influenced change included (i) a high level of staff turnover in both MoES and development partner organizations, which constrained the ministry's capacity for planning, and which added a considerable amount of time to update new staff on sector context and procedures, making dialogue mechanisms less effective; (ii) limited capacity within the MoES on principles related to results-based management (RBM) and monitoring in general; and (iii) pressures of a growing population and increasing school enrollment bringing about high levels of domestic financing dedicated to recurrent expenditures (teacher salaries) and school construction, instead of expenditures related to improving quality education.

Unintended results of GPE support

The evaluation did not find any unintended/unplanned positive or negative effects of GPE support.

System level change

System level change

Changes at the system-level were most significant in education quality, with some improvements in preschool, primary, secondary access. Progress with regards to equity of access to primary and secondary education was, however, low.

Access and equity

- **Improvements towards increased ECE access** were made in terms of increasing the number of state preschool institutions (by 21 percent between 2012 and 2017, from 508 to 615) and ECE centers (increased twofold, from 711 to 1,671, during the same period); and the adoption of the Law on Preschool Education in Tajikistan, which guarantees all Tajik citizens' right to early childhood care and education.
- **Limited progress in access to primary and secondary education** as the number of general secondary schools increased by only 1.5 percent between 2012 and 2017, from 3,813 to 3,870.
- **Continued challenges in equitable access to education** as the teaching of children with disabilities is not mainstreamed in general secondary schools and that most schools are not equipped with learning materials adapted to children with disabilities, nor are teachers trained to deliver education services to children with disabilities.

Quality

- **The rolling out of a new competency-based curriculum for grade 1 to 4 and related teacher training packages** constituted an important milestone during the review period. 80 percent of teachers at the primary level were trained to use the new competency-based curriculum.
- **The pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) decreased at the pre-primary level** from 12.65 to 11.44 between 2012 and 2017. However, there remain important regional disparities in the number of available teachers and that most ECE teachers have not received any formal training in early grade pedagogy.
- **The PTR also decreased at the primary level**, from 23 to 22.3 between 2012 and 2017. Evidence suggests, however, that the government had to hire recent graduates with little to no teaching experience to meet demands for teachers, with 14.2 percent of teachers in primary grades (1-4) and 20.7 percent of teachers in secondary grades (5-11) having less than three years of teaching experience in 2017.

System-level Strengthening

- **A national testing center was established** to provide harmonized examinations for students' admission to higher education, seen by consulted stakeholders as a major achievement in establishing harmonized standards to test student learning outcomes.
- **A baseline assessment of early grade learning was also conducted in 2018** for students in grades 2 to 4. While this does not yet constitute a national assessment of learning outcomes, this first assessment will likely serve as a basis for establishing a national system, which is planned in the upcoming 2021-2030 NSED.
- **The government introduced a per capita financing system in 2010** in an effort to decentralize education spending. Under this system, school budgets are calculated as a function of projected enrollment rates, making school budgets more proportional to school needs, with schools having control of some of the financial allowance for procurement, rather than education district authorities having full control.
- **Tajikistan's EMIS was upgraded to include data from ECE, TVET and higher education.**

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For each of these levels, the EMIS now provides data on schools, students, teachers, and material. As a result of these new measures, the country's national statistics agency has recognized the MoES EMIS as the sole source of official education statistics for Tajikistan, and data are no longer compiled separately by the national statistics agency and MoES.

Likely links between sector plan implementation and system level change

The implementation of the 2012-2020 NSED brought about most identified system-level improvements during the review period. Available evidence suggests that most system-level improvements were implemented under the leadership of the government, with development partners providing technical or financial support. Key improvements driven by plan implementation and supported by development partners include: (i) establishment of state preschools and ECE centers; (ii) upgrading of EMIS; (iii) introduction of per capita financing; (iv) development and roll-out of competency-based curriculum and related materials and teacher training; and (v) conducting of early grade assessment.

Implications for GPE

The evaluation found that two of the four underlying assumptions guiding the link between sector plan implementation and strengthened education systems to be true for Tajikistan: that there is sufficient national capacity to analyze, report on and use available data and maintain EMIS, and that ESP implementation leads to improvements of previous shortcomings in relation to learning. The experience of Tajikistan tends to indicate that greater degrees of plan implementation are dependent on processes of continuous revision and the development of shorter-range operational plans. This experience is especially valuable in countries where the JSR processes are not fully integrated with sector plan revisions, guiding midcourse corrections.

Learning outcomes and equity

Changes in learning outcomes, equity and gender equality

During the period under review, Tajikistan made some progress in improving access to the early childhood education (ECE) and lower secondary education. Key trends in impact-level indicators include:

- **Improvements in ECE enrollment,** as seen in increases in the ECE gross enrollment rate (GER) growing from 9.43 in 2012 to 9.91 in 2017 according to UIS data (though EMIS data indicates that the ECE GER in 2017 was 10.6). The ECE net enrollment rate (NER) increased from 7.38 in 2012 to 8.42 in 2017.
- **Modest increases in access to primary education** as seen in the primary GER remaining constant at 100.9 between 2012 and 2019, and the NER increasing slightly from 98.1 to 98.3 for the same years. The number of OOSC of primary school age decreased from 5,662 to 4,181 and the proportion of OOSC of primary school age fell from 0.9 to 0.5 percent between 2012 and 2017.
- **Slight improvement in the primary dropout rate,** as the 4th grade dropout rate fell from 1.6 to 1.0 percent between 2013 and 2016.
- **Improvements in lower secondary enrollment** were seen as the lower secondary GER increased from 94.7 in 2012 to 98.7 in 2017, and the NER similarly increasing from 94.0 in 2012 to 97.8 in 2017.
- **Continually high primary to lower secondary transition rates, with slight improvements,** as seen in its increase from 99.03 percent in 2013 to 99.49 percent in 2016.

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- **Increases in the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for several indicators,** as seen in the GPIs for out-of-school children of primary school age (from 1.48 in 2014 to 1.50 in 2016), lower secondary GER (from 0.94 in 2012 to 0.97 in 2017), and primary completion rate (from 0,98 in 2012 to 1 in 2017). GPIs remained stable for primary GER and for the primary to secondary transition rate, both at 0.99 between 2013 and 2016. The GPI for ECE GER, however, decreased from 0.90 to 0.87 between 2012 and 2017.

There is insufficient data to assess changes in learning outcomes over time due to the absence of a system or method for national assessment of student learning outcomes. Results from two early grade reading assessments (EGRAs) carried out in 2012 and 2018, the only data on learning outcomes available for the review period, had significantly different samples and are likely not comparable. However, consistent across both EGRAs is the observation that girls generally outperform boys in reaching oral reading proficiency

Likely links to observed system level changes

Progress in expanding pre-primary access is likely linked to infrastructure development, in terms of construction of state preschool institutions and establishment of ECE centers. Furthermore, modest improvements in the primary out-of-school rate and dropout rate may be due to the implementation of a competency-based approach to learning, as well as the development of learning materials and training of teachers in line with the new approach. Of note, these system-level changes stemmed from interventions planned and implemented within the 2012-2020 NSED framework, and under the leadership of the government with financial support from development partners.

Implications for GPE

While it is relatively straightforward to link increases in the number of preschool institutions and ECE centers to growth in enrollment at the pre-primary level, it is challenging to make clear linkages between system-level improvements pertaining to quality and system management to specific impact-level changes. This is due in part to the overall lack of data, but also due to the time lag between system-level improvements and measurable change at the impact level. Some of the noted system-level changes regarding quality (e.g., rollout of the competency-based approach to learning) and system management (e.g., EMIS upgrade, implementation of per capita financing system) are too recent to have had a noticeable impact.

Conclusions/ Overall observations

GPE contributions

Overall, the continuity of the FTI/GPE in Tajikistan has contributed to progressive improvements, albeit modest, in sector planning and overall progress in education sector reform. However, GPE's influence did not appear to lead to additional domestic education financing, and there remain challenges in promoting inclusiveness in education sector planning, dialogue and monitoring, not to mention assessing learning outcomes, given the evolving governance patterns of the country, although the possibility for some degree of progress appears to be viable as a consequence of the development of the upcoming 2021-2030 NSED.

Evidence emerging from stakeholder consultations and reviewed documents highlights that GPE's contribution to Tajikistan was strong in the following areas:

- **Sector planning:** GPE helped enhance the overall quality of the upcoming NSED, as

ESPIG funding requirements helped catalyze the development a new evidence based, credible NSED for the upcoming decade. Furthermore, the implications of the application of the NFM for the upcoming ESPIG have impacted on the development of the NSED by focusing more attention on quality of education and improved monitoring capacities so as to meet the accountability requirements inherent in the application of the NFM. Moreover, there is triangulated evidence to indicate that the process of developing the upcoming NSED was more participatory than prior plan developments.

- **Sector monitoring:** GPE provided technical and financial support, through its 2013-2017 ESPIG, for the development of the 2018-2020 MTEAP M&E plan, an important step forward in ensuring that education sector plans include adequate provisions to ensure the monitoring of results achievement. The ESPIG also funded training, resulting in increased MoES capacity to use EMIS data for decision-making. Finally, the ESPIG also financed upgrades brought to the EMIS which now collects data on three additional sub-sectors.

Evidence emerging from stakeholder consultations and reviewed documents highlight that GPE's contribution to Tajikistan was modest in the following areas:

- **Sector financing:** While Tajikistan closely approaches the GPE global target of 20 percent of total government expenditures to be directed towards education as a whole, there are considerable gaps remaining in crucial areas such as early childhood education and provision of education services for children with disabilities. With respect to international funding, there was mixed evidence about whether GPE had attracted additional funding, as while the pool of traditional development partners has reduced over time with the withdrawal of several OECD partners, there is credible evidence that Tajikistan's membership in GPE, combined with the positive impact of the NFM, has generated new development partner participation in the form of the IsDB.
- **Plan implementation:** While GPE financing closed gaps related to increase of facilities, introduction of competency-based curricula, there is only limited evidence of the latest ESPIG directly strengthening MoES implementation capacity, with outcomes such as primary enrollment, primary to lower secondary transition rates, school life expectancy, primary repetition rate, and primary completion rate all either stagnating or deteriorating.
- **Sector dialogue:** While GPE has been viewed as a catalytic agent in Tajikistan, there have been limited advances in reaching out to civil society and the private sector so as to expand overall sector dialogue. In addition, new evidence points to the fact that the development of the upcoming NSED catalyzed new recognitions of the importance of increasing the scope of sector dialogue, although this evidence only speaks to very preliminary activities and cannot at this time be inferred to relate to broader sustained trends in terms of participatory dialogue. Specifically, the fragility of M&E systems and weaknesses in the JSP process pose on-going challenges.

Emerging good practices

Promotion of greater donor/partner coordination: The relatively small number of development partners currently active in Tajikistan combined with the level of commitment of several successive GAs shows that there are possibilities to affect a greater level of partner coordination in the absence of specific mechanisms such as pooled funds.

Impact of long-term FTI/GPE participation: Familiarity of in-country stakeholders with the GPE model, processes and principles strengthened the capacity of the MoES to better design and subsequently implement sector

plans, as well as enabled all partners, including government, to better understand the implications of the evolution of the GPE funding model as a whole, and specifically the implications of the NFM.

Catalytic effect of the multiplier provisions of the NFM: The multiplier generated not only additional resources for the education sector but also the expansion of the relatively compact development partners pool to now include the IsDB as both contributor and grant agent. The lesson from Tajikistan may be that multiplier provisions offer unique opportunities for countries to reach out beyond traditional development partner pool to seek not only additional funds but also new sources of nonfinancial support and assistance.

Positive impact of long-term ESP planning combined with shorter-term rolling and sequential operational plans: Tajikistan implements a three-year rolling planning mechanism that complements the decade-long ESP, and that ensures continuity of strategic objectives set down in the ESP with shorter-term funding considerations and programmatic developments. In this way, the NSED is in essence continually being reviewed, and as such a process of ongoing organizational learning has been fostered.

Strategic Questions for GPE

1) The current relatively exclusive nature of the LEG, while reflecting the evolving state of the nation's polity as a whole, has the effect of limiting dialogue that could benefit the quality of education in the country and also its inclusiveness. Therefore, in this national context, what can GPE and key players in this partnership (like the new Grant Agent, the existing Coordinating Agency and Secretariat representatives) do to promote a process of increasing the inclusiveness of the LEG?
2) While Tajikistan on the surface appears to be making financial commitments approximately equivalent to GPE expectations, it was generally recognized by government and development partner stakeholders that the educational challenges in the country considerably exceed the current expectations for government investment and development partner resources. In that context, what can GPE do to promote nontraditional resourcing, including private sector and/or public-private partnerships in priority areas such as early childhood education?
3) Recognizing that the limited development partner pool in Tajikistan is now expanding due to the inclusion of the IsDB as both a new funding partner and grant agent, efforts should be more dedicated to ensuring harmonization of effort and concordance among all development partners with the priorities to be set out in the upcoming NSED and corresponding ESPIG.
4) Given an apparent degree of overlap between various units of the MoES especially in relation to curriculum development and teacher training, what can GPE do to address these inherent limitations, and as such improve the effectiveness of the implementation of the upcoming NSED?
5) Given the apparent dichotomy of the budgetary model of Tajikistan, which has the Ministry of Finance as a central agency, and the line ministries, in this case MoES, in competition for resource decision-making, what can GPE do to improve dialogue and cooperation between these two budgetary agents? Should GPE, in Tajikistan and possibly elsewhere, reach out beyond purely education-related public sector bodies, to institutions that have decision-making authority over resource allocations affecting the education sector?

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6) The Tajikistan experience of being a former Soviet republic has resulted in a unique set of perspectives about the state and citizen relationship, where dialogue has been largely focused on government to government partnerships (with multilateral agencies being absorbed into this paradigm), and where civil society has not been an active participant. Although there is some evidence to show that the development of the upcoming NSED may have resulted in a degree of willingness to promote more inclusive dialogue, it remains to be seen whether this inclusiveness will generally take root. Does the evolving governance model of Tajikistan and the apparent technical support needs arising from the upcoming NSED and accompanying ESPIG require more direct non-financial support from the GPE Secretariat than has been afforded in the past?

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and purpose of this summative country level evaluation

1. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is a multilateral global partnership and funding platform established in 2002 as the Education for All/Fast Track Initiative (EFA/FTI) and renamed GPE in 2011. GPE aims to strengthen education systems in developing countries, in order to ensure improved and more equitable student learning outcomes, as well as improved equity, gender equality and inclusion in education.[11] GPE is a partnership that brings together developing countries, donor countries, international organizations, civil society, teacher organizations, the private sector and foundations.

2. This country-level evaluation (CLE), of GPE's support to the national education system of the Republic of Tajikistan, is part of a larger GPE study that comprises 20 summative and eight formative CLEs. The overall study is part of GPE's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategy 2016-2020, which calls for a linked set of evaluation studies to explore how well GPE outputs and activities contribute to outcomes and impact at the country level.[12] Tajikistan was selected as one of 20 summative CLE countries based on sampling criteria described in the study's inception report.[13] As per the inception report and the study's Terms of Reference (TOR), the objective of summative CLEs is:

- to assess GPE contributions to strengthening education systems and, ultimately, the achievement of education results within a partner developing country in the areas of learning, equity, equality and inclusion; and hence,
- to assess the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of GPE's theory of change (ToC) and of its country-level operational model.[14]

3. The primary intended users of CLEs are members of the Global Partnership for Education, including Developing Country Partners (DCPs) and members of local education groups (LEGs) in the sampled countries, and the GPE Board of Directors. The secondary user is the Secretariat. Tertiary intended users include the wider education community at global and country levels.

[11] Global Partnership for Education (2016): GPE 2020. Improving learning and equity through stronger education systems. https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/gpe-2020-strategic-plan.

[12] In the context of this assignment, the term 'impact' is aligned with the terminology used by GPE to refer to changes in sectoral learning, equity, gender equality, and inclusion outcomes (reflected in Strategic Goals 1 and 2 of the GPE 2016-2020 Strategic Plan). While the CLEs examine progress towards impact in this sense, they do not constitute formal impact evaluations, which usually entail counterfactual analysis based on randomized control trials.

[13] See final Inception Report, 2018, https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/country-level-evaluations-final-inception-report, and subsequent update, the Modified Approach to CLEs, 2018. www.globalpartnership.org/content/modified-approach-country-level-evaluations-fy-ii-2019-and-fy-iii-2020

[14] For details on the model, see Global Partnership for Education (2017): How GPE works in partner countries. https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/how-gpe-works-partner-countries

Box 1.1. Scope of this summative country-level evaluation

This summative CLE is focused on eliciting insights that can help GPE assess and, if needed, improve its overall approach to supporting partner developing countries. It does *not* set out to evaluate the performance of the Government of Tajikistan (GoT), of other in-country partners and stakeholders, or of specific GPE grants.

The core review period for this CLE (2012-2019) runs from the start of the 2012-2020 Education Sector Plan, which was developed in 2010 and 2011, through the implementation of the 2013-2017 Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant (ESPIG), and the development of the upcoming 2021-2030 ESP, therefore including the preparation of two sector plans and one ESPIG.

1.2 Methodology overview

4. The guiding frameworks for the evaluation are the evaluation matrix (Appendix I) and the country-level theory of change for the Republic of Tajikistan (Appendix II).[15] A brief summary of the CLE methodology is provided in Appendix III of this report. For further details, please refer to the final Inception Report for the overall assignment (January 2018).

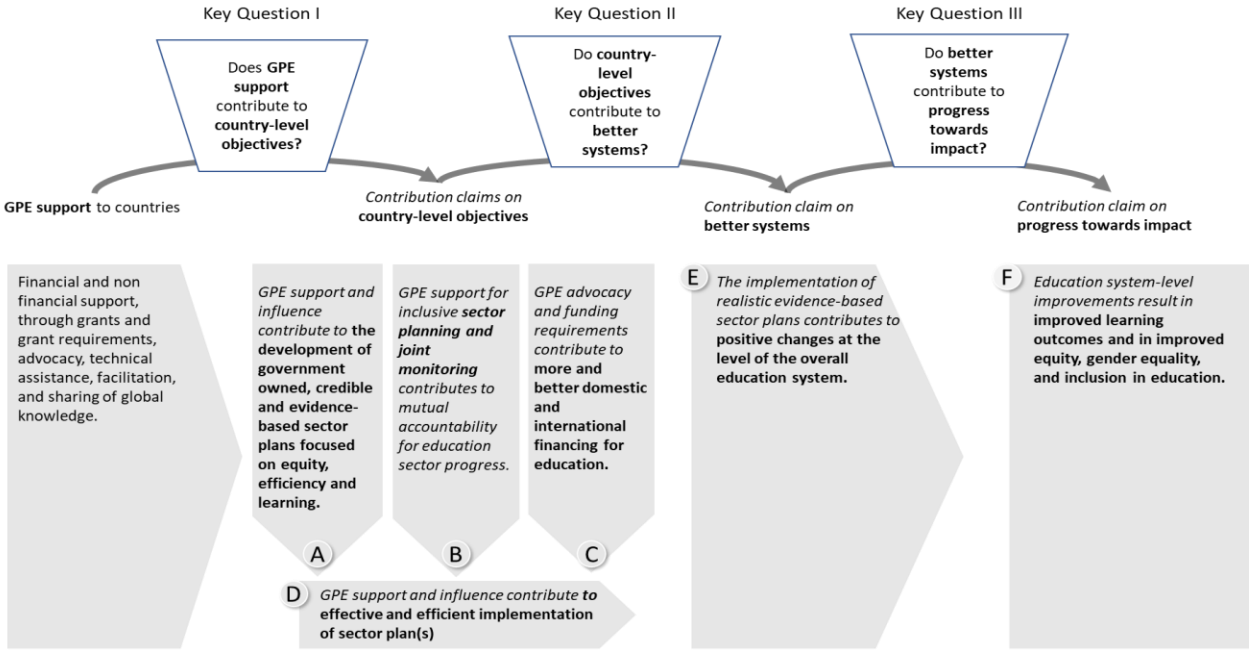
5. For the Tajikistan CLE, the evaluation team consulted a total of 43 stakeholders from the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and its agencies, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, civil society coalitions and teacher training institutions, nongovernmental organizations, the GPE Secretariat, and stakeholders from other backgrounds (see Appendix V for a list of consulted stakeholders). Most stakeholders were consulted in Dushanbe, Tajikistan between October 7 and 18, 2019; others were consulted by phone/Skype shortly before or after the country visit. The evaluation team also reviewed a wide range of relevant documents, databases and websites as well as selected literature (see Appendix VI for a list of reviewed sources).

6. The report presents findings related to the three 'Key Questions' (KQs) from the evaluation matrix, which trace the contribution of GPE support to GPE country-level objectives (KQ I); of these country-level objectives to better education systems (KQ II); and of better education systems to progress towards impact-level objectives in terms of learning, equity, gender equality and inclusion (KQ III). The findings of this report are accordingly presented under three sections that each corresponds to one of the KQs. In turn, each section is divided into sub-sections that address key GPE contribution claims as per GPE's ToC. The three KQs and the six contribution claims (A, B, C, D, E, F) are shown in Figure 1.1 below.

[15] This country-specific ToC was adapted from the generic country-level ToC that was developed in the assignment Inception Report.

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Figure 1.1 The evaluation presents findings on key evaluation questions and contribution claims



7. Throughout the report, we use tables to provide readers with broad overviews of key CLE findings on the respective issue. To facilitate quick orientation, we use a simple color-coding scheme that is based on a three-category scale in which **green** equals 'strong/high/achieved', **amber** equals 'moderate/medium/partly achieved', **red** signifies 'low/weak/not achieved', and **gray** indicates a lack of sufficient data to rate the issue. In each table, the respective meaning of the chosen color coding is clarified. The color coding is intended as a qualitative orientation tool to readers, rather than as a quantifiable measure.

Limitations

8. The Tajikistan CLE was impacted by gaps in process-related documentation and by statistical gaps.

9. There were considerable data gaps in relation to Secretariat records over the 2013-2018 time period. This restricted the ability of the evaluation team to fully assess the GPE Secretariat's contributions to the education sector in Tajikistan and led to a heavy reliance on triangulating oral testimony from various stakeholders.

10. Gaps in statistical data negatively affected the evaluation team's ability to assess system changes and changes in learning outcomes. The most significant gap is that there is no recognized national system to assess educational outcomes, including assessment of primary language and mathematics skills for early grades. What information exists in this regard is drawn from two assessments conducted by a bilateral development partner.[16]

[16] Other data gaps include the following: limited data on lower and upper secondary out of school rates, limited data on upper secondary enrollment rates, limited education data disaggregated by region and categories of vulnerable children (children with disabilities, ethnic minorities, children from poor families, etc.).

1.3 Structure of the report

11. Following this introduction, **Section 2** gives an overview of the national context of Tajikistan, with a focus on the education sector (Section 2.2) and the history of the country's involvement with GPE (Section 2.3).

12. **Section 3** presents evaluation findings related to GPE's contributions to: education sector planning; mutual accountability in the education sector through inclusive policy dialogue and sector monitoring; education sector plan implementation; and domestic and international education sector financing.

13. **Section 4** discusses education system-level changes in Tajikistan during the period under review, as well as any likely links between these changes and the four areas of changes discussed in section 3 (sectoral planning, mutual accountability, plan implementation, and financing).

14. **Section 5** presents an overview of the impact-level changes in terms of learning, equity, gender equality and inclusion observable in Tajikistan over the course of the review period.

15. **Section 6**, finally, presents overall conclusions of the evaluation and outlines several strategic questions to GPE with regard to the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of GPE's country-level theory of change (ToC) and its country-level operational model.

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2 Context

2.1 Overview of Tajikistan

16. The Republic of Tajikistan is a mountainous, landlocked country in Central Asia that gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The land area is 138,790 square kilometers[17] and the population was 9.1 million in 2018.[18] Tajikistan is a presidential republic consisting of four provinces divided into 58 districts. Its population is relatively young; 34 percent of the population is below 15 years old.[19] The country's population is one of the most rapidly growing in Central Asia and increased by 40 percent between 2000 and 2016; in 2015 the fertility rate was 3.064. Tajikistan is a primarily rural country with 73.3 percent of the population living in rural areas.[20]

17. Tajikistan is a low-income country with a per capita Gross National Income of US$4,050 (2018)[21] and a Human Development Index rank of 125 out of 188 (2018).[22] Tajikistan's GDP per capita grew consistently between 2000 and 2018, from US$138 to US$826.[23] This growth was accompanied by a reduction in the poverty rate; the proportion of people living under the national poverty line declined from 83 percent in 2000 to 29.5 percent in 2017.[24] Due to a lack of employment opportunities in Tajikistan, in 2018 more than one million Tajik citizens work abroad - roughly 90% in Russia - supporting families back home through remittances that were equivalent to 29 percent of the GDP.[25]

2.2 Education sector in Tajikistan

18. The constitution of Tajikistan guarantees free and compulsory education. While this right applies to general basic education which starts at age 7 and lasts for nine years, the constitution also guarantees free specialized and vocational education. Since 2013, the Law on Preschool Education and Care guarantees the right to early childhood care and education to all Tajik citizens.[26] Both the Law on Preschool Education and the Law on Education guarantee the right to education for all, "regardless of nationality, race, sex, language, religion, political beliefs, and social and material provisions."[27]

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[17] World Bank, Land area (sq. km) – Tajikistan | https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/AG.LND.TOTL.K2?locations=TJ, retrieved November 2019. All links in this document were retrieved in November 2019, unless otherwise indicated

[18] World Bank, Population, total - Tajikistan | https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=TJ

[19] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[20] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2019). Joint Sector Review Report.

[21] Source: World Bank, GNI per capita - Tajikistan | https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.PP.CD?locations=TJ

[22] Source: United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Index- Tajikistan | http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/TJK

[23] In constant 2010 US$. Source: Work Bank Open Data, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=TJ-UZ-KG-TM-KZ

[24] Source: World Bank – Tajikistan Country Overview - https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/overview#1

[25] Source: Source: World Bank, personal remittances, received % of GDP - Tajikistan | https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=TJ

[26] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[27] Source: Ibid

19. The education system is composed of preschool education, general secondary education (term used in Tajikistan to refer to both primary and secondary levels of education), vocational and technical education, and higher education, all of which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) which has regional representation in all 58 districts. Preschool education begins for two-year-old children and is offered in both state-funded kindergartens, which offer services on a full-day model, and Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers, which usually offer services on a half-day basis. ECE centers are located predominantly in rural areas and supported by international and national partners such as NGOs, INGOs, local governments, and communities.[28] Children begin primary school at age 7. Compulsory education includes four years of primary education and five years of lower secondary education. After completing the nine years of compulsory formal education, students can follow one of two streams: They can complete upper-secondary education and transition to higher education or pursue technical and vocational education and training (TVET) which consists of two levels: primary and secondary. Upon TVET completion, students obtain a general secondary certificate and a TVET certificate.[29]

Table 2.1 Official school age, by level[30]

LEVEL AND GRADE	AGE GROUP (IN YEARS)	CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE	STUDENTS IN SCHOOL	NUMBER OF FEMALE STUDENTS
Pre-primary	2-5	918,739	91,081	41,004
Primary (compulsory)	7-10	799,736	771,040	372,268
Lower Secondary (compulsory)	11-15	820,440	809,645	388,472
Upper Secondary	16-17	336,212	254,184	98,046
Total:		**2,875,127**	**1,925,950**	**899,790**

20. Based on data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the education joint sector review prepared in 2017, the Tajik education system includes the following:

- **Children of school age**: 2.8 million children and adolescents from pre-primary through upper secondary school age in 2017.[31]
- **Students in school**: Close to 2 million children enrolled from pre-primary to upper secondary levels in 2017 in public institutions, and 19,343 children enrolled from primary to upper secondary levels in 2017 in private institutions[32] (of which 8,786 students in primary education, 7,608 in lower secondary, and 2,949 in upper secondary).

[28] Source: Ibid

[29] Source: Ibid

[30] Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database, data.uis.unesco.org, multiple indicators. All the data presented is for the year 2017, except for upper secondary enrollment data which was available for 2013 only.

[31] Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database, http://data.uis.unesco.org/.

[32] Source: Ibid

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- **Schools**: In 2017, there were 2,286 pre-primary schools,[33] and 3,870 general secondary schools offering either primary education and secondary education or both; 78.3 percent of these institutions offer students the complete cycle of primary and secondary education from grades 1 to 11, and 9.1 percent of schools offer only primary grades (grades 1 to 4). The remainder offer some combination of primary and some grades of secondary education.[34]
- **Teachers**:
  - In 2017, 9,083 teachers were employed in state preschool education, of which only 65.7 percent have completed studies higher than lower-secondary education. 97.8 percent of teachers in preschool facilities are women, who are perceived to have been forced out of the labor market due to expectations of housework and childcare at home.[35]
  - In 2017, there were 120,635 teachers from grades 1 to 11 (42.9 percent male, 57.1 percent female), 70.9 percent of whom have a higher education diploma.[36]

21. Since 2005, Tajikistan's education sector has been guided by three sector-wide strategic plans. The National Strategy for Education Development (NSED) 2005-2015 was the first comprehensive sector-wide strategic plan prepared by Tajikistan.[37] The NSED was updated in 2009 and integrated into the NSED 2009-2015. Education sector development is currently guided by the NSED 2012-2020 which the MoES operationalizes through three-year Medium-Term Education Action Plans (MTEAPs). As of October 2019, the MoES is in the process of developing a NSED covering the years 2021 to 2030, along with its first MTEAP for the period 2021-2023. This evaluation focuses on the period covered by the 2012-2020 NSED, which includes the process of developing the 2021-2030 NSED up through October 2019. Table 2.2 provides an overview of the review period and the main policies, plans, and GPE grants in Tajikistan between 2010 and 2020.

Table 2.2 Timeline of key policy documents in the education sector in Tajikistan, 2010-2020

CATEGORY	PRE 2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	POST 2020
Review Period													
National frameworks					The Law on Preschool Education and Care (Law No. 1056)								
					Law on Education revised in 2013 (Law No. 1004)								
								National Development Strategy (NDS) 2016-2030					
Sector Plans and related documents	2009-2015 NSED (made obsolete by the 2012-2020 NSED)												
				2012-2020 NSED									
				MTEAP 2012-2014			MTEAP 2015-2017			MTEAP 2018-2020			
													2021 -

[33] 1,671 ECE centers and 615 preschool state institutions. Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report

[34] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2019). Joint Sector Review Report.

[35] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2017). Joint Sector Review Report.

[36] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2019). Joint Sector Review Report.

[37] Source: Republic of Tajikistan. (2012). Development Partner's Appraisal and Endorsement Report, National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2020.

CATEGORY	PRE 2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	POST 2020
													2030 NSED
Joint Sector Reviews						•	(2014 JSR updated)	•	•		(2017 JSR updated)		
GPE Grants	ESPIG 2006-2010												
		ESPIG 2010-2013											
					ESPIG 2013-2017								
					ESPDG				Two ESPDGs				
					PDG						PDG		

2.3 GPE in Tajikistan

22. Tajikistan joined GPE in 2005 and is represented on the Board through the Eastern Europe, Middle East and Central Asia constituency. Since joining GPE, Tajikistan has received eight grants from GPE: three education sector plan development grants (ESPDG), two program development grants (PDG), and three education sector plan implementation grants (ESPIG), two of which were through the FTI. Tajikistan is in the process of preparing an application for an ESPIG with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) as grant agent. The World Bank has been the agent for five previous GPE grants, and UNICEF has acted as grant agent for two ESPDG grants. UNICEF has been the coordination agency for the review period of this CLE (2012 to 2019). This evaluation includes a review of the latest ESPIG, the PDGs in 2013 and 2019, and the ESPDGs in 2013 and 2017. Dates and values for all grants are shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 GPE grants to Tajikistan[38]

GRANT TYPE	YEARS	ALLOCATIONS (US$)	DISBURSEMENTS (US$)	GRANT AGENT
Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG)	2013-2017	16,200,000	16,200,000	IBRD
	2010-2013	13,500,000	13,500,001	IBRD
	2006-2010	18,250,293	18,250,293	IBRD
Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG)	2017	196,000		IBRD
	2017	133,400		UNICEF
	2013	250,000	247,797	UNICEF
	2019	188,214		IsDB

[38] Source: GPE, Tajikistan overview, https://www.globalpartnership.org/country/tajikistan. All links in this document are as of November 2019. All figures in the table are in current US$ (as of year of grant approval).

GRANT TYPE	YEARS	ALLOCATIONS (US$)	DISBURSEMENTS (US$)	GRANT AGENT
Program Development Grant (PDG)	2013	200,000	123,647	IBRD

23. Tajikistan received a grant through the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) III, directed to the Alliance of CSOs for Education in Tajikistan, a coalition of six nongovernmental organizations working in the education sector in Tajikistan. Since 2018, the coalition is not directly CSEF grant-contracted, but is rather supported by the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic & Adult Education, a regional network of CSOs. Finally, one GPE Global and Regional Activities (GRA) grant has financed activities specific to Tajikistan, GRA 13 (Assessment Systems and Learning Outcomes).

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3 GPE Contributions to Sector Planning, Dialogue/Monitoring, Financing, and Implementation

3.1 Introduction

24. This section summarizes findings related to Key Question I of the evaluation matrix: "Has GPE support to Tajikistan contributed to achieving country-level objectives related to sector planning, to sector dialogue and monitoring, to more/better financing for education, and to sector plan implementation? If so, then how?"[39]

25. The GPE country-level theory of change, developed in the inception report and adapted to the Tajikistan context (Appendix II), outlines four contribution claims related to GPE's influence on progress towards achieving country-level objectives (one claim per objective).

26. This section is structured around and tests the four contribution claims by answering two sub-questions for each phase of the policy cycle. First, in Tajikistan, what characterized sector planning, mutual accountability, sector financing and ESP implementation respectively during the period under review? And second, has GPE's support contributed to observed changes in (and across) these dimensions and, if so, how?

3.2 GPE contributions to education sector planning[40]

Overview

27. This section addresses the following Country Evaluation Questions (CEQs):

- What characterized the education sector plan in place during the core 2012-2019 period under review? (CEQ 1.1.b)
- Has GPE support to sector planning contributed to better (more relevant, more realistic, government-owned) education sector plans? (Key Question V)[41] During the 2012-2019 period under review, have there been unintended, positive or negative, consequences of GPE financial and non-financial support? (CEQ 3.2)
- What factors other than GPE support are likely to have contributed to the observed changes (or lack thereof) in sector planning? (CEQ 3.1)

[39] Improved planning, dialogue/monitoring, financing, and plan implementation correspond to Country-Level Objectives (CLOs) 1, 2, 3 and 4 of GPE's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan.

[40] This section addresses evaluation questions CEQ 1.1 b and 1.2 b-d, as well as to (cross-cutting) CEQs 3.1 and 3.2.

[41] In particular: To what extent has the revised Quality Assurance and Review (QAR) process for education sector plans contributed to the development of better-quality education sector plans? Why? Why not? (CEQ 9); To what extent have the revised ESPDG mechanism and/or ESPIG grant requirements (under the GPE New Funding Model launched in 2015) contributed to the development of better-quality education sector plans? Why? Why not? (CEQ 10); To what extent has GPE support to inclusive sector dialogue influenced sector planning? (CEQ 11b).

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- What are implications of evaluation findings for GPE support to Tajikistan? (Key Question IV)

28. A high-level overview of evaluation findings on sector planning is provided in Table 3.1. These observations are elaborated on through the findings and supporting evidence presented below.

Table 3.1 Overview: CLE findings on sector planning and related GPE contributions in 2012-2018[42]

DEGREE OF PROGRESS TOWARDS A GOVERNMENT-OWNED, ROBUST ESP	DEGREE OF GPE CONTRIBUTION[43]	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS LIKELY HELD TRUE[44]				
Strong: Tajikistan's NSED 2012-2020 reflected improvements over earlier iterations. Moreover, although not yet independently assessed, the upcoming 2021-2030 draft NSED contains many obvious improvements to increase its relevance and the likelihood of achievability. There appears to be increased levels of government ownership vis a vis the two plans and, increased accountability and monitoring mechanisms and enhanced levels of civil society participation during plan preparation	**Strong**: For the NSED 2012-2020, there is evidence that both GPE funding and GPE's quality-assurance and appraisal process contributed to a better planning process and a better plan than might have otherwise been the case. GPE is likely to have been a critical actor, substantially enabling and complementing the work of other actors. For the as yet to be finalized 2021-2030 NSED, these same positive factors appear to have accelerated the improvements.	1	2	3	4	5

Characteristics of sector planning during the 2012-2019 review period[45]

Finding 1: Tajikistan has had a history of developing government-led education sector plans and the quality of sector planning has slowly improved, including most recently with the NSED for 2021-30 that has the potential to mark a significant step forward, though it has yet to be financed or assessed.

29. As mentioned in section 2.2, Tajikistan has developed three NSED for the years 2005-2015, 2009-2015, and 2012-2020, guiding education sector development in Tajikistan. Presently, a fourth NSED ranging out to 2030 is in final preparation. Although as yet not independently assessed, it is sufficiently developed to be tentatively assessed in this CLE.

30. The current plan, 2012-2020 NSED, articulated three main objectives: (i) changing the structure of education; (ii) adjusting the education system and business mechanisms; and (iii) ensuring equal access

[42] Colors stand for 'strong' (green), 'modest' (amber), 'minimal to not detectable' (red), or 'insufficient data' (grey)".

[43] The assessment is based on whether the CLE found evidence of: (i) GPE support likely having influenced (parts of) sector planning; (ii) stakeholder perceptions on the relevance (relative influence) of GPE support; and (iii) the existence or absence of additional or alternative factors beyond GPE support that were equally or more likely to explain (part of) the noted progress. The same assessment criteria are used for rating GPE contributions in all following sections.

[44] For sector planning, the five underlying assumptions in the country level ToC were: (1) country level stakeholders having the *capabilities* to jointly improve sector analysis and planning; (2) stakeholders having the *opportunities* (resources, time, conducive environment) to do so; (3) stakeholders having the *motivation* (incentives) to do so; (4) GPE having sufficient leverage within the country to influence sector planning; and (5) EMIS and LAS producing relevant and reliable data to inform sector planning.

[45] The review period of the evaluation (2012 to October 2019) includes the development of the 2012-2020 NSED, the 2012-2014, 2015-2017, and 2018-2020 MTEAPs, and the ongoing development of the 2021-2030 NSED.

and quality to education. The NSED details these three objectives through 30 subcomponents (strategies). Table 3.2 below compares the main challenges in the education sector identified during the development of the 2012-2020 NSED on the one hand, and key objectives and subcomponents of the education sector plan on the other hand. Table 3.2 also lists the key challenges and recommendations identified in the education sector analysis conducted in 2019 (which became part of the development of the upcoming 2021-2030 NSED).

Table 3.2 Overview of key challenges identified and 2012-2020 NSED strategies

KEY EDUCATION CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED IN THE 2012-2020 NSED[46]	2012-2020 NSED[47]
Key challenges: In relation to "change the structure of education" objective/strategy: • Low education coverage at the pre-primary, TVET, and higher education levels. • Low completion rates at the secondary levels of education. • Low qualification of teachers at all educational levels; lack of teachers with specialized education; shortage of teachers in subjects, such as mathematics, physics, and chemistry; lack of specialized staff to provide services to children with disabilities and special needs; and low salaries and motivation of teachers. • Unconformity between the TVET education programs and labor market needs. • Absence of standardized testing for admission into TVET and higher education. • Absence of a national assessment system for learning outcomes at all levels. In relation to "adjust the education system and business mechanisms" objective/strategy: • Inadequate educational infrastructure. • Teaching programs are obsolete (knowledge-based). • Lack of qualified teachers at all educational levels. In relation to "ensure equal access and quality to education" objective/strategy: • Important differences between the level of education men and women and between people in rural and urban areas.	**NSED main objectives and strategies:** • Change the structure of education. Strategies include develop and implement new education programs; and transfer from knowledge-based to competency-based learning at all levels; and increase the relevance of TVET and higher education to market needs. • Adjust the education system and business mechanisms. Strategies include introduce pre-primary education systems for five and six-years-old-children; introduce new remuneration systems in education; encourage students' participation in supplementary classes; develop appropriate systems for inclusive education; and implement a national learning assessment system. • Ensure equal access and quality to education. Strategies include: increase pre-primary education coverage; improve the quality and equality of resource provision to general education; increase girls' participation in higher education; ensure access of national monitories to education in their native language; introduce an enrollment system in higher education based on national testing results; and create systems of identification and support for talented children.

[46] It is important to note that while the NSED development was supported by different studies and reports, the NSED was not informed by a comprehensive Education Sector Analysis. The information included in table 3.2 is directly taken from the 2012-2020 NSED document. This list is not exhaustive, it contains a summary of the key challenges.

[47] Source: Republic of Tajikistan. (2012). National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2020. P.19-20. This list is not exhaustive, it contains the most relevant strategies in relation to the objectives.

KEY EDUCATION CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED IN THE 2012-2020 NSED[46]	2012-2020 NSED[47]
• Important obstacles to access education for children with disabilities.	

31. The current NSED was operationalized through three-year MTEAPs describing the medium-term activities. While the appraisal notes that there was consistency between the NSED and the MTEAPs, some of the projects included in the MTEAPs were not included in the NSED. This is due to the inclusion in the MTEAPs of a few initiatives from development partners that were not initially planned in the NSED.

32. Table 3.3 below presents the GPE assessment of the quality of the 2012-2020 NSED. The GPE assessment of the quality of the 2021-2030 NSED is not yet available since the strategy is still in development. The table indicates that the 2012-2020 NSED did not meet the minimum number of standards to be considered a 'credible' plan by GPE standards, per indicator 16a of the GPE results framework. The table includes the evaluation team's assessment for each ESP standard.

Table 3.3 GPE ratings of plan quality, and evaluator assessment of NSED 2012-2020 quality[48]

ESP STANDARDS	GPE RESULTS FRAMEWORK (RF) RATINGS	EVALUATOR ASSESSMENT BASED ON INTERVIEWS AND DOCUMENTS, E.G., PLAN APPRAISALS
	2012-2020 NSED	
Overall vision	1/1	The 2012-2020 NSED priorities and planned activities for the sector are in alignment with national priorities.
Strategic	0/7	The appraisal noted that the NSED is overambitious. The results and priorities are not prioritized based on MoES capacity. Consulted development partners saw both the NSED and MTEAPs as long lists of activities that required priority setting. While the NSED is comprehensive and outlines plans for each level of education, priorities among education levels are not outlined.[49]
Holistic	3/3	The 2012-2020 NSED encompassed the entire education sector. While a greater emphasis is put on preschool education, basic general education, and TVET, the 2012-2020 NSED also covers higher education.

[48] GPE ratings are taken directly from GPE's results framework data, indicator 16a, 2016. The numbers in the second column indicate the number of points awarded to a given plan under GPE's indicator 16a, relative to the maximum possible number of points that could have been awarded. Most items rated by GPE can be rated zero (not addressed), one (partially addressed), or two (fully addressed), though detailed rating guidelines vary. It is important to note that the ratings provided are based on an assessment of the 2012-2020 NSED and accompanying 2012-2014 MTEAP. The subsequent 2015-2017 and 2018-2020 MTEAPs are not included in the assessment.

[49] Source: Republic of Tajikistan. (2012). Development Partner's Appraisal and Endorsement Report, National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2020.

ESP STANDARDS	GPE RESULTS FRAMEWORK (RF) RATINGS	EVALUATOR ASSESSMENT BASED ON INTERVIEWS AND DOCUMENTS, E.G., PLAN APPRAISALS
	2012-2020 NSED	
Evidence-based	0/1	While the NSED development was supported by different studies and reports, including the use of data drawn from the EMIS, preschool sector analysis, and others, the NSED was not informed by a comprehensive Education Sector Analysis. The appraisal noted that some of the NSED initiatives were not supported by solid evidence but were rather based on perceptions of the education system. Finally, the appraisal also noted that there were no existing system-wide measures or assessments of quality of education or children's learning outcomes in use in the education system.
Achievable (ESP)	4/9	While the 2012-2020 NSED included multi-year action plans, it addressed financing in a short 5-paragraph section. While a financing gap was identified, the NSED did not include a specific plan to fill the gap nor refer to a financial simulation model. The appraisal also noted that there was no budget for any of the specific initiatives included in the NSED. The appraisal considered the monitoring and evaluation section of the NSED as weak as it included only vague indicators with no clear baselines or dated targets. Multiple consulted stakeholders from both MoES and development partner agencies also noted the monitoring and evaluation as one of the NSED's main weaknesses.
Sensitive to context	1/1	The NSED identified risks to implementation and solutions or mitigating measures. In particular, the appraisal noted that the MoES reduced the political risks of implementing the NSED by submitting it to the government for approval, ensuring its strategies were politically viable.
Attentive to disparities	4/6	The NSED paid particular attention to girls and children with disabilities in its objectives and in its inclusion of gender disaggregated data. It did not include an analysis of regional disparities.
Overall, at least 5/7 met?	No (4/7)	Overall, while the appraisal rated the NSED 2012-2020 as satisfactory in terms of process and stakeholder engagement, the appraisal also noted several areas of improvement, such as prioritization of objectives, implementation readiness, and outlining clear indicators for monitoring implementation.

33. Overall, this evaluation noted areas of improvement and mixed progress in sector planning process in Tajikistan. The following observations are based on interview data as well as available documents.

34. Over the 2012-2019 review period, two significant **improvements** in the sector planning process were evident:

- **Evidence-based:** While the 2012-2020 NSED was not informed by an Education Sector Analysis (ESA), the 2021-2030 NSED is informed by an ESA that was prepared together with UNESCO and

further reviewed and finalized by one technical expert both funded by ESPDG.[50] The ESA is seen as a consolidation of different studies, most notably the 2019 revision of the 2017 JSR, which was funded by the EU, and updated data from the EMIS.[51] The MoES provided comments on the ESA, which was then revised by UNESCO accordingly. The 2021-2030 NSED now includes a lengthy description of results that were achieved during the 2012-2020 NSED timeframe, those that were not achieved and the respective level of prioritization.

- **NSED and MTEAP monitoring and evaluation**: As noted in Table 3.2, the 2012-2020 NSED's measures to ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy are weak. Both the NSED and 2012-2014 and 2015-2017 MTEAPs include vague performance measures with no clear baselines or dated targets. The 2018-2020 MTEAP, on the other hand, does include indicators for monitoring the implementation of expected results, and for increasing the accountability of relevant partners, illustrating increased capacity and awareness within the MoES to monitoring plan implementation (more on this in section 3.3).[52] All consulted stakeholders were confident that the upcoming NSED would include appropriate measures to ensure the implementation of the strategy is properly monitored.

35. Over the 2012-2019 review period, several areas of mixed progress in the sector planning process were noted:

- **Participatory plan development:** According to the NSED appraisal report, the process of developing the 2012-2020 NSED involved consultations through the creation of five working groups. Each working group includes representatives from education professionals, development partners, and CSOs, and is led by a MoES official. The working groups provided input on the initial and subsequent drafts of the NSED. The development of the three MTEAPs and the upcoming NSED followed the same structure of participation with five working groups. Membership in the working groups is decided by MoES. It is unclear, based on the documentation and consultation with stakeholders, whether the membership in the working groups have changed, and to what extent teachers' associations, and private sector actors were involved in the planning process. Consulted development partners and one stakeholder from MoES noted weak collaboration between the MoES and other ministries during sector plan development.
- **Government ownership:** MoES' ownership of sector planning continued throughout the 2012-2019 review period, and there is no evidence of notable changes in this regard over time. While MoES stakeholders indicated that sector planning has strong government ownership, most development partners disagreed and felt that government ownership of planning processes was weak, particularly for developing the MTEAPs. They stated that while the MoES did consult actors for planning, the development partners led the discussions and the development of the plans. This was in large part due to capacity challenges at MoES, domestic perceptions that the ESP process was something separate from the normal activities of the ministry (an activity primarily linked to GPE granting processes), and, paradoxically, the effectiveness and commitment of the development partners themselves to the planning processes - leading and doing what in other circumstances might have been ministerial responsibilities. However, there is some limited evidence to show that there has been a greater degree of government ownership of the upcoming National Strategy for

[50] Source: ESPDG. (2019). Application Form for Education Sector Plan Development Grants

[51] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[52] Source: Ministry of Education and Science of the republic of Tajikistan. (2019). Monitoring and Evaluation Plan of The Medium-Term Education Action Plan 2018-2020.

Education Development 2021-2030 via more active participation in the working groups that played a major role in its articulation.

36. Notwithstanding these improvements, which occurred during the planning period, it is important to underscore that the concerns and suggestions raised by the independent assessment of the 2012-2020 NSED were not formally undertaken in the revision to the NSED itself. Given the turnover of staff among development partners, as well ministerial personnel, there is no conclusive evidence available to explain why these suggestions were not taken up. There was some country stakeholder testimony that inferred that one of the contributing factors might have been perceptions that sector planning in general was largely seen as being a pro forma prerequisite step on the way to obtaining grant money, namely an ESPIG. This issue, the utility of various steps of the GPE model, will be addressed elsewhere in this CLE.

37. The MoES is in the process of developing a fourth NSED covering the years 2021 to 2030, with an anticipated completion date of January 2020. A draft of the NSED was prepared early in the fourth quarter of 2019.

38. Its English language translation was shared with the CLE team during the finalization of this CLE. Although incomplete in areas of finalizing targets, priorities, and performance indicators, this new draft NSED, which is also not formally reviewed, warrants initial analysis due to the degree to which it can be seen as transformational. The ESPDG approved in 2017, used to support the development of the 2018-2020 MTEAP, was extended to support the development of the 2021-2030 NSED. An ESA was prepared with the help of development partners, using the 2017 Joint Education Sector Review as main reference. It is important to underscore that the existing NSED, which runs through 2020, did not benefit from an ESA. Therefore, the processes that are leading to the 2021-2030 NSED are qualitatively different. As well, since April 2019, the application for the ESPIG financing is being negotiated between the MoES and GPE, led by the IsDB as the grant agent.

39. The starting point for the upcoming NSED, which will run through to 2030, is the ESA noted above. Table 3.4 illustrates the key challenges and recommendations contained in the ESA, which will be shown below to have been integrated into the upcoming NSED.

Table 3.4 Challenges and Recommendations of the 2019 Education Sector Analysis.

KEY EDUCATION CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE 2019 EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS[53]
Key challenges:
• Education coverage at the pre-primary remains low.
• Persistent low coverage of education for children with disabilities.
• Completion rates remain relatively low in higher education, particularly in rural areas.
• Lack of updated data on adult education in Tajikistan.
• Shortage of textbooks, particularly in ethnic minority languages.
• Absence of a national assessment system for learning outcomes at all levels.
• Inadequate educational infrastructure.
• Persistent teacher shortage and low qualification of teachers.
• Use of EMIS data remains low at the sub-national and school levels.
Key recommendations:

[53] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

KEY EDUCATION CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE 2019 EDUCATION SECTOR ANALYSIS[53]
• Expand the provision of preschool and ECD, especially in rural areas, and increase funding to pre-primary education while expanding private preschools and alternative modalities. • Promote transition beyond Grade 9, especially among girls. • Develop a comprehensive plan to recruit and retain qualified teachers, especially in rural areas. • Further increase enrollment of female students in TVET by improving relevance of TVET and expand the provision of TVET for youths and adults for continuous learning. • Provide an inclusive and barrier-free environment to enable marginalized children with access to quality education, in particular children with disabilities. • Enhance the national assessment systems to provide data and information relevant for actions. • Review teachers' status and improve their occupational conditions. • Review the primary curriculum and textbooks for a more balanced curriculum. • Ensure the implementation of the competency-based curriculum. • Review the current teacher training systems and introduce teacher professional development. • Review the effectiveness of the existing teacher incentive schemes. • Improve the education information management system (EMIS) and other data management systems to facilitate evidence-based decision-making at all levels.

40. Given that the upcoming NSED remains a draft at the time of writing, it is not possible to do a full-scale analysis of its contents. It should be noted that the crucial statistical information, which will ground this NSED, remains to be finalized by individual working groups. However, based on triangulated testimony, it is a near certainty that the level of statistical information in this upcoming NSED will differ considerably from that of its predecessor, in that the upcoming NSED will fill many of the performance and accountability related short comings that were identified in the independent assessment of the 2012-2020 NSED. In addition, and for greater clarity, the formal independent assessment of this upcoming NSED, to be undertaken by development partners, will not be carried out until all the data gaps in the draft that was shared with the CLE evaluation team have been addressed.

41. The following table, which is derived from the ESP Standards that are utilized during the independent assessment process, provides the tentative initial assessment of the evaluation team, comparing the assessment of the prior NSED with that of the present draft document. In this regard, to demonstrate the degree of change which appears to have occurred, it is necessary to reprise some of the content from Table 3.3 to compare and contrast the differences between the two.[54]

Table 3.5 Comparative Assessment NSED 2012- 2020 and draft NSED 2021- 2030

ESP STANDARDS	EVALUATOR ASSESSMENT	
	NSED 2012- 2020[55]	**NSED (draft) 2021-2030**

[54] While it might have been possible to develop a comprehensive table and not duplicate material from Table 3.3, doing so would have resulted in an excessively cumbersome presentation and would not have clearly demonstrated the degree which the two NSED vary.

[55] Source: Republic of Tajikistan. (2012). Development Partner's Appraisal and Endorsement Report, National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2020.

ESP STANDARDS	EVALUATOR ASSESSMENT	
Overall vision	The 2012-2020 NSED priorities and planned activities for the sector are in alignment with national priorities.	The priorities and planned activities of the draft NSED appears to coincide with currently articulated national priorities.
Strategic	The appraisal noted that the NSED was overambitious. The results and priorities were not prioritized based on MoES capacity. Consulted development partners saw both the NSED and MTEAPs as long lists of activities that required priority setting. While the NSED was comprehensive and outlined plans for each level of education, priorities among education levels were not outlined.	This assessment conducted by the CLE evaluation team is sensitive to assessing the strategic value of the upcoming NSED. While it would not be appropriate to judge the overall strategic value of the new plan, the variances between it and its predecessor are evident. Considerable gaps that were identified by the prior NSED independent assessment are filled. One of the major challenges that faced the prior NSED was the lack of performance-related information, leading to potentially overambitious plans. The current draft NSED, in laying out detailed planning and financial information for the lifecycle of the plan, appears to address these prior strategic gaps.
Holistic	The 2012-2020 NSED encompassed the entire education sector. While a greater emphasis was put on preschool education, basic general education, and TVET, the 2012-2020 NSED also covered higher education.	Like its predecessor, the draft NSED, which will run through to 2030 when approved, is holistic, including all sectors of education. Given the national priority for preschool education, it is unexpected that this particular subsector is addressed in considerable detail. However, all subsectors in this draft NSED benefit from increased reporting of prior performance vis-à-vis the NSED predecessor, substantially improved baseline data (when the appropriate tables are completed), and more precise targeting.
Evidence-based	While the NSED development was supported by different studies and reports, including the use of data drawn from the EMIS, preschool sector analysis, and others, the NSED was not informed by a comprehensive Education Sector Analysis. The appraisal noted that some of the NSED initiatives were not supported by solid evidence but were rather based on perceptions of the education system. Finally, the appraisal also noted that there were no existing system-wide measures or assessments of the quality of education or children's learning outcomes in use in the education system.	The upcoming NESD contains several important additions compared to prior versions. Among other matters , it has been informed by a comprehensive ESA, which in itself was derived from a 2017 JSR. Unlike the previous NSED, the upcoming one contains in narrative format an assessment on the basis of each education subsector the degree to which the goals of the NSED 2012-2020 have been achieved, creating a clear mechanism to assess prior plan attainment so as to better inform future actions. Key priorities for each education subsector have been identified and, when completed, a set of key performance indicators including a current year baseline will be put in place.

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ESP STANDARDS	EVALUATOR ASSESSMENT	
		Across each of the education subsector's emphasis has been given to improving assessment of the quality of education.
Achievable (ESP)	While the 2012-2020 NSED included multi-year action plans, it addressed financing in a short 5-paragraph section. While a financing gap was identified, the NSED did not include a specific plan to fill the gap nor refer to a financial simulation model. The appraisal also noted that there was no budget for any of the specific initiatives included in the NSED. The appraisal considered the monitoring and evaluation section of the NSED as weak, as it included only vague indicators with no clear baselines or dated targets. Multiple consulted stakeholders from both MoES and development partner agencies also noted the monitoring and evaluation as one of the NSED's main weaknesses	Unlike the prior NSED, the upcoming draft version presents a fully detailed financial plan, including budgetary gaps and revenue sources for all programming cited in the NSED itself. This is undertaken by education subsector. Unlike the prior NSED, clear baselines or dated targets have been provided. In addition, for each education subsector, special emphasis has been given to identifying mechanisms to increase the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation. However, these positive changes are balanced by the fact that there have been wholescale senior personnel changes that may impede implementation.
Sensitive to context	The NSED identified risks to implementation and solutions or mitigating measures. In particular, the appraisal noted that the MoES reduced the political risks of implementing the NSED by submitting it to the government for approval, ensuring its strategies were politically viable.	The draft NSED is equally sensitive to context as its predecessor. However, given the level of detail drawn from the 2019 ESA and the new section which outlines by education subsector objectives set out in the prior NSED and their level of attainment, this new NSED appears to be considerably more sensitive to context. It also provides necessary information on which to base future midcourse corrections, something that was absent in the 2012/20 NSED.
Attentive to disparities	The prior NSED paid particular attention to girls and children with disabilities in its objectives and in its inclusion of gender disaggregated data. It did not include an analysis of regional disparities.	While the prior NSED, which concludes in 2020, was sensitive to gender and disability considerations, the new draft, in laying out baselines and annual targets out to 2030, provides a more viable framework on which to measure progress with respect to equity in education. However, like its predecessor, it does not disaggregate data to the regional level, thereby not benefiting from what is intuitively known but seldomly quantitatively validated, namely, the extent of regional disparities in the country as a whole.

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ESP STANDARDS	EVALUATOR ASSESSMENT	
Overall, at least 5/7 met?	Overall, while the appraisal rated the NSED 2012-2020 as satisfactory in terms of process and stakeholder engagement, the appraisal also noted several areas of improvement, such as prioritization of objectives, implementation readiness, and outlining clear indicators for monitoring implementation. In this regard, it did not meet the GPE standard of 5 out of 7 criteria, garnering only 4.	At present, given the absence of a formal independent assessment of the draft NSED 2021-2030, this narrative prepared by the evaluation team should be considered tentative at best. However, the extent of change from the prior NSED in comparison to this current draft is clearly evident. Key gaps in the prior NSED have been addressed and considerable quantitative information provided, along with targets for the future that will serve to improve both accountability and the capacity for organizational learning.

GPE contributions to sector planning

Finding 2: GPE financial and non-financial support likely contributed to improved quality in the processes of the development of the 2012-2020 NSED. ESPDG funding, GPE guidelines, and ESPIG funding requirements encouraged and enabled comprehensive sector planning.

42. GPE offers a series of financial and non-financial mechanisms to support sector planning. Table 3.6 provides an overview of these mechanisms, grouped by whether they are likely to have made a significant,[56] moderately significant, or limited/no contribution to planning in Tajikistan. This grouping does not constitute a formal score.

Table 3.6 GPE contributions to sector planning during the 2012-2019 review period

2012-2020 NSED DEVELOPMENT AND CORRESPONDING MTEAPS	2021-2030 NSED PLANNING CYCLE
SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLANNING	
• **GPE guidelines for ESP development:** Guidelines helped orient MoES through the process of developing the NSED, without which the NSED would be less likely to be comprehensive. While GPE guidelines emphasize cross-cutting issues, several donors independently advocated for increased focus on cross cutting issues with regard to NSED development.	• **GPE guidelines for ESP development**: The 2021-2030 NSED has been developed following GPE guidelines, which according to consulted MoES stakeholders provided a roadmap in developing the NSED and encouraged them to do more than they would have done otherwise. For example, the working groups developed a sector-wide theory of change to guide the prioritization of objectives to be included in the NSED.

[56] In this section and all sections that follow, a GPE contribution is rated 'significant' if it made a clear, positive, and noticeable difference in an outcome of interest to GPE. This outcome of interest need not necessarily be 'improved planning overall', but could be a noticeable improvement in sub-components of this desirable outcome, such as 'improved government ownership', 'improved participation', 'improved results framework', etc. Assessments are based on evaluator judgement based on interviews and documents consulted for this CLE.

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2012-2020 NSED DEVELOPMENT AND CORRESPONDING MTEAPS	2021-2030 NSED PLANNING CYCLE
• **ESPDG:** Tajikistan received grants to support the development of the 2015-17 and 2018-2020 MTEAPs.[57] These financed consultants who facilitated consultations with key stakeholders, analyzed the implementation of the preceding MTEAPs, and finalized the draft MTEAPs for submission to MoES.[58]	• **ESPDG funding and CA and GA contributions**: The ESPDG,[59] to which UNICEF and the World Bank are also contributing, has funded consultants conducting the ESA, developing an ECE roadmap for inclusion in the NSED, and developing an analysis of scenarios for the education sector to transition to a 12 year basic education system. These studies and contributions have supported the development of the upcoming NSED.[60] • **ESPIG funding requirement 3 (data requirements):** MoES and development partner stakeholders asserted that ESPIG data requirements provided an incentive to conduct the ESA, as well as to include the development of learning-outcome assessment systems as an objective of the upcoming NSED.
MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLANNING	
• **ESPIG funding requirement 1 (a credible, endorsed plan)**: According to consulted MoES stakeholders, the funding requirement provided an incentive to ensure the NSED included objectives related to inclusive education and equity, such as children with special needs. • **QA mechanism (appraisal):** An independent appraisal of NSED 2012-2020 was undertaken, supported by development partners prior to their endorsement of the sector plan. The appraisal rated the sector plan as satisfactory in terms of process, noting room for improvement in prioritization, implementation readiness, and outlining clear indicators for monitoring implementation.[61]	• Sporadic evidence is available to tentatively conclude that the GPE made and is making a moderate contribution for improved sector planning for the upcoming 2021-2030 NSED. This includes CA support for working groups, increased levels of direct liaison, financial support for sector planning development granting (ESPDG) and ESPIG funding requirements that mandate a credible and endorsed plan.
LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLANNING	

[57] For the development of the 2015-2017 MTEAP, Tajikistan received a US$133,400 ESPDG

[58] Sources: ESPDG. (2013). Application Form for Education Sector Plan Development Grants; and ESPDG. (2017). Application Form for Education Sector Plan Development Grants.

[59] The ESPDG was initially granted to Tajikistan in 2017 to support the development of the 2018-2020 MTEAP. With the approval of the LEG, the ESPDG was expanded with additional funding to carry out the interventions mentioned in support to the development of the 2021-2030 NSED. Source: ESPDG. (2017). Concept note on Education Sector Plan Development Grant application.

[60] Sources: ESPDG 2017 application; and ESPDG Application Assessment (9/19/2017). The ECE roadmap is led and financed by the WB, and the development of the scenarios is led and financed by UNICEF.

[61] Source: Republic of Tajikistan. (2012). Development Partner's Appraisal and Endorsement Report, National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan till 2020.

2012-2020 NSED DEVELOPMENT AND CORRESPONDING MTEAPS	2021-2030 NSED PLANNING CYCLE
• **GPE Secretariat QA:** The MTEAPs were endorsed by MoES; development partners found the plans acceptable and confirmed their commitment to providing technical and/or financial support within the MTEAPs.[62]	**Variable tranche:** The upcoming ESPIG introduced disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs) to the operational plan's results framework, increasing attention to issues such as school manager performance and training and in-service teacher training. However, it is still too early to assess the extent to which the inclusion of DLIs may affect the development of the next NSED since both the ESPIG and the NSED remain in development. Consulted MoES stakeholders who were aware of the variable tranche mechanism had no opposition to its introduction in the upcoming ESPIG.

43. MoES and development partner stakeholders alike recognized that GPE guidelines on sector plan development are very helpful. They noted that the guidelines provided a clear roadmap regarding the process for developing the NSED and improving its content. In particular, they mentioned that they are in the process of developing a holistic sector-wide theory of change with the objective of meeting GPE standards for a quality ESP. Consulted stakeholders were unanimous in stating that developing the theory of change encouraged the MoES to prioritize activities to be included in the NSED around identified issues. Consulted development partners mentioned this shift from an output-based to an outcome-based approach constituted an important paradigm shift in the MoES. They expect this exercise could help solve one of the main weaknesses of the previous NSED, the lack of prioritization.

44. MoES and development partner stakeholders agree that the GPE ESPIG funding requirement as a whole helped to improve the comprehensiveness of the 2012-2020 NSED. For example, the inclusion of increasing access to and improvement of the quality of ECE in the NSED is directly attributed to GPE and development partners' advocacy to prioritize ECE. Sporadic testimony exists to assert that the goals, priorities, and accountability mechanism of the upcoming NSED were impacted by GPE ESPIG funding requirements and, specifically, the provisions related to the application of the NFM.

Additional factors beyond GPE support

45. One **positive** factor beyond GPE support that likely contributed to sector planning during the 2012-2019 review period was the financial and technical support from other partners. For example, both UNICEF and the WB, as CA and GA respectively, contributed to the ESPDG funding that supported the development of the 2018-2020 MTEAP and the 2021-2030 NSED. Development partners, in particular USAID, the EU, and UNESCO, also contributed to the drafting and revision of the ESA conducted in 2019, provided technical assistance for costing the NSED and ensuring it included adequate measures for monitoring its implementation. Consulted stakeholders from both development partners and MoES were adamant that partners' support contributed significantly to the development process and quality of the MTEAPs and NSEDs.

46. One factor that **negatively** affected sector planning during the review period was the departure of key staff members from MoES in recent years either by transfer to other ministries, a common phenomenon in Tajikistan or by retirement/private sector employment, which constrained the sector's capacity for planning. It should be noted that key MoES stakeholders interviewed for this CLE were subsequently (early 2020) assigned other government responsibilities within the ministry as well as within

[62] Source: ESPDG. (2017). Concept note on Education Sector Plan Development Grant application.

other ministries, thereby highlighting the degree to which this human resources management question may continue to impact on ministerial capacity. [63]

Implications for GPE's ToC and country-level operational model

Finding 3: The Tajikistan experience demonstrates the benefits of long-term and multi-cyclical participation in the GPE as a contributing factor to progressive improvement in the quality of education sector planning.

47. Available evidence suggests that three of the five assumptions about sector planning (related to the 2012-2020 NSED) underlying the GPE country-level ToC **held true** in the context of Tajikistan during the 2012-2019 review period. These assumptions were that country-level stakeholders have the opportunities (resources, conducive external environment) and the motivation (political will, incentives) to jointly and collaboratively improve sector analysis and planning, and that GPE has sufficient leverage within Tajikistan for GPE support to influence sector planning. However, two assumptions were found to hold only partially true in Tajikistan. These assumptions were that country-level stakeholders have the capabilities (knowledge and skills) to jointly improve sector analysis and planning, and that Education Management Information System (EMIS), learning assessment and reporting systems (LARS) produce relevant and reliable data that is used to inform sector planning. As mentioned above in relation to the 2012-2020 NSED, the GoT capacity to produce an education sector plan that is strategic and achievable was found to be limited. Also, while Tajikistan generated considerable data of reasonable quality on key education indicators, Tajikistan at that time did not have system-wide measures or assessments of quality of education or children's learning outcomes in use in the education system.

48. Notwithstanding the sector planning limitations noted above, Tajikistan's participation in the FTI/GPE has generated a degree of acceptance of the benefits of sector-wide planning. It is not unexpected however that the 2012-2020 NSED scored somewhat low on certain characteristics that were not common in former Soviet republics. For example, the current NSED ranked poorly with respect to achievability and being sufficiently evidence-based, both of which tend to reflect prior planning practices that focused on top-down resource control mechanisms. As well, prior tendencies for developing aspirational multi-year plans, a hallmark of the Soviet planning paradigm, still remain, especially at higher levels of government and can easily lead to a disconnect between contemporary understanding of the linkages between evidence and outcome.

49. The upcoming NSED that will run through to 2030, based on the preliminary examination contained in this CLE and not on the formal independent appraisal which is yet to be done, appears to have considerably benefited from the lessons learned through the implementation of the previous NSED. Crucial planning characteristics such as improved goal setting, more precise prioritization, retrospective analysis of the implementation of the prior NSED, and a comprehensive monitoring framework all serve to qualitatively differentiate the upcoming NSED from its predecessor. Equally, there is sporadic evidence to show some degree of change from the prior largely top-down and non-participatory approaches to plan development. However, this tentative and somewhat positive assessment needs to be viewed in light of the fact that this NSED has yet to be appraised; and, matters related to financing its commitments appeared to remain unsettled at the time of writing. In addition, wholescale changes in senior personnel within MoES pose a potential risk for some loss of domestic ownership.

50. However, the Tajikistan experience clearly demonstrates that a longer-term relationship with the GPE, or in this case its predecessor, the FTI, results in subtle levels of knowledge transfer and acceptance of new planning paradigms. Long-term familiarization with GPE results in countries having a higher degree

[63] UNICEF message to the CLE Team, February 5, 2020.

of acceptance of what might appear to be significant changes in the GPE model as a whole (like the addition of multiplier and variable tranche provisions of the new funding model - NFM). Indeed, the degree of acceptance of the multiplier and variable tranche provisions by government stakeholders was unexpected, given that both result in relatively significant alterations in the overall GPE model.

51. A further implication derived from the Tajikistan experience relates to the combination of longer-term ESP development, in this case decade long Noses, with medium term MTEAPs. While the GPE model is predicated on the longer-term, or a singular ESP effective for the duration of the planning period established by the government in question, in Tajikistan's case the three MTEAPs, notwithstanding the limitations, provided a mechanism for ongoing organizational learning and thus acceptance of new planning techniques. It should be noted that the upcoming NSED, which will run through to 2030, continues the bifurcation of planning into long-term and medium-term. However, the apparent greater degree of precision of the new NSED may to some degree improve the quality of ongoing organizational learning.

52. Therefore, in terms of implications, in the longer-term some consideration might be given across the GPE to emphasize linkages between ESPs, and what partner countries use as medium-term planning and resource allocation tools. Doing so however would necessarily require something of a re-articulation of the nature of the ESP and a sufficient degree of flexibility across the GPE partnership to embrace the variances in short to medium term planning across various countries in the GPE global partnership.

3.3 GPE contributions to mutual accountability through sector dialogue and monitoring

Overview

53. This section addresses the following evaluation questions:

- Have sector dialogue and monitoring changed during the 2012-2019 review period? If so, then how and why? If not, why not? (CEQ 2.1 and 2.2)
- Has GPE contributed to observed changes in sector dialogue and monitoring? If so, then how? If not, why not? (CEQ 2.3) Has GPE support had any unintended effects, positive or negative? (CEQ 3.2)
- What factors other than GPE support are likely to have contributed to the observed changes (or lack thereof) in sector dialogue and monitoring? (CEQ 3.1)
- What are implications of evaluation findings for GPE support to Tajikistan? (Key Question IV)

54. Table 3.7 These observations are elaborated on through the findings and supporting evidence presented below.

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Table 3.7 Overview: CLE findings on sector dialogue and monitoring and related GPE contributions

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY	DEGREE OF GPE CONTRIBUTION	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING TOC ASSUMPTIONS LIKELY HELD TRUE[64]			
Sector Dialogue: Stable – Dialogue processes are strong and did not show marked change over the evaluation period (2012-2019), apart from small improvements in CSO inclusion. Notwithstanding some more recent changes in 2019, there remains considerable room for improvement in dialogue effectiveness and efficiency.	**Modest:** GPE's contribution is mainly through dialogue around GPE's set of grants taking place in the LEG, which have influenced alignment and coordination among actors in the sector.	1	2	3	4
Sector Monitoring: Stable – Tajikistan has held joint sector reviews regularly since 2012, with limited participation by education stakeholders (including teachers, parents, and the private sector) outside the MoES. Some improvements are noted in regard to improved sector monitoring.	**Strong:** Evidence suggests that GPE's contribution via the ESPIG improved MoE's capacity for data usage, planning for monitoring ESPs, and increased available education data for planning.				

Characteristics of sector dialogue during the 2012-2019 review period

Finding 4: Tajikistan has well-established mechanisms for sector dialogue with development partners. Although the inclusion of civil society has been recently formalized and enhanced to some degree, challenges remain regarding long term trends related to sector dialogue representativeness, inclusiveness, and effectiveness.

55. There are two mechanisms for education sector dialogue in Tajikistan, the Local Education Group (LEG) and the Donor Coordination Council (DCC). The LEG, co-chaired by UNICEF and the MoES, includes representatives from MoES, development partner agencies, INGOs, and Economics and Education as the one national civil society representative. Development partner and INGO membership in the LEG includes the World Bank, UNICEF, USAID, the Asian Development Bank (AsDB), the Aga Khan Foundation, Open Society Institute, and WFP. While the IsDB is not an official LEG member and does not have country presence, it participated in one LEG meeting in November 2018.[65] However, the IsDB expects that it will actively participate in the LEG since assuming its role as grant agent for the upcoming ESPIG.[66] The DCC is co-chaired by UNICEF and the EU. Membership in the DCC is the same as the LEG, minus government representatives.

56. UNICEF, as coordinating agency (CA), convenes LEG members for meetings. While MoES had not participated systematically in LEG meetings, it now participates in almost every meeting; the specific

[64] For sector dialogue and monitoring, the underlying assumptions in GPE's country level ToC are: (1) GPE has sufficient *leverage* at global and country levels to influence LEG existence and functioning; (2) country level stakeholders having the *capabilities* to work together to solve sector issues. (3) Stakeholders have the *opportunities* (resources, time, conducive environment) to do so; (4) stakeholders have the *motivation* (incentives) to do so.

[65] Source: Local Education group, Meeting Minutes – 19 November 2018

[66] Source: Selection of the Grant Agent for GPE Multiplier Funds, Meeting Minutes – 22 October 2018.

MoES representatives vary based on the LEG agenda. While development partners do not perceive the government as the primary driver of sector dialogue, consulted MoES stakeholders value their participation in the LEG and see the ministry as an equal partner in the LEG. They noted that the ministry does not aim to impose its views on other LEG members.

57. While the LEG was and is the main and only sector coordination in the country, during the review period, the LEG was not a body that truly represents the education sector and all of its stakeholders. Notably absent from LEG membership were civil society organizations representing different stakeholder groups (e.g., national NGOs and associations involved in education service delivery or representing the needs of special interest groups, private sector schools, teacher associations and unions). While some CSOs participated in sector planning working groups, their membership in the LEG was the subject of ongoing discussions between development partners and the government. When the government of Tajikistan was submitting its application for the multiplier fund component of the upcoming ESPIG, development partners and the GPE Secretariat urged the MoES to include a greater representation of CSOs in the LEG. As a result, Economics and Education and the Open Society Institute joined the LEG in April 2019. In addition, based on triangulated testimony, the development of the new NSED, which will run through to 2030, resulted in additions to the LEG, such as increasing representation from civil society and, most notably, for the first time included representatives from teachers' unions

58. Consulted CSOs working in the education sector commented that NGOs' limited capacity for communicating their mandate with the MoES was the main limitation for further engagement with the government. Consulted MoES stakeholders agreed that the participation of CSOs and the private sector had been limited in the LEG and said that they were receptive to development partners' advocacy efforts to increase membership in the LEG. Consulted CSOs also expressed interest to participate in the LEG and further engage with the government. In the past, the MoES had not been open to including representatives of teachers' unions in the LEG, arguing that they are part of MoES[67] and hence their representation is not necessary. A review of LEG minutes revealed that one representative of the teachers' union participated in a LEG meeting in 2019, although teachers' unions were not members of the LEG.[68] However, the development of the upcoming NSED that will run to 2030 has generated new perceptions about the overall value of broader representation in dialogue and consultation fora. The MoES has now reversed its prior view about the applicability of LEG membership for teachers' unions; with their representatives now joining the LEG. Notwithstanding this positive change in relation to the LEG, consulted development partners mentioned that they did not work closely with CSOs in their education projects and activities; there is no evidence of development partners supporting CSOs in strengthening their coordination with the MoES.

59. However, these observations need to be nuanced to some degree to reflect the evolution of civil society participation in Tajikistan. Less than a generation ago the country was embroiled in a civil war after emerging from decades of Soviet rule which can be characterized as a top down, centralized approach to governance involving little if any dialogue with civil society. Moreover, the nature of governance and the state/citizen relationship remains largely tied to past approaches although, according to key development partner stakeholders, it is beginning to evolve.

60. According to stakeholders interviewed, the LEG is supposed to meet quarterly but, in practice, averages two or three meetings per year. The frequency of meetings depends largely on whether there are issues related to GPE grants up for discussion. For example, LEG meetings were less frequent once the

[67] The MoES contended that because teachers are on the MoES payroll as individuals, and thus part of MoES their union, composed of MoES staff is also part of MoES and therefore does not have independent standing.

[68] Source: review of LEG minutes.

implementation of the previous ESPIG had ended but have become more frequent since Tajikistan applied for a PDG in April 2019. This tends to point to the conclusion that the LEG during the review period for this CLE was seen to a great extent in a GPE context. However, the process of developing a new NSED has resulted in marked degrees of increased cooperation and dialogue; as well as, according to testimony triangulated by several stakeholders, increased ownership by the MoES; and increased recognition by the Ministry of the intrinsic value of a longer-term education sector plan in addition to it being a prerequisite for securing GPE grants. Dialogue among development partners remains consistent and frequent through regular meetings of the DCC, which address education portfolio issues over and above GPE related considerations (mainly planning and granting requirements).[69]

Finding 5: While sector dialogue has facilitated alignment and coordination, it has had a more limited effect on the promotion of donor harmonization.

61. According to stakeholders interviewed and the evaluation's review of LEG minutes, dialogue within LEG meetings during the review period were largely dominated by GPE-related matters such as the approval and development of GPE grants, and the development of education sector plans (NSED and MTEAPs). While issues for discussion remained limited, consulted stakeholders pointed to positive developments resulting from LEG meetings: i) MoES inclusion of new priorities as a result of development partners advocacy; ii) the alignment of development partner interventions with MoES priorities and MTEAPs; and iii) increased coordination among development partners. The likely reasons for this level of interactivity include: the relatively small size of the development partner pool which facilitates consensus; the degree to which MoES has relied on development partners for the introduction of innovation; and the extent to which development partners have been the financiers of change.

62. Consulted LEG members commented that MoES priorities have shifted as a result of development partner advocacy during LEG meetings. For example, they mentioned that the increased attention to ECE and inclusion of the creation of a national assessment system for learning outcomes in the 2012-2020 NSED resulted from development partner advocacy. Development partners also advocated for improving the monitoring of the NSED and MTEAPs. Consulted MoES stakeholders confirmed that these issues were considered in the NSED as a result of sector dialogue with development partners.

63. According to consulted LEG members, the LEG has served as a forum for information exchange and for promoting alignment between ESP objectives and the individual education projects of development partners. Development partner stakeholders mentioned that sector dialogue has largely been effective in promoting alignment between partners' initiatives and MoES priorities. MTEAPs are discussed within the LEG, LEG members are included in working groups responsible for developing the MTEAPs, and MTEAPs are endorsed by LEG members; as a result development partners are aware of the MoES priorities and objectives and are actively taking steps to align their programming with the priorities included in the MTEAPs. Development partners are asked to include in the MTEAPs their individual interventions that correspond to MoES priorities.[70]

64. A majority of stakeholders from development partner agencies report that sector dialogue has made significant contributions promote the principles of coordination. There is evidence in the minutes from LEG and DCC meetings that development partners reduced overlap and duplication between their respective projects and programs. For example, development partners conducted a mapping of their respective interventions in 2016 and again in 2019. There is also evidence that development partners built

[69] Source: ESPDG. (2017). Concept note on Education Sector Plan Development Grant application.

[70] Almost all development partners interventions are included in the MTEAPs.

their interventions around the work of other partners. A notable example is the GPE-4 project focus on ECE, which built on sub-sector studies led by the World Bank and also used ECE models piloted by UNICEF and the Aga Khan Foundation.[71]

65. On the other hand, the contribution of sector dialogue to harmonization as espoused in the Paris and Busan Declarations is limited. There is no evidence in the minutes of recent sector dialogue meetings that harmonization of reporting and elimination of planning/accountability duplication has been discussed.

Strengths and weaknesses of sector monitoring

Finding 6: While there was limited monitoring of the 2012-2020 NSED, overall sector plan monitoring has improved in recent years with the development of more viable monitoring mechanisms plan for the latest (2018-2020) MTEAP.

66. In Tajikistan, education data is collected on an annual basis via surveys circulated by the MoES. Data provided by the EMIS covers all public and private schools in the country and includes student administrative data (such as enrollment numbers, age, gender), and basic teacher information (such as teacher qualifications and allocations). As such, there is a significant amount of data available on the education system. Documents and stakeholders suggest that EMIS data is now beginning to feed back into the system to inform sector planning, for example, to inform JSRs and the ESA conducted in 2019. However, for most of the review period, the JSR process was flawed due to the fact that data was of poor quality and equally importantly, the JSR was not used as a mechanism for dialogue, beyond simple statistical reporting. In addition, MoES uses EMIS data to calculate the allocation of financial resources to district authorities and schools, to plan the allocation of teachers to different schools, and to plan teacher training. However, the use of EMIS data is limited to the MoES and development partners. Schools and other stakeholders (parents, communities), do not use EMIS data for decision-making. Schools are asked to provide data to the MoES to inform the EMIS, however, the data collected is not shared with schools via an established feedback loop.[72] Further observations are provided in Table 3.8.

[71] Source: IsDB. (2019). Application for the Project to Support Implementation of the Medium-Term Education Action Plan (2018-2020) of the Republic of Tajikistan.

[72] Source: World Bank. (2017) Republic of Tajikistan, Education Management Information Systems, SABER Country report.

Table 3.8 EMIS Assessment in Tajikistan[73]

ASSESSMENT USING WORLD BANK SABER[74] CRITERIA
Enabling Environment[75]: Institutionalized in 2007, two policies guide and influence the functioning of EMIS in Tajikistan, the "EMIS RT Conception" and "Methodology of the Automated Data in Education". These two policies clearly define the role and responsibilities of the MoES regarding data collection, processing, and management. While schools can access EMIS data upon request, there are not mechanisms to guide the flow of education data back to schools. While processes exist to ensure that EMIS data is shared with other government departments, the data shared is not comprehensible to them. In addition, Tajikistan has a weak culture of evidence-based decision-making, and education data is barely used outside the MoES. Finally, the hardware and software of the EMIS are funded by donors and development partners, while the EMIs operations are covered by the MoES.
System Soundness[76]: While the necessary software and staff support data collection and entry, the system and staff in place can only perform basic tabulations with little focus on data analysis. Data coverage is limited to administrative data. In particular, lack of learning outcomes data represents a significant gap in the possible uses of EMIS data. Finally, EMIS is a standalone system and is not integrated with other databases managed by other departments.
Quality Data[77]: According to the Saber report published by the World Bank, there is a clear intent to have EMIS data used for policies, planning, and management in the education sector. However, the scope of education statistics in EMIS is restricted to a small number of indicators such as enrollment, completion rates, and basis demographic indicators. While there are validation mechanisms to monitor the quality of education data, it is unclear whether there are mechanisms in place to prevent misinterpretation of data once published.
Utilization in Decision-making[78]: The EMIS is available to all stakeholders in the education sectors. An annual statistics handbook is produced from the data collected by the EMIS. However, while the GoT, MoES, and district authorities use the data generated by the EMIS, schools and other stakeholders (e.g., parents, communities) do not use any data for decision-making.

67. Three joint sector reviews (JSRs) were conducted during the period under review, in 2014, 2016, and 2017.[79] The JSR reports[80] produced in 2014 and 2017 were revised in 2015 and 2019 respectively. The stated objectives of the JSRs are to review the progress of MTEAP implementation, identify current challenges, analyze statistical patterns and trends, and inform the development of subsequent MTEAPs. Table 3.9 summarizes the extent to which JSRs conducted during the review period would appear to fulfil GPE quality standards, as per the evaluation team's own assessment. It is important to note that no recent data was available for Tajikistan in GPE's Results Framework, which tracks JSR data through indicator 18.

[73] Source: World Bank. (2017) Republic of Tajikistan, Education Management Information Systems, SABER Country report.

[74] The assessment doesn't rigorously apply all SABER criteria but uses them as a guide for assessing EMIS function.

[75] Defined by: Legal frameworks, organizational structure and institutionalized processes, human resources, infrastructural capacity, budget and a data-driven culture.

[76] Defined by: Data architecture, data coverage, data analytics, dynamic system, and serviceability

[77] Defined by: Methodological soundness, accuracy and reliability, integrity, and periodicity and timeliness

[78] Defined by: Openness to EMIS users, operational use, accessibility and effectiveness in disseminating findings and results

[79] Consultants were hired to conduct the JSRs, and write reports containing the main findings from the exercise.

[80] The "aide memoires" are referred to as "JSR reports" in Tajikistan.

However, in the 2015 RF reporting year, it was noted that the then most recent JSR did not meet the specified criteria.

Table 3.9 JSRs in Tajikistan have not shown improvement over the review period

JSR QUALITY STANDARDS[81]	EVALUATOR ASSESSMENT BASED ON DOCUMENTS (E.G., JSR REPORTS, ETC.) AND CONSULTED STAKEHOLDERS[82]
Participatory and inclusive	• JSR reports are prepared by consultants hired by development partners with oversight from MoES. The 2016 JSR was informed by consultations with relevant stakeholders from MoES and development partner agencies. Consultations were carried out via working groups, who completed questionnaires for each level of education.[83] Available evidence does not indicate whether the other JSRs included consultations with stakeholders. • Multiple consulted MoES stakeholders reported that they were asked to provide data to feed into the JSRs but that they did not participate in any active discussions about the development of the JSRs. • Consulted LEG members said that the LEG was not actively involved in the development of JSRs. • Consulted stakeholders from CSO and the private sector were not aware that JSRs were conducted on a regular basis.
Evidence-based	• JSRs were prepared using primary and secondary data available, namely data available through the EMIS, reports, and assessments prepared by development partners and financial data prepared by the Ministry of Finance. • The 2014, 2015, and 2016 JSR reports note some limitations in data available through the EMIS, including inconsistencies between annual statistical reports produced across different years.[84] In addition, the EMIS does not trace attendance and dropout rates consistently, limiting JSR assessments of the flow of students.[85] • Tajikistan does not have a systematic method for assessing student learning outcomes nor does it participate in international learning assessments,[86] limiting the evidence base for JSR reports. • Consulted stakeholders from MoES and development partner agencies did not perceive JSRs as opportunities for sector dialogue, but rather as monitoring opportunities to develop reports produced by consultants without input from the LEG and the DCC. All JSR reports clearly mention that JSRs are mainly the result of a desk-based review of available data sources.[87]
Comprehensive	• All JSRs in the review period covered all education subsectors. • JSRs report on public expenditures in the education sector in Tajikistan.

[81] JSR quality criteria scored by GPE's Results Framework (RF) indicator 18. GPE, Results Framework Indicators, Methodological Guidelines, version 8, June 2017, p.47).

[82] The evaluator assessment covers all the JSRs produced during the review period (2012-2019).

[83] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report.

[84] Source: Ibid

[85] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report.

[86] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[87] Sources: all Joint Sector Review Reports from 2014 to 2019

JSR QUALITY STANDARDS[81]	EVALUATOR ASSESSMENT BASED ON DOCUMENTS (E.G., JSR REPORTS, ETC.) AND CONSULTED STAKEHOLDERS[82]
	• Since JSR reports are mainly desk-based, descriptive statistical studies largely devoid of qualitative data gathering (asking "why"), they do not capture underlying causes or observable trends in the education sector.[88] • The 2019 JSR report does not include a section on the methodology used to develop the study.
A monitoring instrument	• One of the stated objectives of JSRs is to review progress made in the implementation of MTEAPs. However, a review of JSRs does not indicate that JSRs do so. The 2016 JSR included lists of activities implemented that were planned in the 2015-2017 MTEAP, by education level. However, it did not track planned to actually implemented activity and output achievement for the MTEAP. For example, the 2016 JSR report does not provide any indication on the number of activities not implemented, nor outputs not achieved. The 2016 JSR did not provide any indication on the extent to which the 2015-2017 MTEAP was fully or partially implemented.[89] Other JSR reports also list activities implemented in the preceding years without attributing or linking those activities to the implementation of the NSED or MTEAPs. The MTEAPs include vague indicators and no clear baselines, so they cannot be fully quantified nor measured. Finally, no unit in the MoES is responsible or tasked with monitoring the NSED and MTEAPs. [90] • While JSRs report on public expenditures in the education sector in Tajikistan, they do not track budgetary execution of the MTEAPs. JSRs state that is it not possible since financial data provided by the Ministry of Finance does not match the activity lines in MTEAPs.[91] • Consulted development partners noted that JSRs were not embedded in the NSED or MTEAPs and did not contribute to a better understanding of the extent to which sector plans are being implemented.
Anchored in an effective policy cycle	• Since the JSR reports do not assess the implementation progress of the NSED or its accompanying MTEAPs, JSR reports do not include recommendations, nor do they designate responsible actors to ensure the implementation of sector plans. • Consulted stakeholders from both development partner agencies and the MoES stated that JSR reports were used to inform the development of subsequent MTEAPs. In particular, the 2019 JSR served as a starting point for the development of the ESA informing the upcoming NSED.

68. While recent JSRs have been comprehensive and based on available evidence, several weaknesses limit their application as useful tools for monitoring progress in the education sector and mutual

[88] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report.

[89] MTEAPs include activity matrices, but there is no follow-up on these in available documentation. In other words, there is no comparison of planned to actual implemented activities. The education sector analysis conducted in 2019 summarizes the JSRs weakness with regard to monitoring of the education sector: "While several joint sector reviews have been conducted in the past, none of them were able to assess the overall performance of the education system, due to the education sector's lack of a results-based planning mechanism and its weak monitoring systems. While there have been efforts to introduce results-based budgeting in the education sector, there is weak capacity among education sector staff to implement such a system." Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019, p.69.

[90] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report.

[91] Sources: all Joint Sector Review Reports from 2014 to 2019

accountability. First, JSR reports are mainly developed by hired consultants and informed by very limited consultation with only a select number of education stakeholders. Second, JSR reports do not track progress towards the implementation of NSED and MTEAPs. Finally, JSR reports do not provide recommendations regarding the implementation of the NSED and MTEAPs. In sum, JSR reports mainly detail a long list of education indicators, and only partially assess the reasons for progress or lack of progress.

69. Monitoring the implementation of the NSED and MTEAPs is limited by two main factors. First, no unit in MoES is responsible for the monitoring the NSED and MTEAPs.[92] Second, the NSED plan for monitoring its implementation is not entirely sound. The NSED includes indicators to measure plan implementation but they are not accompanied by baselines or time-bound targets; they simply indicate the direction of desired change. They range from specific indicators such as "increasing the coverage of children at the age of 3-6 by preschool education programs" to more vague ones such as "increasing the share of children demonstrating readiness for school education". In addition, the NSED lists the expected results of the implementation of the plan, but none of these are aligned with the development priorities of the plan or with the indicators mentioned above. The expected results are structured around the following categories: i) preschool education; ii) general education; iii) basic and secondary specialized vocational education; iv) higher education; v) management in education system; vi) financial models; and vii) development of staffing capacity. The list includes both specific results such as "around 1000 new schools will be built" to results that are quite vague such as "attractive conditions created for pedagogic activity in education institutions". Additionally, some expected results are outcomes, while others are outputs and even activities. Consulted stakeholders, the appraisal report of the NSED, and the JSRs all noted that monitoring the achievement of specific objectives in the plan is a nearly impossible task. As a result, the JSRs, whose objectives include reviewing progress made in the implementation of NSED, are not able to compare planned vs implemented activities, nor can they draw conclusions on the achievement of specific targets with clear indicators.

70. On the other hand, over the 2012-2019 review period, one improvement in sector monitoring was evident. In the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan developed to track the implementation of the 2018-2020 MTEAP, expected results are clearly articulated and measurable, performance indicators are developed for each expected result, baseline and time-bound targets are defined for each indicator, and expected results and actions are linked with resources. These are significant improvements compared with the previous two MTEAPs and the 2012-2020 NSED.[93]

71. In sum, changes in sector monitoring and the creation of mutual accountability were limited in Tajikistan between 2012 and 2019. Improvements in monitoring include the increased availability of education data thanks to a GPE-supported EMIS upgrade and the M&E plan prepared for the 2018-2020 MTEAP. So far JSRs have not been a useful tool for monitoring the implementation of the NSED and MTEAPs,[94] nor is there a specific unit within the MoES assigned to this task. There is no evidence that the implementation progress of the NSED and related MTEAPs have been discussed within available mechanisms for sector dialogue in Tajikistan.[95] The EMIS provides useful data, but its usage is limited. More importantly, the absence of a system for assessment of student learning outcomes limits the data available at the output level; data on learning outcomes are still not available in the country.

[92] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report.

[93] Source: Ministry of Education and Science of the republic of Tajikistan. (2019). Monitoring and Evaluation Plan of The Medium-Term Education Action Plan 2018-2020.

[94] While the 2018-2020 MTEAP does include more provisions for the monitoring of its implementation, the latest JSR (2019) does not monitor its implementation.

[95] Source: interviews and review of LEG and DCC minutes.

GPE contributions to sector dialogue and monitoring

Finding 7: GPE significantly contributed to strengthening sector monitoring by financing EMIS upgrades and the development of the 2018-2020 MTEAP M&E plan, while contributions to improving sector dialogue were more modest.

72. GPE has employed several financial and non-financial mechanisms to support sector dialogue and monitoring. Table 3.10 below provides an overview of these mechanisms, grouped by whether they have made a significant, moderately significant, or insignificant contribution to mutual accountability in Tajikistan. This grouping is indicative and does not constitute a formal score.

Table 3.10 GPE contributions to mutual accountability during the 2012-2019 review period

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY
• **GPE's contribution through the LEG**: All consulted development partners mentioned that the LEG as a dialogue mechanism between development partners and the MoES, and perceived by all as a GPE initiative, has allowed them to speak with one common voice to the MoES, giving them additional leverage to lobby on behalf of priority policy issues. For example, development partners attribute the inclusion of ECE and the creation of national systems for the assessment of learning outcomes as a result of donor coordination within the LEG. • **Increased donor coordination resulting from dialogue on GPE grants:** All consulted development partners pointed out that the discussion of GPE grants within the LEG encouraged donor coordination. For example, to inform the upcoming ESPIG application prepared by the IsDB, development partners conducted a mapping of their respective initiatives in the education sector in Tajikistan. (More examples provided below) • **Coordinating agency:** Consulted development partners and MoES stakeholders praised the work of the CA in guiding sector dialogue. Government participation in LEG meetings has increased in the past years thanks to the CA's increased communication and outreach efforts with MoES. UNICEF, as co-chair of both the LEG and DCC, is praised for playing a central role in improving dialogue between development partners and MoES. • **ESPIG-funded project:** The 2013-2017 ESPIG financing of the GPE-4 project contributed to improvements in sector monitoring in three ways. First, through ESPIG funding and UNICEF and CA, GPE provided technical and financial support for the development of the 2018-2020 MTEAP M&E plan, an important step forward in ensuring that education sector plans include adequate provisions to ensure the monitoring of results achievement. Second, the ESPIG funded training, resulting in increased MoES capacity to use EMIS data for decision-making. While previously only statistical reports were prepared using EMIS data, analytical reports showing trends over time based on EMIS data are prepared and used in JSRs. Finally, as part of the GPE-4 project, the EMIS was upgraded to include educational data on three sub-sectors (ECE, TVET, and higher education), increasing the quality and quantity of education data for decision-making.[96]
MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY
n/a
LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION, NOT APPLICABLE TO MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY
• **GPE guidance on conducting JSRs:** Available evidence does not indicate whether GPE guidelines on conducting JSRs have influenced JSRs in Tajikistan. However, it should be noted that this guidance was circulated only at the very end of the review period.

[96] Source: World Bank. (2018). Implementation Completion and Results Report on a Grant in the Amount of US $16.2 Million to The Republic of Tajikistan for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)-4.

- **ESPIG variable tranche:** Available evidence does not suggest that GPE's new funding requirement, the introduction of disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs), has influenced sector dialogue and the creation of mutual accountability in Tajikistan. This may be due to the fact that DLIs will be incorporated in the new ESPIG but were not incorporated in the previous one.

73. While sector dialogue in the LEG and DCC was largely focused on GPE grants, there are multiple examples of donor coordination resulting from discussions focused on GPE grants among donors in the LEG and DCC:

- ESPIG 2013-2017 (GPE-4): One of the objectives of GPE-4 was to increase access to ECE by establishing new ECE centers or reinforcing existing centers. As a result of discussing the grant within dialogue mechanisms, the project was able to build on the previous work on ECE of development partners.
- Upcoming ESPIG: While preparing the application for the upcoming ESPIG, development partners conducted a mapping of their current and upcoming interventions in the education sector, allowing for better coordination of initiatives.[97]
- ESPDG 2017: The ESPGD approved in 2017 to support the preparation of the 2018-2020 MTEAP was extended to support the preparation of the 2021-2030 NSED. As part of the extension, the EU and UNICEF contributed financially to the grant and led the preparation of specific activities.[98]

74. In sum, development partners participating in the LEG and DCC all contributed one way or another to processes surrounding GPE grants. In GPE grant applications, the role of other development partners, about the grants themselves and the education sector in general, are always specified. As a result, all consulted development partners mentioned they felt ownership towards GPE and its processes. Their consensus is that GPE provided a clear model for coordination and partnership among development partners, both through the LEG and through GPE's requirement that grants be discussed and approved by the LEG.

Additional factors beyond GPE support

75. Additional **positive** factors beyond GPE support that likely contributed to strengthening processes and mechanisms for mutual accountability include: (a) development partners contributions to sector dialogue via the LEG and DCC, and (b) development partners contributions to generating useful and relevant data in the education sector. For example, the 2017 JSR was financed by the EU.

76. Additional **negative** factors that limited the basis for *mutual accountability* between key sector stakeholders include: (a) a high level of staff turnover in both MoES and development partner organizations, as it takes a considerable amount of time to update new staff on sector context and procedures, making dialogue mechanisms less effective; and (b) limited capacity within the MoES on principles related to results-based management (RBM) and monitoring in general, as expressed by most consulted development partners.

77. The evaluation did not find any unintended negative or unplanned positive effects of GPE support to sector dialogue or sector monitoring during the review period.

[97] This mapping exercise was conducted by the IsDB as the GA for the upcoming ESPIG. Overall, consulted development partners noted they were cooperative in completing the mapping. Only a very few development partners were noted to be somewhat reluctant to participate in the mapping exercise.

[98] Source: ESPDG. (2017). Concept note on Education Sector Plan Development Grant application.

Implications for GPE's ToC and country-level operational model

Finding 8: During the review period, the GPE ToC assumptions regarding the capabilities, motivations, and opportunities of country level stakeholders with respect to sector dialogue and monitoring held only partially true, suggesting that these assumptions are not holding as strongly in the context of Tajikistan. However, recent positive developments hold out the hope for change.

78. Available evidence suggests that only one of the four assumptions about sector dialogue and sector monitoring underlying the GPE country-level ToC fully held in the context of Tajikistan during the 2012-2019 review period, that is GPE has sufficient leverage at global and country levels to influence LEG existence and functioning. However, available evidence suggests that the assumptions that country-level stakeholders have the capabilities, opportunities, and motivation to work together to solve education sector issues held only partially true in Tajikistan during the review period. As mentioned above, while JSRs are regularly conducted in Tajikistan, no unit in MoES is responsible for the monitoring the NSED and MTEAPs, and basic concepts related to results-based management and monitoring and evaluation are only recently emerging in the country. However, it is important to underscore that the development of the upcoming NSED appears to have resulted in a greater willingness on the part of the government to reach out to civil society in ways previously not available.

79. Many of the limitations noted above that were prevalent during the review period are grounded in a set of assumptions that reflect certain cultural or political values that are commonly shared across OECD countries. However, as mentioned earlier, Tajikistan is emerging from decades of Soviet rule, which was characterized as a top down, centralized approach to governance involving little if any dialogue with civil society. The relationship between the state and its citizens in terms of their dialogue will differ with that society's history and will evolve based on that history, and not so much on values and principles which may be brought by others, no matter how positively motivated. In terms therefore of the overall GPE ToC, assumptions about what constitute appropriate levels of sectorial dialogue may need to be viewed more in context with the overall governance history and patterns of the country in question.

3.4 GPE contributions to sector financing[99]

Overview

80. This section addresses the following evaluation questions:

- How has education sector financing (domestic and international, quantity and quality) evolved during the 2012-2019 period under review? (CEQ 1.5)
- Has GPE contributed to leveraging additional education sector financing and improving the quality of financing? If so, then how? If not, then why not? (CEQ 1.6) Have there been unintended, positive or negative, consequences of GPE financial and non-financial support? (CEQ 3.2)
- What factors other than GPE support are likely to have contributed to the observed changes (or lack thereof) in sector financing? (CEQ 3.1)
- What are implications of evaluation findings for GPE support to Tajikistan? (Key Question IV)

[99] This section addresses evaluation questions CEQ 1.5 and 1.6, as well as to (cross-cutting) CEQs 3.1 and 3.2.

81. A high-level overview of evaluation findings on sector financing is provided in Table 3.11 11. These observations are elaborated on through the findings and supporting evidence presented below.

Table 3.11 Overview: CLE findings on sector financing and related likelihood of GPE contributions

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS MORE/BETTER EDUCATION SECTOR FINANCING					LIKELIHOOD[100] OF GPE CONTRIBUTIONS TO[101]:			UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS APPLIED?[102]	
Total domestic education expenditure	Education share of domestic budget	Met 20% Goal?[103]	Total intl. education financing to country	Quality of intl. financing	Share of domestic financing	Amount of intl. financing	Quality of intl. sector financing	GPE has leverage on domestic finance	Context permits domestic or ODA improve ment
Increased by 85 percent between 2010-17, in absolute terms	Modest increase, from 15.3 to 16.4 percent between 2010-15	Not met	Fluctuations, overall stable	Improved	None	Modest	Significant	1	2

Characteristics of sector financing during the review period

Domestic financing

Finding 9: Although domestic education expenditure in Tajikistan increased substantially in absolute and relative terms during the period under review, the share of the overall education budget for capital investment and basic education decreased.

82. Between 2010 and 2017, absolute domestic education expenditures[104] increased by 85 percent (from US$226 million to US$419 million).[105] According to UIS data, government expenditure on education as a share of total government expenditure increased from 15.3 percent in 2010 to 17.7 percent in 2018, remaining somewhat below GPE's benchmark of 20 percent.[106] However, GPE 2016 results framework

[100] Note that, different from similar tables in previous chapters, the summary focuses on the 'likelihood' rather than the 'degree' of GPE contributions. This reflects the nature of the respective change processes, which make it difficult to elicit evidence on direct links between GPE support and observed changes.

[101] Assessment is based on (i) existence/absence of positive change in respective area; (ii) stakeholder views on likelihood of GPE support/funding criteria having influenced domestic or international funding decisions; (iii) absence or existence of additional factors that are as/more likely than GPE support to explain noted trends.

[102] For sector financing, the two underlying assumptions in the country level ToC were: (1) GPE has sufficient *leverage* to influence the amount and quality of domestic education sector financing, and (2) *External (contextual) factors* permit national and international stakeholders to increase/improve the quality of sector financing.

[103] One of GPE's ESPIG funding requirements is that 20 percent of government expenditure be invested in education, or that government expenditure on education shows an increase towards the 20 percent threshold.

[104] The data in this section on domestic education financing reflect expenditures, not allocations. Data comparing allocations and expenditures for the education sector as a whole was not made available to the evaluation. Absolute domestic education expenditures include both recurrent and capital development expenditures.

[105] When adjusted for inflation, absolute education expenditure increased by 65 percent between 2010 and 2017 (from US$226 million to US$373.6 million in 2010 constant US$). Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[106] Source: UIS data. 2015 is the latest year for which UIS data provides data; 2018 data from Ministry of Finance via UNICEF Tajikistan office.

data for indicator 10 shows Tajikistan allocating more than 20 percent of total government expenditure to education in 2015 (at 21.1 percent of total government expenditure allocated to education), but then dropping at 18.3 percent in 2016.[107] This variance is likely due to differences in methodologies used by the UIS, the Ministry of Finance, and the GPE results framework for indicator 10. While the UIS includes debt services to calculate the share of government education expenditure as a share of total government expenditure, the GPE 2016 results framework data for indicator 10 does not, which inflates the share of education expenditure in the total government spending. Finally, the share of government expenditure on education relative to the country's GDP increased from four percent to 5.2 percent between 2010 and 2015.[108] In 2017, the government of Tajikistan committed to increase domestic education expenditure in order to maintain the share of public expenditure going to education to its current level.[109] Consulted stakeholders from MoES, MoF, and development partners confirmed that the GoT was firmly committed to providing relatively high levels of funding to the education sector.

83. The share of education expenditure allocated to capital investments decreased substantially, from 21 percent in 2010 to nine percent in 2017.[110] The proportion of the capital expenditure budget dedicated to building new schools increased from 77 percent to 100 percent between 2010 and 2017, reflecting government commitments to increasing access to education via the refurbishment/ construction of school facilities.[111] Almost all consulted MoES stakeholders said that demographic pressures were the main reason for the GoT's decision to increase the share of capital expenditure dedicated to building new schools.[112] Several development partners questioned this decision, pointing out the MoES emphasis on infrastructure over improving the quality of education; for example, not establishing standardized testing for educational outcomes. Consultation with stakeholders also revealed that competing national priorities from the MoF to allocate capital development funding to other priority sectors in Tajikistan may have contributed to the reduction in education's capital development budget.

Table 3.12 Domestic sector financing, absolute and relative indicators, 2010 to 2017

CATEGORY	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	TREND
Total government education expenditure, US$ (millions current US$)[113]	226.1	313.0	325.5	443.2	477	412.2	394.8	418.9	Rising
Education expenditure as percentage of GDP, %[114]	4.0	3.9	4.0	-	-	5.2	-	-	Rising

[107] Source: GPE RF indicator 10.

[108] Source: UIS data. 2015 is the latest year for which UIS data provides data.

[109] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[110] Domestic capital expenditure in 2010 amounted to US$ 48.5 million and US$ 32.72 in 2010 and 2017 respectively, in constant 2010 US$. Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[111] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[112] While the share of capital expenditure budget dedicated to building new schools increased, education expenditures dedicated to building new schools remained stable from US$ 37 million in 2010 to US$ 36.7 million in 2017. Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[113] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[114] Source: UIS data. 2015 is the latest year for which UIS data provides data.

CATEGORY	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	TREND
Education Share of Total Government Expenditure, %[115]	15.3	14.6	16.4	-	-	16.4	-	-	Rising

84. By sub-sector, the share of education expenditure dedicated to basic education decreased from 74 to 58 percent between 2010 and 2017.[116] Comparatively, the share of education expenditure dedicated to tertiary and professional education increased from 13 to 23 percent.[117] This may be in large part due to the fact that available education data show that Tajikistan has reached near universal coverage in primary education, while consistent gaps appear to exist with respect to higher levels of education.

85. The 2012-2020 NSED addresses financing in a short five-paragraph section, mentioning that financing will come mainly from the state budget, and that financing will be planned on short-term intervals. As a result, all three MTEAPs detail the financing needs for their implementation, the sources of funding, and the financial gap. While subsequent MTEAPs had increasing financial needs,[118] the financial gap for the 2012-2014, 2015-2017, and 2018-2020 MTEAPs were, respectively, 25.6, 10.8, and 56.7 percent.[119] Available documents do not report committed vs disbursed amounts for the implementation of the NSED and MTEAPs.

86. In 2016, the GoT introduced a resolution[120] that regulated parents' contributions to state preschools. Before the introduction of the resolution, parents' financial contributions to preschools were not regulated and varied widely. Since the resolution, parents' contributions are determined by the district of residence, with parents living in rural areas having to contribute less than parents living in urban areas. While the regulation for parents' contributions represents an important step towards consolidating and settling private contributions to state preschools, challenges remain. Some state preschools reported that some parents were no longer able to afford their required contribution. The share of parent fees in the total budget for state preschool institutions increased from 19 percent to 34 between 2015 and 2018.[121] Available documents do not report on parent fees for other ECE models and other levels of education.

International financing

[115] Source: UIS data. 2015 is the latest year for which UIS data provides data.

[116] The absolute amount spent on basic education increase by 30 percent, from US$ 168.1 million in 2010 to US$ 219.16 million in 2017 (in constant 2017 US$). Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019. Data on the share of education expenditure dedicated to primary education is not available. The education sector analysis conducted in 2019 provides the share of education expenditure dedicated to general secondary which includes both primary and secondary levels. UIS data does not provide the share of education expenditure dedicated to primary education. As such, it is not possible to assess whether or not the share of education expenditure dedicated to primary education has remained above or below the 45 percent benchmark recommended by GPE.

[117] The absolute amount spent on tertiary and professional education increase by 191 percent, from US$ 29.8 million in 2010 to US$ 86,84 million in 2017 (in constant 2017 US$). Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[118] The funding needs for the 2012 2014, 2015-2017, and 2018-2020 MTEAPs were, respectively, US$ 252 million, US$ 430 million, and US$ 864 million.

[119] Source: evaluation's calculations using the three MTEAPs.

[120] "On payments for maintenance of children in state preschool educational institutions." Government Resolution, 2016.

[121] Source: Global Partnership for Education. (2019). Early Childhood Education and Care: A Focused Review of Preschool Education in Tajikistan.

Finding 10: During the period under review, overall international financing for education fluctuated, while basic education ODA decreased in both absolute and relative terms. While efforts have been made with regard to coordination and alignment of donors' initiatives, little progress has been made regarding harmonization.

87. As shown in Table 3.13, international education sector financing to Tajikistan fluctuated during the period under review, 2012-2019. In relative terms, education ODA as a share of overall ODA remained low, below the 10 percent mark. The share of education ODA allocated to basic education decreased significantly, from 51.6 percent in 2010 (US$8.5 million) to 28.8 percent in 2017 (US$4.9 million). The level of basic education ODA decreased sharply between 2012 and 2013, the second year of implementation of the NSED 2012-2020.

Table 3.13 Overseas Development Assistance flows, all sectors vs. education, US$ millions constant

FLOW	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	TREND
Total ODA, all sectors, million US$	407.2	304.4	370.6	368.0	339.8	481.8	404.8	381.3	Fluctuating
Total education ODA, million US$	16.6	17.3	20.0	11.9	11.8	13.5	16.1	17.2	Fluctuating
Education ODA as % of total ODA	4.1%	5.7%	5.4%	3.2%	3.5%	2.8%	4.0%	4.5%	Fluctuating
Basic education ODA, million US$	8.5	7.9	11.6	3.6	3.2	4.5	5.2	4.9	Decreasing
Basic education ODA as % of total education ODA	51.6%	45.8%	58.0%	30.0%	27.0%	33.4%	32.1%	28.8%	Decreasing
GPE disbursements as % of total education ODA	29.8	16.3	14.4	35.7	21.5	19.3	16.8	15.8	Fluctuating

Figures in constant 2017 million US$, Source: OECD-CRS, 2019

88. The decrease in ODA to basic education is likely due two factors. First, the number of bilateral agencies contributing to total education ODA remained stable but has declined for basic education. While 19 of the 29 OECD DAC countries provided education ODA to Tajikistan between 2012 and 2017, only four[122] provided basic education ODA. Of those four, only two countries provided basic education ODA consistently every year.[123] In recent years, three contributors from OECD countries stopped contributing to education ODA.[124] Second, most development partners that contributed to basic education ODA reduced their contributions over the years. USAID is the only bilateral agency that increased its contributions to basic education ODA between 2010 and 2017; all other bilateral agencies reduced their funding.

[122] The United States, Germany, Canada, Finland, as per OECD credit reporting system.

[123] United States and Canada

[124] GIZ contributed basic education ODA of US$15.35 million between 2010 and 2015, but has not contributed to basic education ODA since 2015; it still contributes to overall education ODA. The World Bank has not contributed to basic education ODA since 2013, while it still contributes to total education ODA. Consulted stakeholders noted that the World Bank has already committed to the GoT that it will support financing the 2021-2030 NSED by supporting basic education. Spain also stopped contributing to basic education ODA in 2009. As per OECD credit reporting system

89. Regarding the quality of international education financing in Tajikistan, most development partner initiatives in Tajikistan are project-based, with the exception of AsDB, which offers a mix of grant and loans to the GoT,[125] and the WB which offers a credit loan.[126] Some consulted development partner organizations were not in favor of pooled funding mechanisms and budgetary supports to the GoT due to the lack of a solid foundation for macroeconomic stability in the country.[127] While all consulted development partner agencies mentioned that their participation in the LEG and DCC ensured coordination of their activities which reduced duplication of efforts, as well as alignment with MOEs priorities, harmonization (as envisaged by the Paris and Busan Declarations) within the education sector had not been addressed in LEG or DCC meetings (see Finding 5).

GPE contributions to sector financing

Finding 11: GPE support has significantly contributed to the overall amount of sector financing. The introduction of the multiplier and the ESPIG's alignment with the MoES have both led to an improvement in donor alignment. GPE has had limited influence on domestic education financing.

90. GPE offers a series of financial and non-financial mechanisms to support the quantity and quality of domestic and international sector financing. Table 3.14 14 provides an overview of these mechanisms, grouped by whether they are likely to have made a significant, moderately significant, or no/limited contribution in Tajikistan. This grouping does not constitute a formal score.

Table 3.14 GPE contributions to sector financing during the 2012 - 2019 review period

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO DOMESTIC FINANCING	SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCING
• (none)	• **ESPIG funding** financed one percent of total sector financing between 2012 and 2017,[128] representing 18.8 percent of all education ODA, and 35.9 percent of basic education ODA in this period. • **ESPIG multiplier mechanism**: In 2018, GPE announced that it would provide Tajikistan with an additional grant of US$10 million to the education sector, provided other development partners matched this grant through new (additional) funds at a ratio of 3:1. As a result, IsDB came forward with a loan of US$30 million, GoT with US$6 million, and UNICEF with US$750,000 of in-kind contributions. Consulted development partners mentioned that IsDB initially planned to allocate the entire US$30 million loan to school construction. As a result of IsDB participation in GPE

[125] AsDB contributions are to basic education and TVET. Source: Development Partners Education Mapping matrix.

[126] WB's contribution to the education sector is via the "Higher Education Project", running from 2015 and expected to end in 2021. Source: Development Partners Education Mapping matrix.

[127] As mentioned in chapter 2, Tajikistan is vulnerable to external economic shocks such as drops in commodity prices, and economic growth is in great part driven by personal remittances.

[128] GPE's two ESPIGs (2010-2013 and 2013-2017) provided US$29.7 million out of US$157.82 million in total education ODA and US$82.84 million basic education ODA between 2010 and 2017. This evaluation focuses on the contribution of the US$16.2 million ESPIG from 2013-2017

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SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO DOMESTIC FINANCING	SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCING
	processes, and MoES' selection of IsDB as grant agent for the ESPIG, the IsDB loan will have a broader focus.[129] • **Increased donor coordination resulting from dialogue on GPE grants:** LEG discussions on GPE grants encouraged donor coordination (see Finding 7). • **ESPIG projects modalities:** Multiple consulted development partners mentioned that GPE's second ESPIG project (FIT-2, 2010-2013) was the first initiative that used a project implementation unit (PIU) within the MoES itself. As a result, development partners started working more closely with the MoES, implementing initiatives via PIUs within the MoES. The MoES also demonstrated increased ownership of development partner initiatives as a result. In sum, GPE's ESPIG project modalities influenced both development partners and MoES behaviors and relationships.
MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO DOMESTIC FINANCING	**MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCING**
• **ESPIG funding requirement on domestic financing**: Some consulted MoES stakeholders were aware of GPE's objective to meet the 20 percent target as a requirement for ESPIG funding. Documented evidence[130] suggests that the GoT's 2017 pledge to increase domestic education financing to maintain a high share of total public expenditures dedicated to education was related to its membership in the GPE.	• **GPE support for sector planning**: Development partner stakeholders mentioned that it was useful in terms of coordination among partners to have sector plans and noted alignment of their own work to the NSED and MTEAPS. Development partner initiatives are often explicitly mentioned in the MTEAPs.
LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION/NOT APPLICABLE TO DOMESTIC FINANCING	**LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION/NOT APPLICABLE TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCING**
• **GPE Secretariat advocacy** has had no measurable influence on the overall quantity of domestic education financing or the proportion allocated to basic education. Consulted MoES stakeholders were aware of GPE's requirement to provide 45 percent of sector financing to primary education. However, given Tajikistan's historically high government budget allocation to basic education, there was no evidence that GPE's requirement	• **CSEF grants:** Not Applicable. The CSEF grants are not designed to influence the quantity or quality of international education financing. As mentioned in chapter 2, the coalition in Tajikistan supported by the CSEF grant is not grant-contracted, but rather supported indirectly via a regional coalition of CSOs. • **ESPIG variable tranche**: Available evidence does not suggest that GPE's new funding requirements, including the introduction of disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs), has influenced sector financing in Tajikistan over the review

[129] According to the project appraisal document on the ESPIG project prepared by the IsDB, the ESPIG will have three main objectives: i) enhancing access to quality education facilities; ii) improving the efficacy of the competency-based education, and iii) supporting education sector policy, planning and evidence based resource allocation through strengthening the EMIS and its piloting project area.

[130] Notably, the Education Sector analysis published in 2019.

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO DOMESTIC FINANCING	SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCING
had influenced the government's budget allocation decisions. • **CSEF grants:** There is no evidence that CSEF grants have influenced domestic education financing.	period. This may be due to the fact that DLIs will only be incorporated in the upcoming ESPIG. Similarly, the variable tranche mechanism only being introduced in the upcoming ESPIG could not have influenced financing. Therefore, both are, in effect, not applicable in the context of the review period.

91. Overall, GPE did not catalyze additional domestic financing, given the GoT's already relatively important domestic contributions to the education sector and decreasing allocation to non-recurrent expenditures. While some consulted MoES stakeholders were aware of GPE's targets regarding domestic education financing, there is no evidence that GPE's requirements had influenced significantly domestic education financing. It was the perception of a handful of stakeholders that the GoT's commitment to financing education would be the same without GPE's advocacy.

92. As noted above, GPE influenced the quality and quantity of the overall ODA landscape in Tajikistan through the ESPIGs by: i) providing an important proportion of international education financing via its ESPIG funding; ii) contributing to increasing the quantity of education ODA via the ESPIG multiplier mechanism; and iii) contributing to improving the quality of international education financing via ESPIG project modalities and its contribution to the sector dialogue (also discussed in finding 9).

93. There was no evidence that GPE support had negative or unintended effects in sector financing.

Additional factors beyond GPE support

94. An additional **positive** factor that affected domestic financing beyond GPE support was an increase in the government's nominal allocations and expenditures to the education sector, despite economic downturns. Several NSED-aligned donor funded initiatives also contributed to international financing.

95. One **negative** factor beyond GPE support that likely affected domestic financing is the fact that growing population and increasing school enrollment put massive pressure on the education system. This has contributed to high levels of domestic financing dedicated to recurrent expenditures (teacher salaries) and school construction, instead of capital expenditures related to improving quality education.

Implications for GPE's ToC and country-level operational model

Finding 12: In Tajikistan, until the 2015 introduction of new funding modalities, traditional GPE mechanisms to influence the quality of domestic or international financing yielded few results.

96. The Tajikistan experience demonstrates two differing observations about the effectiveness of GPE mechanisms in terms of influencing the amount and quality of education sector finance. Before the introduction of the NFM by Board decision in 2015, GPE had very little effect on either the quantity or quality of domestic education financing. There also were no discernable patterns of GPE influence in the period after the introduction of the NFM.

97. However, the introduction of the NFM, and its acceptance by government and development partners, has resulted in increases in international financing quality from at least one new ODA partner. Government and development partner stakeholders alike attribute these positive developments to consistent GPE support and the extent to which FTI/GPE participation has positively conditioned government decision-makers to the benefits of being a GPE member. The tradition of bilateral ODA

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partner / GoT relations, combined with a relatively small pool of ODA partners during the review period, did not enable GPE support to promote funding harmonization mechanisms to any significant degree.

98. The Tajikistan experience demonstrates relatively traditional patterns of how development partners making financial contributions attempt to coordinate their activities. Given the small pool of such partners in Tajikistan and the tightly knit nature of the LEG, ad hoc coordination could be achieved, although no harmonization as envisaged by the Paris and Busan Declarations.

99. Stakeholders candidly admitted that there was no one central repository of information about the practical work of the various partners, let alone their strategic objectives. IsDB, the incoming GA, in its ESPIG application pointed out this gap and its implications and committed itself in the second year of ESPIG to make concerted efforts first to increase reporting of ODA partner funding and activities, and second to advocate for more coordination of efforts, not necessarily the establishment of the pooled fund, but a greater degree of hands-on coordination, especially in areas where two or more partners are active.

3.5 GPE contributions to sector plan implementation[131]

Overview

100. This section addresses the following evaluation questions:

- What have been the strengths and weaknesses of sector plan implementation during the review period? Why? (CEQ 1.3)
- Has GPE contributed to observed characteristics of sector plan implementation? If so, how and why? (CEQ 1.4) Has GPE support had any unintended effects, positive or negative? (CEQ 3.2)
- What other factors contributed to observed characteristics of plan implementation? (CEQ 3.1)
- Going forward, what are the implications of findings for the GPE ToC/operational model? (CEQ 7)

101. Table 3.15 provides an overview of evaluation findings on sector plan implementation and on related GPE contributions during the review period. These observations are elaborated on through the findings and supporting evidence presented below.

[131] This section addresses evaluation questions 1.3 and 1.4, as well as (cross-cutting) CEQs 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3.15 Overview: CLE findings on sector plan implementation and related GPE contributions

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	DEGREE OF GPE CONTRIBUTION	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS LIKELY HELD TRUE[132]					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Moderate – several results were achieved, but lack of evidence makes it difficult to assess progress against planned targets	**Modest –** the 2013-2017 ESPIG of US$16.2m represented 18 percent of international education financing, which contributed to key interventions planned in the 2012-2020 NSED						

Strengths and weaknesses of sector plan implementation

Finding 13: Given current monitoring and reporting systems, it is challenging to track the implementation of the 2012-2020 NSED.

102. It is difficult to assess the extent to which the NSED and MTEAPs have been implemented. This is due to three main reasons.

- While the NSED includes three overarching education system development priorities,[133] these priorities are not accompanied with a clear list of activities or measurable results, nor are they aligned with the expected results listed in the plan. The complex framework of priorities, objectives, and expected results hinders a comparison of planned vs implemented activities and results. As mentioned in section 3.3, the monitoring measures in the NSED do not allow for proper analysis of achieved results nor do they allow a comparison of planned vs actually implemented activities.
- No information is available on the NSED's execution rate (i.e., disbursement rate, implementation of activities, achieved outputs). As mentioned in section 3.3, no unit in the MoES is responsible for monitoring the NSED and MTEAPs, and no reporting is done against the vague indicators or the expected results included in the NSED. While available documents (such as JSRs, ESA) provide information on implemented activities by educational level, they do not provide a clear and systematic overview of progress against planned interventions, nor do they include any explanation or analysis of variance between planned and actual delivery.
- No evaluation of the NSED or its MTEAPS has been conducted.

103. While MTEAPs clearly list planned activities, as opposed to the prior NSED, which did not contain significant operational detail, all three MTEAPs reviewed included a total of 416 individual activity lines. However, they are not structured around the same sets of outcomes as the NSED in question. MTEAP 2012-2014 lists indicators (conceptually) but provides no targets or benchmarks. While MTEAP 2015-2017 has clear targets, there was no systematic reporting on their implementation. JSR reporting on implementation of MTEAP activities is incidental rather than systematic, highlighting only selected

[132] For sector plan implementation, the six underlying assumptions in the country level ToC were: (1) Relevant government actors having the *motivation* to implement the sector plan; (2) government actors gave the *opportunity* (resources, time, conducive environment) to implement the plan; (3) government actors have the technical *capabilities* to do so; (4) country level stakeholders have the motivation and opportunity to align their own activities with the priorities of the ESP; (5) country level stakeholders take part in regular, evidence-based joint sector reviews and apply resulting recommendations to enhance ESP implementation; (6) the sector plan includes provisions for strengthening EMIS and LAS to produce timely, relevant and reliable data.

[133] NSED p. 20. These priorities are: 1. modernization of education structure; 2. structural changes in the education system; and 3. ensuring availability of quality education.

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accomplishments instead of providing a full analysis in comparison to targets listed in the MTEAP. Finally, the most recent MTEAP (2018-2020) cannot be used as a mechanism to assess progress against planned activities, due to the lack of reliable data after 2017.

104. However, using available documents,[134] it is possible to extract output-level progresses that were achieved during the review period in the following categories: access, quality, and management (as opposed to the priorities of the NSED, see table 3.16). Some of the outputs noted below were implemented in cooperation with development partners. Outputs are compared against targets included in the NSED and MTEAPs. However, it is not always possible to assess the extent to which all targets have been met, since targets are either absent or vague as explained above. The list in table 3.16 is not exhaustive, since there is no systematic reporting on implemented activities planned in the NSED and MTEAPs. The list contains mostly fully achieved activities, since available documents do not report on planned activities that were not implemented. In terms of achievement of results, Appendix VIII provides available data on the 14 key performance indicators included in the 2012-2020 NSED. The NSED mentions that the evaluation of the NSED is based on these indicators. However, no baseline nor targets are included in relations with these indicators.

Table 3.16 Key output-level achievements for NSED and MTEAPs from 2012-2019

EQUITABLE ACCESS	QUALITY	SYSTEM EFFICIENCY/GOVERNANCE
OUTPUTS LARGELY ACHIEVED DURING NSED IMPLEMENTATION, 2012-2019		
Construction: The number of preschool institutions increased from 451 to 636 between 2012 and 2017,[135] and the number of ECE centers increased from 1,400 to 1,647 during the same period.[136] **School equipment:** 450 state preschool institutions were provided with learning material.[137]	**ECE models** were piloted and tested in Tajikistan, such as community-based or school-based Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers, private kindergartens and family-based kindergartens as well as double-shift kindergartens.[142] **Learning and educational programs for preschool** education were reviewed in line with the Law on	The **National Testing Center** was established to provide harmonized examinations for students' admission to higher education.[148] **Per capita financing systems** were introduced for ECE, primary, and secondary levels of education.[149] The **EMIS** was upgraded and now includes data on three additional

[134] Sources: Ministry of Education and Science. (2019). Joint Sector Review Report; Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[135] Preschool institutions are state-funded kinder gardens. It is not possible to know exactly how many preschool institutions were built, since some preschool institutions are installed in already existing buildings such as schools.

[136] As mentioned in chapter 2, ECE centers, which usually offer education services on a half-day basis, are predominantly located in rural areas and supported by development partners, both international and national. Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019. The 2015-2017 MTEAP target regarding the construction of ECE centers is to build 250 new ones. Hence, the target was largely met.

[137] The 2015-2017 MTEAP target in this regard it to provide 450 ECE centers with learning materials, which was met.

[142] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019. The NSED (p.27) mentions the aim of developing new models. There was no explicit target to pilot/test new models in the MTEAPs.

[148] MTEAPs 2018-2020 introductory notes. The NSED includes as a target the development of standardized national assessment for admission to higher education. This target is met with the creation of the National Testing Center.

[149] Source: (2019). Introductory Note: Medium-Term Education Action Plan 2018-2020 of the National Strategy on Education Development 2020. This output was planned in the MTEAP 2015-2017 and was achieved.

EQUITABLE ACCESS	QUALITY	SYSTEM EFFICIENCY/GOVERNANCE
School feeding: The concept of school meals was approved[138] by the GoT in 2015, resulting in increased number of students receiving meals in schools.[139] **Policy developments:** In 2017, the GoT adopted the Law on the Education of Adults, recognizing the right of adults to equal educational access at any point in their lives. In 2013, the Law on Preschool Education was also adopted, which guarantees the right to early childhood care and education to all Tajik citizens.[140] A new law on TVET is also being drafted, although not approved yet.[141]	Preschool Education adopted in 2013.[143] **Teacher training and management:** To increase the number of qualified teachers, the GoT implemented a strategy that focused on teacher training, enforcement of new teaching standards, and increased remuneration.[144] **ECE curricula and learning materials development:** 52 types of learning materials were developed for pre-primary education, new teaching programs, textbooks, teacher guides and subject standards.[145] Available ECE curricula, modules, and teacher guides were also translated from Tajik and Russian to some ethnic minority languages.[146] New pedagogical materials were also developed for primary and secondary education.[147]	sub-sectors: ECE, TVET, and higher education. The MoES developed a concept on the implementation of a **Labor Market Information System**, an instrument to track graduates upon completion of TVET study.[150] To facilitate transition from TVET education to the labor market, **cooperation agreements** were signed and professional linkages established between TVET institutions and a number of state-owned enterprises.[151]

[138] The MTEAP target in this regard was to develop the school meals strategy, which was met.

[139] The MTEAP target was "356,000 students, teachers and school technical personnel covered by the WFP's school meal programme". Meals were provided to 370,000 students in 2017, an increase from 356,000 in 2014 (Source: JSR 2016). The target was met.

[140] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[141] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report.

[143] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report. The 2015-2017 MTEAP includes a target stating that pre=school curricula should be revised and approved, which was met.

[144] Measures include the creation of a number of awards to incentivize teachers (e.g., state awards, local education awards, and excellence in education). In 2017-2018, 120,185 teaching personnel received these awards, including 68,867 women. These awards aim to both retain teachers in education and assess the quality of teaching practice in schools in the country. Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019. The NSED and MTEAPs include numerous targets related to teacher training, teaching standards, and teacher remuneration. Available data suggests these targets were met.

[145] The 2015-2017 MTEAP's target was to develop 15 modules, this target was exceeded.

[146] The 2015-2017 MTEAP includes a target for translating and disseminating educational materials for ethnic minority schools. This target was met.

[147] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[150] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report. While neither the NSED nor the MTEAPs include specific target on the creation of the Labor Market Information System, the NSED clearly includes increasing the relevance of TVET to market needs.

[151] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report. The 2015-2017 MTEAP includes as a target the development and approval of regulatory frameworks supporting employers' participation in the development of the TVET.

EQUITABLE ACCESS	QUALITY	SYSTEM EFFICIENCY/GOVERNANCE
OUTPUTS PARTIALLY OR NOT ACHIEVED DURING NSED IMPLEMENTATION, 2012-2019		
Construction: From 2012-2017, the number of general secondary schools[152] increased modestly from 3,813 to 3,870.[153] **Out-of-school children (OOSC):** Accelerated education programs were piloted for OOSC**.** These were revised based on the experience of the pilots, and new ones were developed.[154] Much remains to be done, since only one school in the country is adapted to providing the accelerated education program to out-of-school children.[155]	**25 professional standards for TVET** were developed and approved by MoES. In addition, MoES started the development of competency standards, standards for learning assessment, in 5 sectors and 17 pilot professions for TVET education.[156] In relation to the new standards, 120 training curricula were approved for TVET institutions for grades 9-11.	**Two baseline assessments of early grade reading** were implemented in 2012 and 2018, from a sample of students from grades 2 to 4. The 2018 baseline study provided data that is representative of student learning outcomes on a national basis.[157]

GPE contributions to sector plan implementation

Finding 14: GPE's financial support (GPE-4, 2013/2017) contributed to filling gaps in what consulted stakeholders perceived as the most important areas in the education sector plan.

105. GPE uses a series of financial and non-financial mechanisms to support sector plan implementation. Table 3.17 gives an overview of these mechanisms, organized by whether they are likely to have made a significant, moderately significant, or insignificant contribution to plan implementation in Tajikistan. This classification does not constitute a formal score.

[152] Schools in which different levels from primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary can be taught.

[153] The NSED target regarding school construction is to build one thousand schools by 2020. Hence, as of 2017, the target has not been achieved.

[154] The MTEAP target was "legal and regulatory provisional documents on the accelerated education program for out-of-school children to ensure their general education approved developed", which was met.

[155] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report. The MTEAP target was ""250 [formerly out-of-school] enrolled in Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) in three regions of the country". This target was not met since only one school in one part of the country has the program.

[156] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report. The 2015-2017 MTEAP's target was to develop 120 professional standards for TVET, this target was not achieved.

[157] Sources: USAID. (2012). Review of Early Grade Reading Teaching and Skills, The Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan. USAID. (2018). Early Grade Reading Assessment Baseline 2018 Results USAID Read with Me Project in Tajikistan. The NSED planned the creation of national learning assessment systems. These systems have not been created.

Table 3.17 GPE contributed to plan implementation through financial support and incentives

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
• **ESPIG funding support to NSED and share of ODA**: The 2013-2017 US$16.2 million ESPIG, representing 18 percent of all international education financing.[158] Government stakeholders highlighted the value of this contribution in filling gaps in priority areas, such as the implementation of the competency-based approach, and increasing access to ECE. • **ESPIG support for improving sector data:** GPE-4 provided support to upgrade the EMIS to include education data on ECE, TVET, and higher education.
MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
• **Program Development Grant 2013:** GPE provided a US$200,000 grant for developing the 2013-2017 GPE-4 project. Some stakeholders indicated that this financing was helpful during the design of the GPE-4 project. • **GA**: Stakeholders generally appreciated the GA's supervision of GPE-4 execution, noting that World Bank procedures for fund approval/disbursements were well understood within the MoES. • **Funding requirement of an endorsed sector plan**: Consulted development partners mentioned that the requirement related to development partners endorsing the sector plan contributed to aligning their initiatives with government priorities. As a result, development partners did implement initiatives that contributed to implementing the NSED. • **LEG and sector dialogue:** As mentioned in section 3.3, although sector dialogue with the LEG is in part limited to GPE-related issues, the fact that the LEG discussed the development of the MTEAPs supported alignment between development partner initiatives and the MTEAPs, which are in turn in great part aligned with the NSED.
LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
• **ESPIG support to strengthen plan implementation capacities:** Outside of indirect support (e.g., development partners encouraging MoES to increase its focus and capacity on M&E via the LEG), neither the ESPIG nor other modalities of GPE support (e.g., technical assistance through the CA, GA, or Secretariat) **directly** strengthened MoES plan implementation capacities. • **Coordinating agency**: The evaluation found no evidence of specific and strong contributions by the coordinating agency (UNICEF) to NSED implementation over and above fulfilling its role as a development partner.

106. GPE's primary contribution to NSED implementation was through the US$16.2 million ESPIG 2013-2017, which financed the GPE-4 project. The project was implemented by various departments within the MoES, with the World Bank functioning as grant agent. All consulted stakeholders were satisfied with how the project had been managed. In May 2016 the project received a one-year extension, extending the grant's closing date from September 2016 to September 2017. Also, in May 2016, the project was restructured, resulting in a reduction in the scope of the project, notably on the piloting of the new competency-based curriculum for secondary education.[159]

107. The main objectives and associated interventions of the GPE-4 project were:

- **Component 1,** increasing Access to Quality Early Childhood Education Programs (original US$2.55 million; actual US$2.16 million, or 13 percent of total ESPIG fund disbursed).

[158] Data on ESPIG contributions relative to overall ODA to basic education ODA is calculated based on UNESCO UIS data.

[159] While it was planned that the new competency-based curriculum for mathematics and Tajik language would be piloted for grades 5 to 11, it was piloted for grades 5 and 6 only. Source: World Bank. (2018). Implementation Completion and Results Report on a Grant in the Amount of US $16.2 Million to The Republic of Tajikistan for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)-4.

  - Establishment of new or reinforcement of existing 450 ECE centers (using models piloted and by UNICEF and the Aga Khan Foundation).
  - Build the capacity of 900 teachers to deliver ECE curriculum.
- **Component 2,** enhancing Quality of Education (original US$3.25 million; actual US$3.62 million, or 22 percent of total ESPIG fund disbursed):
  - Upgrade primary and secondary education curriculum and pedagogy, through the development of new competency-based curriculum package, teaching training, and provision of learning packages in schools.
  - Ensure access to quality inclusive education for 750 children with disabilities.
- **Component 3,** improving Child-friendly Learning Environments (original US$8.00 million; actual US$7.88 million, or 49 percent of total ESPIG fund disbursed).
  - Rehabilitate 240 classrooms in 30 schools.
  - Provide school supplies.
- **Component 4,** strengthening System Capacity (original US$2.40 million; actual US$2.54 million, or 16 percent of total ESPIG fund disbursed).
  - Build capacity of MoES staff to use EMIS data for decision-making, and strategic planning.
  - Build the capacity of 1,900 school directors on financing management in the context of the implementation of per capita financing system.
  - Extend the EMIS to include three new sub-sectors (preschool, TVET, and higher education).

108. Consulted MoES stakeholders noted that GPE's continued contributions through the multiple ESPIG grants it has provided is unique in the country. The continued support from GPE allows the MoES to implement new activities with a longer-term focus. Consulted MOEs stakeholders mentioned that GPE's ESPIG projects always focused on the most important issues and priorities in the education sector.[160] For example, the three major education system-level changes mentioned most often by consulted MoES stakeholders (increase ECE coverage, transition to competency-based learning approach, and the introduction of per capita financing) are all recognized as contributions of the GPE-4 project and results from the project are seen as sustainable. For example, the competency-based approach is the new norm at the primary level of education, and the associated new teaching and learning materials are used as models to expand the learning approach to other levels of education. In terms of performance against planned objectives, GPE-4 met planned targets for all of its intermediate results indicators (see Appendix VII for a full overview).

109. There was no indication that GPE support had any positive or negative unintended consequences in Tajikistan.

[160] The 2013-2017 ESPIG is relevant to the following goals of the NSED: "(i) increase coverage and quality of early childhood education; (ii) modernize general education content by increasing its relevance and moving from a knowledge- to a competency-based model; (iii) improve teachers effectiveness; (iv) improve existing schools physical infrastructure and build 1,000 new schools to accommodate population growth; and (v) strengthen management capacities of the education system and the system's efficiency. Source: Global Partnership for Education." (2013). Program Implementation Grant Application, Republic of Tajikistan - Global Education Partnership Fourth Grant to Tajikistan (GPE-4), p. 9

Additional factors beyond GPE support

110. The key additional factor beyond GPE support that **positively** supported the implementation of the 2012-2020 NSED was contributions from other development partners. As mentioned in section 3.4, these interventions were in great part aligned with the NSED and MTEAPs (see table 3.18).

Table 3.18 Contribution of other development partners to NSED implementation

DONOR	AMOUNT COMMITTED	CONTRIBUTION TO NSED IMPLEMENTATION 2013-2018[161]
World Food Programme	US$ 58 million, 2016 – 2020	WFP's School Meals Program aims at supporting, enhancing children's learning capacity, and building a sustainable food and nutrition based social safety net through daily provision of nutritious meals to schoolchildren in rural areas with high levels of food insecurity.
USAID	US$ 34 million, 2012-2021	USAID is financing three primary education and literacy projects in Tajikistan, in collaboration with the American Institute for Research, Save the Children, Aga Khan Foundation, and Chemonics international. These projects aim to improve reading outcomes for primary school children by providing teacher training, early grade reading assessment, and supporting curriculum reform.
Asia Development Bank	US$ 34 million, 2016 – 2021	ADB's Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project aims to modernize TVET methodology, improve physical learning facilities, and strengthen governance and management at the TVET level
EU	US$ 16.7 million, 2017 – 2020	EU's Quality Education Support Program aims to improve learning outcomes at the secondary and TVET levels by training teachers on the competency-based approach to learning, improving assessment systems at the TVET level, and strengthening planning, budgeting and monitoring process within the MoES.
World Bank	US$ 15 million, 2015 – 2021	The World Bank's Higher Education Project aims to develop mechanisms that improve and monitor the quality and labor-market relevance of higher education
UNICEF	US$ 8.8 million, 2016 – 2020	UNICEF's Learning Program aligns closely NSED. It focuses on promoting increased access to early learning and school readiness, improving the quality of primary education through teacher motivation and training, promoting access to primary education for vulnerable children and girls, and building planning, management, and monitoring capacity at national, sub-national and school levels.
Aga Khan Foundation	US$ 4.03 million, 2010 – 2019	The AKF implements two projects, the Early Childhood Development Project, and the School Improvement Program. Through these projects, the AKF provides technical and financial support to the MoES in order to increase the availability of ECE centers, train ECE and primary and secondary teachers, and improve children's learning outcomes.

[161] Based on information from interviews and reviewed documentation.

DONOR	AMOUNT COMMITTED	CONTRIBUTION TO NSED IMPLEMENTATION 2013-2018[161]
		JICA developed a model for CGEs, developed procedures and manuals based on this model, and provided technical support to strengthen capacities of CGEs across the country. JICA also provided support to construct schools in basic and secondary education and is supporting education quality through the development of a model for teaching and learning in math.
OSI	US$ 2.25 million, 2014 – 2020	OSI implements the "Development of Inclusive Education and Access to Quality Education" project. The objectives of the projects are to provide technical assistance to the MoES in introducing teacher training modules on the assessment of children's learning outcomes, provide methodological support for in-service teachers, and establish a network of pilot schools practicing inclusive education for children with special needs.

Implications for GPE's ToC and country-level operational model

Finding 15: While government actors had the motivation to implement the NSED and development partners aligned their interventions with the sector plan, limited government resources and inadequate sector plan monitoring hindered the achievement of planned interventions.

111. In Tajikistan, the evaluation found two out of the six ToC assumptions for plan implementation to be true: relevant government actors having the *motivation* (political will, incentives) to implement the sector plan, and country level stakeholders have the motivation and opportunity to align their own activities with the priorities of the ESP. Two other assumptions were found to hold partially true in Tajikistan: government actors have the technical *capabilities* to implement the sector plan, and the sector plan includes provisions for strengthening EMIS and LAS to produce timely, relevant and reliable data. As mentioned above, there is no national system in place to measure students' learning outcomes nor was the implementation of such system planned in the NSED.

112. Finally, the last two assumptions were found not to hold in Tajikistan: government actors gave the *opportunity* (resources, time, conducive environment) to implement the plan, and country level stakeholders take part in regular, evidence-based joint sector reviews and apply resulting recommendations to enhance ESP implementation. The MoES capabilities to implement the sector plan is limited since the MoES does not have full oversight on the execution of the education budget. Also, as mentioned in section 3.3, JSRs do not contribute to a better understanding of the extent to which the sector plan is being implemented, and they do not produce actionable recommendations. It is important to underscore that the current gaps and shortfalls in the joint sector review process result in risks that implementation may not be sufficiently evidence-based and that necessary midcourse corrections may not occur.

4 Progress Towards a Stronger Education System

Introduction

113. This section summarizes evaluation findings related to Key Question II from the evaluation matrix: "Has sector plan implementation contributed to making the overall education system in Tajikistan more effective and efficient?" Key sub-questions are:

- During the review period, how has the education system changed in relation to (a) improving access and equity, (b) improving education quality and relevance, and (c) improving sector management? (CEQ 4)
- How has sector plan implementation contributed to observed changes at the education system level? (CEQ 5)
- Going forward, what are implications of findings for the GPE ToC/operational model? (CEQ 7)

114. Progress towards a stronger education system is focused on changes that go beyond specific activities or outputs, and, instead, constitute changes in the existence and functioning of relevant institutions (e.g., schools, MoES), as well as changes in relevant rules, norms and frameworks (e.g., standards, curricula, teaching and learning materials) that influence how actors in the education sector interact with each other.[162]

115. To be counted as a 'system-level change', an intervention needs to be planned, nationwide in scope (at least in the medium-term), and at least partly led by the ministry. Ideally, it should also be sustainable in terms of funding (e.g., government co-funding, cost recovery), or make sensible plans for future sustainability. Actual implementation is not a necessary criterion as policy or program design can in and of itself be a valuable first step, but timely implementation needs to at least be likely, and its likelihood is enhanced if timelines, funding and responsibilities are clearly outlined. Whether system-level changes actually enhanced education outcomes (enrollment, learning) is reviewed in chapter 6.

116. This section reviews system-level changes documented in the review period, based on the three areas of access, quality of learning and system-level governance, in addition to the cross-cutting issue of equity. It is important to note that this categorization is the judgement of the evaluation; the NSED and MTEAPs are not aligned along these categories.

117. Table 4.1 summarizes related CLE findings, which are further elaborated on below.

[162] Please see definition of 'education systems' in the terminology table of this report. The GPE 2020 corporate results framework defines six indicators for measuring system-level change: (a) increased public expenditure on education (RF10, covered in section 3.3 on education financing); (b) equitable allocation of teachers (RF11, covered here under Access and Equity); (c) improved ratios of pupils to trained teachers at the primary level (RF12, covered below under Quality and Relevance); (d) reduced student dropout and repetition rates (RF13, covered in section 5; (e) the proportion of key education indicators the country reports to UIS (RF14, covered here under Sector Management), and (f) the existence of a learning assessment system for basic education that meets quality standards (RF15, covered below under Quality and Relevance).

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Table 4.1 Overview: CLE findings on contribution of plan implementation to systems change

IMPROVEMENTS MADE DURING REVIEW PERIOD?[163]	HAD ISSUE BEEN ADDRESSED IN THE 2012-2020 NSED?[164]	LIKELIHOOD THAT NSED IMPLEMENTATION CONTRIBUTED TO NOTED IMPROVEMENTS[165]	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS LIKELY HELD TRUE[166]			
			1	2	3	4
Access: Modest. Increase in state preschool institutions, ECE centers, and general secondary school construction	**Yes**, increasing access to ECE and increasing the number of general secondary schools are listed expected results.	**High** – Increased access to ECE and basic education planned for and implemented under NSED.				
Quality: Significant. Competency-based approach to learning, along with curriculum development and teacher training implemented.	**Yes**, listed as a key result to achieve in the NSED.	**High** – The transition towards competency-based learning planned for and partially implemented under NSED.				
Equity: Limited. Improvements in policy at the pre-primary level of education, but significant lags in terms of teacher qualification and awareness within the MoES.	**Yes**, partially addressed in the NSED.	**Moderate** – Policy improvement planned and implemented in line with NSED.				
System management: Modest. Introduced per capita financing, and increased the quantity and quality of education data.	**Yes**, listed as expected results in the NSED.	**High** – Planned and partially implemented learning assessment system and EMIS upgrade under NSED.				

[163] Meaning, for example, new or expanded mechanisms or frameworks having been put in place. Rating options and related color coding: Green = strong/comprehensive. Amber = modest/fragmented; Limited/in isolated areas only – red; Insufficient data – gray.

[164] Green = yes, comprehensively. Amber = yes, albeit partly/with gaps. Red = no or insufficiently. Gray = unclear. Of note, the fact that an issue was addressed in an ESP does guarantee that positive changes in this area were due to ESP implementation. This table thus has two columns, one for whether the issue was addressed in the relevant ESP, and a second for whether there is evidence that improvements were due to ESP implementation (as opposed to, say, being due to a donor project that had little or no connection with the ESP).

[165] Green = High. Amber = Moderate; Red = Low. Gray = Insufficient data.

[166] The four underlying assumptions for this contribution claim are (1) sector plan implementation leads to improvements of previous shortcomings in relation to sector management; (2) there is sufficient national capacity (technical capabilities, political will, resources) to analyze, report on and use available data and maintain EMIS and LAS; (3) ESP implementation leads to improvements of previous shortcomings in relation to learning and (4) it leads to improvements in relation to equity.

Progress towards a stronger education system during 2012-2019 period

Finding 16: During the review period, education system quality was strengthened through implementing the competency-based approach, including developing relevant teacher training modalities and curricula. There have been some improvements in preschool and general secondary access, but limited progress with regard to equity.

118. Changes at the system-level were most significant in the area of quality with the rollout of the competency-based approach to learning at the primary level of education. Along with the implementation of the new approach, teaching curriculum and learning programs were revised, and teachers were trained in using the new approach. Access has also improved over time, in particular at the ECE level. While progress has been made, enrollment to ECE remains low. In terms of governance, some progress has been made with regard to increasing the quantity and quality of education data. However, these system-level changes remain constrained given that Tajikistan still does not have a national assessment system for learning outcomes.

Access and equity

119. Tajikistan has worked towards achieving universal basic education by focusing its education capital development budget increasingly on school construction. Since there is a recognition in the 2012-2020 NSED that universal access had almost been reached during the ten-year period preceding the 2012-2020 NSED, the NSED 's focus is on increasing access to ECE. As a result of this focus, the number of state preschool institutions increased by 21 percent between 2012 and 2017, from 508 to 615, and the number of ECE centers increased twofold, from 711 to 1,671, during the same period. This constitutes a significant system-level improvement with regard to both access to ECE, as well as an improvement with regard to equity since most ECE centers are located in rural areas where education coverage is typically lower than in urban areas. Specifically, the model of ECE centers is aimed at tackling the issue of access and quality in preschool education targeting marginalized children (children with disabilities, poor, ethnic communities) from rural regions with the lowest access to early learning education. [167]

120. Another important system-level change with regard to ensuring access to ECE in Tajikistan was the adoption of the Law on Preschool Education in Tajikistan, which guarantees the right to early childhood care and education to all Tajik citizens.[168] Also, noting that households often withdrew their children from ECE from state preschool institutions due to inability to contribute to ECE, the MoES developed new guidelines stipulating a decrease in parental contributions to preschool education.

121. Despite these achievements, enrollment in ECE remains low (more on this in chapter 5). Most preschool facilities are not equipped to incorporate children with disabilities, nor are ECE teachers trained to deal with such cases (more on the enrollment of children with disabilities in chapter 5) and learning materials are often not available in languages other than Tajik and Russian.

122. The number of general secondary schools[169] increased by only 1.5 percent, from 3,813 to 3,870, between 2012 and 2017. 78.3 percent of general secondary schools offer students the complete cycle of general secondary education (from grade 1 to 11), while 9.1 percent offer only primary grade (grades 1 to 4).

[167] Reliable data on access and equity issued is largely unavailable for the 2012-2019 timeframe.

[168] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[169] As mentioned in chapters 2 and 3, primary and secondary levels are taught in general secondary schools.

123. With regard to equity in primary and secondary education, there were 28 schools teaching facilities specialized in teaching disadvantaged children in 2017.[170] There are still significant system-level challenges with regard to equity in general secondary schools. Consulted development partners mentioned that most schools are not equipped with learning materials adapted to children with disabilities, nor are teachers trained to deliver education services to children with disabilities. While there are specialized facilities for children with disabilities, the teaching of children with disabilities is not mainstreamed in general secondary schools. Consulted stakeholders from civil society organizations mentioned that the MoES has a very limited understanding of the structural changes needed to ensure a more inclusive education system. A notable example is the fact that autism is still not recognized as a disability by the GoT, thus impeding the MoES from establishing measures tailored to the learning needs of children on the autism spectrum.

124. Available documents do not provide a breakdown of the number of TVET institutions by year. In 2017, there were 61 primary vocational education schools, 66 secondary vocational education schools, and 25 adult learning centers.

Table 4.2 Number of schools per educational level in Tajikistan[171]

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	TYPES OF EDUCATION INSTITUTION	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Early childhood education	Number of state preschool institutions	508	527	550	578	602	615
	Number of ECE centers	711	1,031	1,400	1,558	1,647	1,671
Primary and secondary levels	Number of general secondary schools	3,813	3,836	3,845	3,855	3,865	3,870

Quality

125. During the period under review, the MoES, with support from development partners, implemented various system-level measures to improve the quality of teaching, mainly with regard to teacher training and curriculum development. The transition towards competency-based education, along with the development of curriculum and teaching material on the new approach, and the training of teachers on the new approach, constitutes an important milestone in improving the quality of education in Tajikistan.

Curriculum development and teaching/learning materials

126. A total of 52 types of learning materials were developed for pre-primary education, including teaching programs, textbooks, teacher's guides, and subject standards. The new learning materials were

[170] 20 schools for orphans, 2 schools providing medical rehabilitation courses, 3 courses for children with disability, and 3 schools for visually impaired children. An analysis over time on the number of specialized schools is not possible due to data limitations.

[171] Sources: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019; Ministry of Education and Science. (2019). Joint Sector Review Report.

done in accordance with the Law on Preschool Education and learning adopted in 2015. Available ECE learning materials were also translated into some ethnic minority languages.

127. The GoT developed and rolled out a new competency-based curriculum for grades 1 to 4 at the primary level of education. A new curriculum was also developed for grades 5 to 11 for two subject areas: Tajik and Russian languages and mathematics. To date, these new standards have been piloted in grades 5 and 6.

128. MoES developed and approved 25 professional standards for TVET. It also started the development of competency standards and standards for learning assessment in five sectors and 17 pilot professions for TVET education. In relation to the new standards, 120 training curricula were approved for TVET institutions for grades 9-11.

Teacher hiring and training

129. Between 2012 and 2017, the number of teachers working in state preschool institutions increased by 64 percent, from 5,522 to 9,083.[172] As shown in Table 4.3 below, the pupil to teacher ratio has fluctuated but overall decreased during this period, suggesting that the rate of increase of teachers in state preschool institutions kept up with the increasing number of children enrolled in ECE. It is important to note that there remain important regional disparities in the number of available teachers and that most ECE teachers do not have higher education degrees (71.6 percent in rural areas and 60.9 percent in urban areas) and thus have not received any formal training in early years pedagogy. This is partially due to the fact that the GoT decreased the minimum requirement to be a preschool teacher (from having a higher education degree to simply having completed secondary education) to cope with increasing demand.

130. Between 2012 and 2017, the number of teachers in general secondary schools increased by 23 percent, from 97,990 to 120,635. As shown in Table 4.3 below, the pupil to teacher ratio has fluctuated but remained at the same level across the period, suggesting that the rate of increase of teachers kept up with the increasing number of children enrolled in general secondary schools. To meet the growing demands, the GoT had to hire recent graduates with little to no teaching experience. In 2017, 14.2 percent of teachers in primary grades (1-4) and 20.7 percent of teachers in secondary grades (5-11) had less than three years of teaching experience.[173]

131. Along with the rollout of the competency-based approach to learning, teacher training packages were developed for primary and secondary levels of education. With support from GPE through the GPE-4 project, 80 percent of teachers at the primary level were trained to use the new competency-based curriculum. However, teachers at the secondary level have not yet been trained on the new approach, limiting the implementation of the partially developed competency-based approach to teaching at the secondary level. 5,000 teachers and school administrators also received training on a newly introduced early warning system which, along with teacher training, is aimed at identifying underperforming children and motivating them to learn and study.

[172] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2019). Joint Sector Review Report.

[173] Sources: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019; Ministry of Education and Science. (2019). Joint Sector Review Report. Available documents do not suggest that there are any plans for in-service teacher training for these less qualified teachers.

Table 4.3 Number of pupils per teacher per educational level in Tajikistan[174]

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Early childhood education	12.65	13.48	13.91	14.37	12.93	11.44
Primary education	23.00	22.69	22.36	22.29	22.19	22.30

System-level strengthening

132. The GoT improved education system governance in four main areas during the period under review: a national testing center was established, a baseline assessment of early grade learning was conducted, the per capita financing system was introduced, and the EMIS was upgraded.

133. The national testing center was established to provide harmonized examinations for students' admission to higher education. Consulted stakeholders felt this was a major achievement in establishing harmonized standards to test student learning outcomes. The first learning outcomes assessment was conducted in 2018 with the help of USAID. Learning outcomes, in particular with regard to literacy, were assessed from a sample of students from grades 2 to 4. While this does not yet constitute a national assessment of learning outcomes, consulted stakeholders mentioned that this first assessment will serve as a basis for establishing a national system, which is planned in the upcoming 2021-2030 NSED.[175]

134. In 2010, the GoT introduced a per capita financing system in the education sector in an effort to decentralize education spending. Under this system, school budgets are now calculated as a function of projected enrollment rates, making school budgets more proportional to school needs. While schools had depended on the education district authority for the procurement of learning materials and school furniture, schools now control some of the financial allowance for procurement. All consulted stakeholders and documented evidence indicate that the per capita financing system has helped make spending more efficient, equitable, and accountable.[176] A few stakeholders noted that some challenges remain in the implementation of the system, notably in ensuring that school budgets also take into account region-specific challenges that schools may face.

127. Finally, with the help of GPE through the GPE-4 project, the EMIS was upgraded and now includes education data from ECE, TVET, and higher education. For each of these levels, the EMIS now provides data on schools (land area, number of classrooms, etc.), students (grades, age, gender, disability, etc.), teachers (training, years of experience, gender, specialization, etc.), and material (furniture, teaching and learning materials). MoES staff were also trained to use these new data. As a result of these new measures, the country's national statistics agency has recognized the MoES EMIS as the sole source of official education statistics for Tajikistan, and data are no longer compiled separately by the national statistics agency and MoES.[177]

[174] Source: UIS. Data was not available for secondary levels of education.

[175] Source: Ministry of Education and Science. (2017). Joint Sector Review Report.

[176] Sources: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019; Ministry of Education and Science. (2016). Joint Sector Review Report.

[177] Source: World Bank. (2018). Implementation Completion and Results Report on a Grant in the Amount of US $16.2 Million to the Republic of Tajikistan for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)-4.

Did ESP implementation contribute to system-level changes?

Finding 17: The NSED (2012-2020) and its successive three-year operational plans guided the achievement of most identified system-level changes. Development partners supported key areas of improvement, which were implemented in partnership with the MoES.

135. Table 4.4 provides an overview of the most significant system-level changes identified in the previous finding and indicates whether they were planned under the 2012-2020 NSED and whether their achievement was likely linked to ESP implementation.

Table 4.4 System-level improvements in the review period, against 2012-2020 NSED

SYSTEM-LEVEL IMPROVEMENT	LIKELY DUE TO NSED IMPLEMENTATION?	IMPROVEMENT SUPPORTED BY DONORS?
ALREADY SIGNIFICANT AND LIKELY SUSTAINABLE		
Establishment of state preschool institutions and ECE centers	**Yes:** Improving access to ECE was a key priority of the 2012-2020 NSED; listed as an expected result in the NSED.[178]	**Yes:** ECE centers established by development partners.
Increased number of general secondary schools	**Yes:** Included in the NSED, listed as an expected result.[179]	Unclear due to limited data.
Additional teachers hired	**No**: Not specifically mentioned in the NSED.	Unclear due to limited data.
EMIS upgraded to include educational data on all levels of education	**Yes**: Not listed as expected results, but the fact that the EMIS did not cover all educational levels is mentioned in the NSED. The NSED also mentions that upgrading the EMIS is essential for the modernization of the education system management system.	**Yes**: Supported by GPE through the GPE-4 project.
Per capita financing introduced	**Yes**: Listed as an expected result in the NSED.[180]	**Yes**: Partially supported by GPE through the GPE-4 project.

[178] "Expanding the coverage of preschool age children by education programs will be achieved by means of enhancement of network of state institutions and development of network of non-state institutions." Source: Republic of Tajikistan. (2018). National Strategy of Education Development Midterm Action Plan for 2018-2020, p. 38

[179] "Around 1000 new schools will be built." Source: Republic of Tajikistan. (2018). National Strategy of Education Development Midterm Action Plan for 2018-2020, p. 38.

[180] "Per capita financing will become a key mechanism for allocation of budget funds, appropriated for education system, is implemented without a break down of funds into items of budget classification ("across the board")." Source: Republic of Tajikistan. (2018). National Strategy of Education Development Midterm Action Plan for 2018-2020, p. 40

SYSTEM-LEVEL IMPROVEMENT	LIKELY DUE TO NSED IMPLEMENTATION?	IMPROVEMENT SUPPORTED BY DONORS?
POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IF IMPLEMENTED AND/OR STRENGTHENED FURTHER		
Development of competency-based learning curriculum, development of related teaching material, and teacher training on the competency-based approach. This change will be significant when implemented at all levels of basic education.	**Yes:** Listed as a key result to achieve under the priority "Modernization of education structure".[181]	**Yes:** Supported by GPE through the GPE-4 project.
Early grade assessment conducted	**Yes**: Listed as an expected result in the NSED.[182]	**Yes**: Early grade assessment supported by USAID

136. The above table suggests that NSED implementation brought about most identified system-level changes, with six of seven changes likely to have been principally driven by plan implementation. Development partners provided important support (technical or financial) to at least six of the seven interventions. Consistent with evidence from Section 3.4 which notes limited domestic financing available for non-salary priorities, six of these interventions relied heavily on partner financial support.[183] Available evidence suggests that most system-level improvements were implemented under the leadership of the GoT, although government officials noted support from development partners in many areas.

Implications for GPE's ToC and country-level operational model

Finding 18: The linkages between NSED (2012-2020) implementation and observed system-level changes support a key element of the GPE ToC. However, the Tajikistan experience also demonstrates that even a somewhat satisfactory plan may lead to limited system-level changes in governance.

137. The evaluation found that two of the four underlying assumptions guiding the link between sector plan implementation and strengthened education systems to be true for Tajikistan: that there is sufficient national capacity (technical capabilities, political will, resources) to analyze, report on and use available data and maintain EMIS, and that ESP implementation leads to improvements of previous shortcomings in relation to learning. The observed improvements in learning (i.e., the introduction of competency-based education) were largely achieved through coordinated implementation efforts and based on priorities agreed to by all sector stakeholders. The other two assumptions were found to hold partially true. First improvements regarding sector management were limited to the introduction of per capita financing and increased in the quantity and quality of education data during the period under review. Second, improvements regarding equity were limited to improvements in policy, and there remain significant gaps in terms of teacher qualification and awareness within the MoES.

[181] "Development and approval of educational standards of new generation, designed on the basis of professional standards and competency-based approach." Source: Republic of Tajikistan. (2018). National Strategy of Education Development Midterm Action Plan for 2018-2020, p. 23

[182] "Regulatory and methodology framework and infrastructure of national system of education quality assessment, supported by current structures - will be established." Source: Republic of Tajikistan. (2018). National Strategy of Education Development Midterm Action Plan for 2018-2020, p. 32

[183] One limitation of the data reported in JSRs and the 2019 ESA is that it does not distinguish between government- versus donor-funded initiatives in results reporting.

138. The experience of Tajikistan tends to indicate that greater degrees of plan implementation are dependent on processes of continuous revision and the development of shorter-range operational plans. This experience is especially valuable in countries where the JSR processes are not fully integrated with sector plan revisions, guiding midcourse corrections. This experience also illustrates the variances that exist in the way different countries conceptualize and operationalize sectorial planning.

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5 Progress Towards Stronger Learning Outcomes and Equity

Introduction

139. This section summarizes evaluation findings related to Key Question III from the evaluation matrix: "Have improvements at education system level contributed to progress towards impact?"[184] Key sub-questions are:

- During the period under review, what changes have occurred in relation to (a) learning outcomes in basic education, (b) equity, gender equality and inclusion in education? (CEQ 6)
- Is there evidence to link changes in learning outcomes, equity, gender equality, and inclusion to system-level changes identified under CEQ 4? (CEQ 6)
- What other factors can explain changes in learning outcomes, equity, etc.? (CEQ 6)
- Going forward, what are the implications of findings for the GPE ToC/operational model? (CEQ 7)

140. The section offers a brief overview of medium-term trends in relation to basic education learning outcomes, equity, gender equality and inclusion that occurred in Tajikistan up to and during the review period. The evaluation is not attempting to establish verifiable links between specific system-level changes that occurred during the review period and impact-level trends, given that the CLE covered only a relatively short timeframe and that in most cases it is likely too early to expect specific changes to be reflected in impact level trends. However, where links are plausible, those are discussed. Table 5.1 summarizes CLE findings on any such plausible links, which are further elaborated on below.

Table 5.1 Overview: CLE findings on contribution of system-level changes to impact-level changes

IMPROVEMENTS MADE DURING REVIEW PERIOD?	LIKELIHOOD THAT TRENDS WERE INFLUENCED BY SYSTEM-LEVEL CHANGES DURING REVIEW PERIOD	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS LIKELY HELD TRUE[185]	
Equity, Gender Equality and Inclusion: Moderate. Access to pre-primary and lower-secondary increased, primary enrollment and school life expectancy stagnated, and primary completion ratio decreased.	**Strong**: The establishment of state preschool institutions and ECE centers, and the roll out of the competency-based approach to learning likely contributed to improvements in inclusion and equity.	1	2

[184] Key sub-questions are: CEQ 6: (i) During the period under review, what changes have occurred in relation to (a) learning outcomes in basic education, (b) equity, gender equality and inclusion in education; (ii) Is there evidence to link changes in learning outcomes, equity, gender equality, and inclusion to system-level changes identified under CEQ 4?; (iii) What other factors can explain changes in learning outcomes, equity, etc. CEQ 7 (iv) Going forward, what are implications of findings for the GPE ToC/operational model?

[185] The underlying assumptions for this contribution claim are (1) changes in the education system positively affect learning outcomes and equity, and (2) country-produced data on equity, efficiency and learning allow measuring/tracking these changes.

IMPROVEMENTS MADE DURING REVIEW PERIOD?	LIKELIHOOD THAT TRENDS WERE INFLUENCED BY SYSTEM-LEVEL CHANGES DURING REVIEW PERIOD	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS LIKELY HELD TRUE[185]	
Learning: Insufficient data. Learning outcomes data is available for a sample of schools for the year 2018 only.	**Not enough data to analyze,** though available evidence suggests learning outcomes, in general, are quite poor.		

Trends in learning outcomes, equity, gender equality and inclusion in the education sector, 2012-2019

Finding 19: During the period under review, there has been progress in increasing enrollment at the pre-primary level of education, while modest improvements are noted regarding access to and completion of lower secondary education, as well as in out-of-school rate, dropout rate, and repetition rate in primary education.

Equity, Gender Equality and Inclusion in Basic Education

141. During the period under review, Tajikistan made some improvements in improving access and equity at the ECE level and in access to and completion of lower secondary education. Table 5.2 provides an overview of trends in the key impact-level indicators listed in the evaluation matrix, grouped by the extent to which they showed improvement, stability, deterioration, or whether available data is inconclusive. Selected highlights from the table include:

- Tajikistan improved access to pre-primary education with enrollment increasing significantly in ECE centers.
- Progress in expanding access to primary education improved, as seen in the reduction of primary out-of-school rate, repetition rate, and dropout rate. However, the proportion of children who complete primary education has decreased.
- Access to lower secondary education improved, as seen in the increased NER and GER.
- Transition from primary to lower secondary remains high and slightly increased between 2012 and 2017.
- Gender equality improved for girls, as seen in changes in the gender parity index for different indicators.
- Data on access by income groups and rural/urban is not comparable over time but indicates that substantial gaps exist.

142. Historical country-level data is available for most education indicators and is disaggregated by gender, although data is not disaggregated by region or household income or disability or for differences over time.

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Table 5.2 Trends in indicators for Equity, Gender Equality and Inclusion in Basic Education

INDICATORS THAT IMPROVED DURING THE REVIEW PERIOD VALUES

- **ECE enrollment**: The number of children enrolled in state preschool institutions increased from 74,448 in 2012 to 93,053 in 2017 (JSR 2019), and the number of children enrolled in ECE centers increased from 14,796 to 43,666 during the same period. According to UIS data, the **ECE GER** grew from 9.43 in 2012 to 9.91 in 2017.[186] However, data from the EMIS shows an ECE GER of 10.6 percent in 2017. The ECE GER only counts children enrolled in state preschool institutions. The ECE gender parity index decreased from 0.90 to 0.87 between 2012 and 2017, indicating that the ECE GER is lower for girls than for boys. Finally, the ECE NER grew from 7.38 in 2012 to 8.42 in 2917 (UIS data).
- **Out-of-school children (OOSC) of primary school age**: Between 2012 and 2017, the number of OOSC of primary school age decreased from 5,662 to 4,181 and the proportion of OOSC of primary school age fell from 0.9 to 0.5 percent. The gender parity index rate of out-of-school children remained above 1 (from 1.48 in 2014 to 1.50 in 2016),[187] indicating that the out-of-school rate is higher for girls than for boys. (UIS data).
- **Dropout rate at primary level**: The 4th grade dropout rate fell from 1.6 to 1.0 percent between 2013 and 2016 (UIS data).
- **Lower secondary enrollment**: **Lower secondary GER** grew from 94.7 in 2012 to 98.7 in 2017, with the **gender parity index** increasing from 0.94 to 0.97. The **lower secondary NER** improved slightly from 94.0 in 2012 to 97.8 in 2017 (UIS data).
- **Lower secondary completion rate**: The proportion of children who complete lower secondary education increased from 86.4 percent to 96.2 percent between 2012 and 2017. The gender parity index rate of the proportion of children completing lower secondary education increased from 0.91 to 0.96 during the same period. (UIS data).

INDICATORS THAT STAGNATED DURING THE REVIEW PERIOD

- **Primary enrollment**: Between 2012 and 2017, the **primary GER** remained constant at 100.9, with the **gender parity index** improving slightly, from 0.98 to 0.99. The **primary NER** also underwent a very small improvement, growing from 98.1 to 98.3 between 2012 and 2017, with the **gender parity index** remaining at 0.99 (UIS data).
- **Primary to lower secondary transition rates**: The effective transition rate from primary to lower secondary increased slightly from 99.03 percent in 2013 to 99.49 percent in 2016. The gender parity index of the transition rate remained at 0.99 between 2013 and 2016 (UIS data).
- **School life expectancy**: The primary and lower secondary school life expectancy grew marginally from 8.8 years in 2012 to 9 years in 2017, while the GPI for the same indicator remained at 1 throughout the period.
- **Primary repetition rate:** Between 2013 and 2016, the 4th grade repetition rate increased slightly, from 0.04 to 0.08 percent (UIS data).

INDICATORS THAT DETERIORATED DURING THE REVIEW PERIOD

- **Primary completion rate**: The proportion of children who complete primary education decreased from 98.2 percent to 94.9 percent between 2012 and 2017. The gender parity index rate of the proportion of children completing primary education has increased from 0.98 to 1 during the same period. (UIS data).

[186] The ECE GER only counts children enrolled in state preschool institutions.

[187] UIS data on the GPI of out-of-school children is only available for the years 2014, 2015, and 2016.

INDICATORS FOR WHICH NO CONCLUSIVE DATA IS AVAILABLE

- **Vulnerable groups:** Children with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and children from poor families have higher rates of absenteeism and dropouts than other children**.** The EMIS reported that 931 children with disabilities, 126 orphans, and 1,074 children from households below the national poverty line are enrolled in state preschool institutions. 87.2 percent of children enrolled in state preschool institutions are ethnic Tajik nationals, suggesting that very few non-Tajik nationalities are enrolled in state preschool institutions. There are 2,540 students with disabilities in general secondary schools. Available documents do not provide a breakdown by years of these numbers, but they do mention that parents often withdraw their vulnerable children from the education system due to fear of social stigma, unsatisfactory infrastructure and conditions in facilities (ESA 2019 and JSR 2019). The JSR 2019 also mentions that children from vulnerable groups appear to be isolated from the mainstream education process due to shortage of qualified teachers and learning materials tailored to the needs of vulnerable children.
- **Regional differences**: While the EMIS provides some data disaggregated by region, for example the number of children enrolled in ECE and general secondary schools and the number of teachers, these absolute numbers are not put into perspective with the relative population in each region. For example, available data sources do not provide the GER, NER, and GPI for enrollment and out-of-school children by region for most educational levels. The available information does suggest, however, that rural areas perform worse than urban areas on some education indicators. For example, girls' participation in state preschool institutions is lower in rural than urban areas.[188] Another example is that the number of children enrolled increased in all regions except for the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, a rural region.[189] Available documents provide different explanations for poorer performance in rural areas, such as prevalence of poverty and inability of households to pay for education of their children in higher grades, remoteness of educational facilities and distance to school, and poor school infrastructure (ESA 2019 and JSR 2019).
- **Out-of-school children (OOSC) of lower/upper secondary school age**: Data is limited to UIS data which provides lower secondary out-of-school rate and the GPI of out-of-school children for the years between 2006 and 2010. The number of OOSC of lower secondary age was 46,705 in 2010, representing 5.36 percent of children of lower secondary age. The gender parity index for OOSC of lower secondary age was 1.76 in 2010, indicating that girls are much more likely than boys to be out of school at the lower secondary level. At the upper secondary level, there were 150,304 OOSC in 2010, representing 43.5 percent of children of upper secondary age, and the gender parity index for OOSC in upper secondary was 1.3 in 2010 (UIS data).
- **Upper secondary enrollment**: Data is limited to UIS data, which provides lower secondary out-of-school rate and the GPIA of out-of-school children for the years between 2006 and 2013. In 2013, the GER for upper secondary was 68.3 with a GPI of 0.8, and the NER was 55.2.

Learning Outcomes in Basic Education

Finding 20: The absence of a system or method for national assessment of student learning outcomes makes it effectively impossible to gauge whether longer-term change is occurring. Available data suggest reading outcomes are quite poor in early grades of primary education.

143. As noted in previous chapters, Tajikistan does not have a national method or system in place to assess student learning outcomes at the national level. In addition, the country does not participate in international learning assessments. The only data available on student learning outcomes is from the early grade reading assessments (EGRA) that USAID carried out in 2012 and 2018, which suggest low reading

[188] The gender parity index for GER in state preschool institutions is 0.80 in urban areas and 0.78 in urban areas.

[189] The Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, also known as GBAO, is a semi-autonomous region in the east of the country where three percent of the population lives on 45 percent of the country's land area.

fluency in grades 2 and 4 (see Table 5.3 below). While results from the two EGRAs seem to indicate changes in reading outcomes between 2012 and 2018, the samples were significantly different, and likely not comparable.[190] As such, it is not possible to reach a conclusion on changes in reading outcomes in Tajikistan over time. However, consistent across both early grade learning assessments is the fact that girls generally outperform boys in reaching oral reading proficiency. The EGRA reports[191] point to four predictors of reading outcomes in Tajikistan: i) the availability of books for reading at home; ii) parents' ability to read in the language of instruction their child is taught; iii) teachers' mother-tongue; and iv) availability of supplementary reading books in schools.

Table 5.3 Share of students reaching oral reading proficiency, by year, language, grade, and gender, based on EGRA test results[192]

LANGUAGES	2012				2018			
	GRADE 2		GRADE 4		GRADE 2		GRADE 4	
	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS
Tajik	69 %	70%	44 %	55 %	37 %	42 %	52 %	59 %
Russian	72 %	74 %	35 %	23 %	29 %	33 %	72 %	76 %

Is there evidence to link trends in learning outcomes, equity, gender equality and inclusion to system-level changes identified? What other factors can explain observed changes (or lack thereof)?

Finding 21: Progress in expanding pre-primary and primary access is likely linked to infrastructure development and to a lesser extent to the implementation of the competency-based approach.

144. Table 5.4 provides an overview of the main impact-level improvements identified in the two previous findings, and of the likelihood that system-level improvements identified in Chapter 4 contributed to these.

[190] The assessment conducted in 2018 was done with a nationally representative sample of 5,476 students from 287 schools. The assessment conducted in 2012 was done with a smaller sample of 1,907 students in two regions only. The tests were administered in Tajik and Russian depending on the language of instruction used in the sample of schools. In addition, the latest EGRA report (2018) does not compare results with the assessment conducted in 2012. These assessments were conducted to collect baseline data for the USAID Read with Me project.

[191] Sources: USAID. (2018). Early Grade Reading Assessment Baseline 2018 Results, USAID Read with Me project in Tajikistan. USAID. (2012). Review of Early Grade Reading Teaching and Skills, The Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan.

[192] Reaching oral reading proficiency is defined as being able to read 40 correct words per minute correctly in grade 2, and 80 words per minutes in grade 4. These national standards were defined by the MoES in 2009. The test asks students to read a short text aloud, followed by reading comprehension questions. Percentages are rounded up. Sources: USAID. (2018). Early Grade Reading Assessment Baseline 2018 Results, USAID Read with Me project in Tajikistan. USAID. (2012). Review of Early Grade Reading Teaching and Skills, The Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan.

Table 5.4 Contributions of system-level improvements to identified impact-level improvements

IMPACT-LEVEL IMPROVEMENTS	LIKELIHOOD THAT SYSTEM-LEVEL CHANGES CONTRIBUTED TO THE IMPROVEMENT?
Growth in ECE enrollment	**Strong:** The significant growth in ECE enrollment is most likely due to the MoES efforts in building state preschool institutions (from 508 to 615 between 2012 and 2017) and development efforts in establishing ECE centers (from 711 to 1,671 between 2012 and 2017).
Decrease in out-of-school rate, repetition rate, and dropout rate at the primary level	**Strong:** The modest improvements in OOS rate, dropout rates, and repetition rates at primary level may be due to a combination of factors affecting quality: the implementation of the competency-based approach at the primary level, the development of learning materials in line with the new learning approach, and the training of teachers on competency-based learning.
Growth in lower secondary GER and NER, and lower secondary completion rate	**Modest:** While available sector reporting noted increases in lower secondary enrollment during the review period, it did not provide possible reasons for this improvement. System-level changes aimed at improving access to lower secondary education during the review period, which may have supported increases in (gross and net) lower secondary enrollment include (i) the overall increase in general secondary schools between 2012 and 2017, and (ii) the development of new teacher training packages.

145. Three observations can be derived from this table. First, the identified system-level changes that most likely contributed to impact-level changes (construction of state preschool institutions and establishment of ECE centers, implementation of the competency-based approach accompanied with teacher training and curricular changes) were interventions planned and implemented within the framework of the 2012-2020 NSED. Second, as noted in Chapter 4, most system-level improvements were implemented under the leadership of the GoT with substantial financial (and in some cases, technical) support from development partners. Finally, most system-level improvements related to sector management listed in Chapter 4 appear to have not yet influenced impact-level improvements. This is most likely due to the fact that it may take a longer period of time for effects to become apparent at the outcome and impact levels (e.g., EMIS upgrade, implementation of per capita financing system). However, data emerging from documents and consulted stakeholders identified two areas where current progress at the system level has the potential to lead to improved learning outcomes in the future:

- **The complete rollout of the competency-based approach to learning at the lower and upper secondary levels:** The majority of consulted stakeholders expect the implementation of the new learning approach at all levels of basic education to yield positive results with regard to increasing student learning outcomes.
- **Planned continued efforts to increase access to preschool education**: Consulted stakeholders from the MoES, as well as a few consulted stakeholders from development partner organizations, mentioned that they would continue their focus on increasing access to ECE by building additional state preschool institutions and establishing additional ECE centers. Consulted stakeholders were unanimous in stating that increasing access to ECE would still be an important priority within the upcoming 2021-2030 NSED.

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Implications for GPE's ToC and country-level operational model

Finding 22: While it is possible to trace impact-level changes regarding access to some system-level improvements, it is difficult to link system-level changes regarding quality and education system management to impact-level changes.

146. As shown in Table 5.4 above, the growth in enrollment at the pre-primary level of education is most likely due to the establishment of state preschool institutions and ECE centers. However, while it is relatively straightforward to link simple increases in number of teaching institutions to increases in number of pupils, it is challenging to make clear linkages between system-level improvements pertaining to quality and system management to specific impact-level changes. This is due in part to the overall lack of data, but also due to the time lag between system-level improvements and measurable change at the impact level. Some of the noted system-level changes regarding quality (e.g., rollout of the competency-based approach to learning) and system management (e.g., EMIS upgrade, implementation of per capita financing system) are too recent to have had a noticeable impact.

147. The underlying assumptions for this contribution claim are: (1) changes in the education system positively affect learning outcomes and equity; and (2) country-produced data on equity, efficiency and learning allow for the measuring/tracking of these changes. Given that learning data was available only for 2012 and 2018, the first assumption does not hold in the case of Tajikistan. However, as seen above, the EMIS does produce data on equity and efficiency, which allows tracking of changes on key indicators.

6 Conclusions and Strategic Questions/Issues

148. This final section of the report draws **overall conclusions** deriving from the evaluation findings and formulates several **strategic questions** that have been raised by the findings of the Tajikistan evaluation. These questions are of potential relevance for GPE overall and may warrant further exploration in other upcoming country-level evaluations.

149. This section answers CEQ 7 and CEQ 8 from the evaluation matrix:

- What, if any, aspects of GPE support to Tajikistan should be improved? What, if any, good practices have emerged related to how GPE supports countries? (CEQ 7)
- What, if any, good practices have emerged related to how countries address specific education sector challenges/how countries operate during different elements of the policy cycle? (CEQ 8)

6.1 Conclusions

150. The continuity of the FTI/GPE in Tajikistan has contributed to progressive improvements in sector planning and overall progress in education sector reform. GPE collective efforts have raised awareness of and levels of commitment to previously under-valued priority issue areas such as early childhood education. Overall, the level of commitment to the GPE model of collaborative efforts has increased over the last 10 years and is likely to do so during the life span of the upcoming 2021-2030 NSED. The consistency of GPE activities in the country has raised the confidence and willingness of new development partners to participate, which has triggered considerable new ODA financing via the multiplier modality and the apparent willingness of the government to work with the variable tranche mechanism. However, GPE's influence did not appear to lead to additional domestic education financing. As well, given the evolving governance patterns of the country during the review period for this CLE, there remained challenges in promoting inclusiveness in education sector planning, dialogue, and monitoring, although some degree of progress appears to have been made as a consequence of the development of the upcoming NSED, which will run out to 2030.

151. GPE's country-level ToC outlines five country-level objectives for GPE's support. Table 6.1 summarizes this evaluation's assessment of the degree of GPE contribution to each of these in Tajikistan.

Table 6.1 Overview of GPE contribution to country-level objectives of the GPE ToC

COUNTRY-LEVEL OBJECTIVES	RATING OF DEGREE/LIKELIHOOD OF GPE CONTRIBUTION
Sector Planning	**Strong**
Sector Dialogue	**Modest**
Sector Monitoring	**Strong**
Sector Financing	**Modest**
Sector Plan Implementation	**Modest**

152. Evidence from stakeholder consultations and reviewed documents highlight how GPE support in Tajikistan contributed to improved sector planning through the following:

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- **Enhancing the overall quality of the upcoming NSED:** ESPIG funding requirements are helping catalyze the development a new evidence based, credible NSED for the upcoming decade. The parallel process of developing a new ESPIG application and a new NSED has resulted in a degree of cross fertilization that seldom occurs in the GPE architecture. The implications of the application of the NFM for the upcoming ESPIG have impacted on the development of the NSED by focusing more attention on quality of education and improved monitoring capacities so as to meet the accountability requirements inherent in the application of the NFM. Moreover, and of equal importance, there is triangulated evidence to indicate that the process of developing the upcoming NSED was more participatory than prior plan developments.
- **Enhancing sector monitoring:** Through the 2013-2017 ESPIG, GPE provided technical and financial support for the development of the 2018-2020 MTEAP M&E plan, an important step forward in ensuring that education sector plans include adequate provisions to ensure the monitoring of results achievement. The ESPIG also funded training, resulting in increased MoES capacity to use EMIS data for decision-making. Finally, the ESPIG also financed upgrades brought to the EMIS which now collects data on three additional sub-sectors (ECE, TVET, and higher education), increasing the quality and quantity of education data for decision-making.

153. Three areas of somewhat lesser GPE contribution during the review period were sector financing, plan implementation, and sector dialogue.

- **Domestic education financing:** While Tajikistan closely approaches the GPE global target of 20 percent of total government expenditures to be directed towards education as a whole, there are considerable gaps remaining in crucial areas such as early childhood education where even after considerable efforts, only 12.5 percent of eligible young children are participating in ECE. There are also gaps in resource allocations for disadvantaged groups such as those with physical or mental disabilities. With respect to **international funding,** there was mixed evidence about whether GPE had attracted additional funding. While the pool of traditional development partners has reduced over time with the withdrawal of several OECD partners, there is credible evidence that Tajikistan's membership in GPE, combined with the positive impact of the NFM, has generated new development partner participation in the form of the IsDB.
- **Implementation:** While GPE financing closed gaps related to increase of facilities, introduction of competency-based curricula and ECE, to highlight only three initiatives, there is only limited evidence of the latest ESPIG directly strengthening MoES implementation capacity, with outcomes such as primary enrollment, primary to lower secondary transition rates, school life expectancy, primary repetition rate, and primary completion rate all either stagnating or deteriorating.
- **Increasing participation in sector planning and dialogue:** While GPE has been viewed as a catalytic agent among this relatively small pool, there have been limited advances in reaching out to civil society and the private sector so as to expand overall sector dialogue. In this context, given the magnitude of the education challenges facing Tajikistan, potential opportunities may have been overlooked. However, this somewhat gloomy assessment is mitigated by recent positive developments such as the IsDB joining the partnership in both a financial sense and a programmatic sense in the context of assuming the GA function. In addition, evidence points to the fact that the development of the upcoming NSED catalyzed new recognitions of the importance of increasing the scope of sector dialogue, although this evidence only speaks to very preliminary activities and cannot at this time be inferred to relate to broader sustained trends in terms of participatory dialogue.

154. GPE's ToC assumes that sector plan implementation is the main factor for system-level changes and the evidence from Tajikistan tends to support this assumption. It is clearly evident that the system-level changes that have occurred since 2012 were influenced or specifically derived from the NSED and its series of operational plans. Given the level of resources available however, key areas such as expanding competency-based curriculum, national assessment standards and early childhood education have lagged behind in terms of commitment, and more importantly implementation, during the last eight years.

155. Among the key lessons from the Tajikistan experience, as relates to implementation capacity, are that there needs to be: i) more attention given to ensuring capacity for data usage in day-to-day evidence-based planning; ii) in that context, more attention to gathering qualitative data, so as to promote more a rounded approach to decision-making which can inform the "why" questions; and iii) greater emphasis on streamlining of programmatic initiatives and reducing overlap and duplication on the part of several elements of the MoES, especially those involved in curriculum development and teacher training.

6.2 Good practices arising from Tajikistan for other countries

156. The following 'good practices' noted by the evaluation team may be of interest to other DCPs:

- **The promotion of greater donor/partner coordination**. The relatively small number of development partners currently active in Tajikistan combined with the level of commitment of several successive GAs shows that there are possibilities to affect a greater level of partner coordination in the absence of specific mechanisms such as pooled funds. However, the ability to achieve higher levels of partner coordination is completely dependent on two factors: first and in terms of the GPE architecture, GA commitment to go beyond being merely a financial agent, to focus on more policy and strategic considerations; and second, the willingness of major financial contributors to tailor their contributions and granting and accountability requirements so as to reduce the possibility of overlap and duplication.
- **The catalytic effect of the multiplier provisions inherent in the GPE's NFM.** The multiplier provisions of the NFM generated not only $30 million in additional resources for the education sector but also, and potentially more important, the expansion of the relatively compact development partners pool to now include the IsDB as both a financial contributor and grant agent. Therefore, the multiplier provisions were catalytic, financially as well as programmatically. The lesson from Tajikistan may be that multiplier provisions offer unique opportunities for countries to reach out beyond traditional development partner pool to seek not only additional funds but also new sources of nonfinancial support and assistance.
- **The positive impact of the recent combination of long-term ESP planning combined with shorter-term rolling and sequential operational plans.** Like many partner countries, Tajikistan has adopted an approach to the development of an education sector plan that in terms of its duration spans several funding cycles of GPE as a financial contributor, as well as those of many other development partners. In this light, there is a potential for uncoupling the longer-term considerations laid out in any ESP of nearly a decade in duration with shorter-term funding considerations. Tajikistan addressed this risk by implementing a complementary three-year rolling planning mechanism that ensures continuity of strategic objectives set down in a relatively long-term ESP with shorter-term funding considerations and programmatic developments. In this way, the NSED is in essence continually being reviewed, and as such a process of ongoing organizational learning has been fostered.

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6.3 Strategic questions arising from this CLE for GPE

157. The following strategic questions arising from this CLE may be particularly relevant in thinking about the role that GPE plays in Tajikistan itself and in similar contexts.

- The current relatively exclusive nature of the LEG, while reflecting the evolving state of the nation's polity as a whole, has the effect of limiting dialogue that could benefit the quality of education in the country and also its inclusiveness. Therefore, in this national context, what can GPE and key players in this partnership (like the new Grant Agent, the existing Coordinating Agency and Secretariat representatives) do to promote a process of increasing the inclusiveness of the LEG?
- While Tajikistan on the surface appears to be making financial commitments approximately equivalent to GPE expectations, it was generally recognized by government and development partner stakeholders that the educational challenges in the country considerably exceed the current expectations for government investment and development partner resources. In that context, what can GPE do to promote nontraditional resourcing, including private sector and/or public-private partnerships in priority areas such as early childhood education?
- Recognizing that the limited development partner pool in Tajikistan is now expanding due to the inclusion of the IsDB as both a new funding partner and grant agent, efforts should be more dedicated to ensuring harmonization of effort and concordance among all development partners with the priorities to be set out in the upcoming NSED and corresponding ESPIG.
- Given an apparent degree of overlap between various units of the MoES especially in relation to curriculum development and teacher training, what can GPE do to address these inherent limitations, and as such improve the effectiveness of the implementation of the upcoming NSED?
- Given the apparent dichotomy of the budgetary model of Tajikistan, which has the MoF as a central agency, and the line ministries, in this case MoES, in a degree of competition for resource decision-making, what can GPE do to improve dialogue and cooperation between these two budgetary agents? Should GPE, in Tajikistan and possibly elsewhere, reach out beyond purely education-related public sector bodies, to institutions that have decision-making authority over resource allocations affecting the education sector?
- Does the evolving governance model of Tajikistan and the apparent technical support needs arising from the upcoming NSED and accompanying ESPIG require more direct non-financial support from the GPE Secretariat than has been afforded in the past? The Tajikistan experience of being a former Soviet republic has resulted in a unique set of perspectives about the state and citizen relationship. Therefore, it is not unexpected that a dialogue within the Tajikistan context would largely focus on government to government partnerships (with multilateral agencies being absorbed into this paradigm). The fact that during the review period civil society was not an active participant in sector dialogue more reflects the overall nature of the governance of Tajikistan, and not specifically its education sector. Although there is some evidence to show that the development of the upcoming NSED may have resulted in a degree of willingness to promote more inclusive dialogue, it remains to be seen whether this inclusiveness will generally take root. The GPE as a global partnership therefore may wish to consider how it adapts to different paradigms involving state and citizen relationships within the context of the inclusiveness of education sector dialogue.

Appendix I Revised Evaluation Matrix

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
Key question I: Has GPE support to [country] contributed to achieving country-level objectives related to sector plan implementation, sector dialogue and monitoring, and more/better financing for education?[193] If so, then how?			
CEQ 1: Has GPE contributed to education sector plan implementation in [country] during the period under review? [194] How?			
CEQ 1.1a (prospective CLE) What have been strengths and weaknesses of sector planning during the period under review?[195] What are likely reasons for strong/weak sector planning?	• Extent to which the country's sector plan met the criteria for a credible ESP as put forward in GPE/IIEP Guidelines[196] – ESP is guided by an overall vision – ESP is strategic, i.e., it identifies strategies for achieving its vision, including required human, technical and financial capacities, and sets priorities) – ESP is holistic, i.e., it covers all sub-sectors as well as non-formal education and adult literacy – ESP is evidence-based, i.e., it starts from an education sector analysis	• Sector plan(s) for the period covered by the most recent ESPIG • Education Sector Analyses and other documents analyzing key gaps/issues in the sector • GPE ESP/TEP quality assurance documents	• Descriptive analysis • Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews

[193] OECD DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.

[194] The core period under review varies for summative and prospective evaluations. Prospective evaluations will primarily focus on the period early 2018 to early 2020 and will relate observations of change back to the baseline established at this point. The summative evaluations will focus on the period covered by the most recent ESPIG implemented in the respective country. However, where applicable, (and subject to data availability) the summative evaluations will also look at the beginning of the next policy cycle, more specifically sector planning processes and related GPE support carried out during/towards the end of the period covered by the most recent ESPIG.

[195] This question will be applied in prospective evaluations in countries that have not yet developed a (recent) sector plan, such as Mali, as well as in countries that have an existing plan, but that are in the process of embarking into a new planning process. In countries where a sector plan exists and where related GPE support has already been assessed in Year 1 reports, future reports will use a similarly descriptive approach as outlined under question 1.1b, i.e., briefly summarizing key characteristics of the existing sector plan.

[196] Global Partnership for education, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal. Washington and Paris. 2015. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation. Available at: https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-preparation

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	– ESP is achievable – ESP is sensitive to context – ESP pays attention to disparities (e.g., between girls/boys or between groups defined geographically, ethnically/culturally or by income) • For TEPs: Extent to which the country's sector plan met the criteria for a credible TEP as put forward in GPE/IIEP Guidelines[197] – TEP is shared (state-driven, developed through participatory process) – TEP is evidence-based – TEP is sensitive to context and pays attention to disparities – TEP is strategic, i.e., it identifies strategies that not only help address immediate needs but lay the foundation for realizing system's long-term vision – TEP is targeted (focused on critical education needs in the short and medium term, on system capacity development, on limited number of priorities) – TEP is operational (feasible, including implementation and monitoring frameworks)	• GPE RF data (Indicator 16 a-b-c-d)[200] • Other relevant reports or reviews that comment on the quality of the sector plan • Interviews	

[197] Global Partnership for Education, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal. Washington and Paris. 2016. Guidelines for Transitional Education Plan Preparation. Available at: https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-transitional-education-plan-preparation

[200] If the respective ESP has not been rated by GPE (i.e., if no specific information is available on indicators 16 a-d), the evaluation team will provide a broad assessment of the extent to which the ESP meets or does not meet the quality criteria. This review will be based on *existing* reviews and assessments of the sector plan, in particular the appraisal report. To the extent possible, findings of these assessments will be 'translated' in terms of the GPE/IIEP quality standards.

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MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	• Extent to which the ESP/TEP meets GPE quality criteria as outlined in the GPE 2020 results framework (indicators 16a, b, c and d)[198] • Extent to which the ESP/TEP addresses the main issues/gaps in the education sector (as identified through Education Sector Analyses and/or other studies) • Extent to which the process of sector plan preparation has been country-led, participatory, and transparent[199] • Stakeholder views on strengths and weaknesses of the most recent sector planning process in terms of: – Leadership for and inclusiveness of sector plan development – Relevance, coherence and achievability of the sector plan		
CEQ 1.1b (summative CLE) What characterized the education sector plan in place during the core period under review?	• ESP/TEP objectives/envisaged results and related targets • For ESPs: Extent to which the country's sector plan met the criteria for a credible ESP as put forward in GPE/IIEP Guidelines[201] – ESP is guided by an overall vision	• Sector plan(s) for the period covered by the most recent ESPIG • GPE ESP/TEP quality assurance documents • GPE RF data (indicator 16 a-b-c-d)[204]	• Descriptive analysis

[198] If no GPE ratings on these indicators are available, evaluation team's assessment of extent to which the ESP meets the various criteria outlined under indicator 16a-d.

[199] Global Partnership for Education, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal. Washington and Paris. 2015. Available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002337/233768e.pdf

[201] Global Partnership for Education, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal. Washington and Paris. 2015. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation. Available at: https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-preparation

[204] If the respective ESP has not been rated by GPE (i.e., if no specific information is available on indicators 16 a-d), the evaluation team will provide a broad assessment of the extent to which the ESP meets or does not meet the quality criteria. This review will be based on *existing* reviews and assessments of the sector plan, in particular the appraisal report. To the extent possible, findings of these assessments will be 'translated' in terms of the GPE/IIEP quality standards.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	– ESP is strategic, i.e., it identifies strategies for achieving its vision, including required human, technical and financial capacities, and sets priorities) – ESP is holistic, i.e., it covers all sub-sectors as well as non-formal education and adult literacy – ESP is evidence-based, i.e., it starts from an education sector analysis – ESP is achievable – ESP is sensitive to context – ESP pays attention to disparities (e.g., between girls/boys or between groups defined geographically, ethnically/culturally or by income) • For TEPs: Extent to which the country's sector plan met the criteria for a credible TEP as put forward in GPE/IIEP Guidelines[202] – TEP is shared (state-driven, developed through participatory process) – TEP is evidence-based – TEP is sensitive to context and pays attention to disparities – TEP is strategic, i.e., it identifies strategies that not only help address immediate needs but lay the foundation for realizing system's long-term vision – TEP is targeted (focused on critical education needs in the short and medium term, on system capacity development, on limited number of priorities)	• Other relevant reports or reviews that comment on the quality of the sector plan	

[202] Global Partnership for Education, UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning. Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Appraisal. Washington and Paris. 2016. Guidelines for Transitional Education Plan Preparation. Available at: https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-transitional-education-plan-preparation

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	– TEP is operational (feasible, including implementation and monitoring frameworks) • Extent to which the ESP/TEP meets GPE quality criteria as outlined in the GPE 2020 results framework (indicators 16a, b, c and d) [203]		
CEQ 1.2a (prospective CLE) Has GPE contributed to the observed characteristics of sector planning? How? If no, why not? a) Through the GPE ESPDG grant- (funding, funding requirements) b) Through other support for sector planning (advocacy, standards, quality assurance procedures, guidelines, capacity building, facilitation, CSEF and ASA grants, and cross-national sharing of evidence/good practice)[205]	a) Contributions through GPE ESPDG grant and related funding requirements: • ESPDG amount as a share of total resources invested into sector plan preparation. • Types of activities/deliverables financed through ESPDG and their role in informing/enabling sector plan development b) Contributions through other (non ESPDG-related) support to sector planning: • Evidence of GPE quality assurance processes improving the quality of the final, compared to draft versions of the sector plan • Stakeholder views on relevance and appropriateness/value added of GPE Secretariat support, in-country assistance from GA/CA, Secretariat/GA/CA advocacy, capacity building, facilitation; GPE standards, guidelines, CSEF and ASA grants, and knowledge exchange in relation to: – Improving the quality (including relevance) of education sector plans – Strengthening in-country capacity for sector planning	• Draft and final versions of the sector plan • Related GPE ESP/TSP quality assurance documents • Secretariat reports, e.g., country lead back to office/mission reports • Other documents on advocacy/facilitation provided by Secretariat, CA or GA • Country-specific ESPDG grant applications • Interviews • Education sector analyses and other studies conducted with ESPDG funding	• Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews

[203] If no GPE ratings on these indicators are available, evaluation team's assessment of extent to which the ESP meets the various criteria outlined under indicator 16a-d.

[205] Advocacy can include inputs from Secretariat, grant agent, coordinating agency, LEG, and GPE at global level (e.g., Board meetings, agreed upon standards). Knowledge exchange includes cross-national/global activities organized by the Secretariat, as well as the sharing and use of insights derived from GRA and KIX grant-supported interventions.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
CEQ 1.2b-d (summative CLE – currently in Part B of the matrix below and labelled CEQ 9-11)			
CEQ 1.3 What have been strengths and weaknesses of sector plan implementation during the period under review? What are likely reasons for strong/weak sector plan implementation?	• Progress made towards implementing sector plan objectives/meeting implementation targets of current/most recent sector plan within envisaged timeframe (with focus on changes relevant in view of GPE 2020 envisaged impact and outcome areas). • Extent to which sector plan implementation is funded (expected and actual funding gap) • Evidence of government ownership of and leadership for plan implementation (country specific).[206] • Government implementation capacity and management, e.g.: – Existence of clear operational/implementation plans or equivalents to guide sector plan implementation and monitoring – Clear roles and responsibilities related to plan implementation and monitoring – Relevant staff have required knowledge/skills/experience) • Extent to which development partners who have endorsed the plan have actively supported/contributed to its implementation in an aligned manner. • Extent to which sector dialogue and monitoring have facilitated dynamic adaptation of sector plan	• Sector plan(s) for the period covered by the most recent (mostly) complete ESPIG • DCP government ESP/TEP implementation documents including mid-term or final reviews • Relevant program or sector evaluations, including reviews preceding the period of GPE support under review • JSR reports • Reports or studies on ESP/TEP implementation commissioned by other development partners and/or the DCP government • CSO reports • Interviews • DCP's plan implementation progress reports	• Descriptive analysis • Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews

[206] For example, in some countries one indicator of country ownership may be the existence of measures to gradually transfer funding for specific ESP elements from GPE/development partner support to domestic funding. However, this indicator may not be applicable in all countries. Stakeholder interviews will be an important source for identifying appropriate, context-specific indicators for government ownership in each case.

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MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	implementation to respond to contextual changes (where applicable) • Extent to which the quality of the implementation plan in the ESP/TEP and of the plan itself is influencing the actual implementation (e.g., achievability, prioritization of objectives). • Stakeholder views on reasons why plan has or has not been implemented as envisaged		

CEQ 1.4 Has GPE contributed to the observed characteristics of sector plan implementation? If so, then how? If not, why not? a) Through GPE EPDG, ESPIG grants-related funding requirements and the variable tranche under the New Funding Model (NFM)[207] b) Through non-financial support (advocacy, standards, quality assurance procedures, guidelines, capacity building, and facilitation, and cross-national sharing of evidence/good practice)[208]	a) Contributions through GPE EPDG and ESPIG grants, related funding requirements and variable tranche under the NFM (where applicable) • Proportion of overall sector plan (both in terms of costs and key objectives) funded through GPE ESPIG • Absolute amount of GPE disbursement and GPE disbursement as a share of total aid to education • Evidence of GPE grants addressing gaps/needs or priorities identified by the DCP government and/or LEG • Degree of alignment of ESPIG objectives with ESP objectives. • Grant implementation is on time and on budget • Degree of achievement of/progress toward achieving ESPIG targets (showed mapped to ESPIG objectives, and sector plan objectives) • Evidence of variable tranche having influenced policy dialogue before and during sector plan implementation (where applicable) • Progress made towards sector targets outlined in GPE grant agreements as triggers for variable tranche under the NFM, compared to progress made in areas without specific targets (where applicable) • EPDG/ESPIG resources allocated to(implementation) capacity development • Stakeholder views on GPE EPDG and ESPIG grants with focus on: – Value added by these grants to overall sector plan implementation; – the extent to which the new (2015) funding model is clear and appropriate especially in relation to the variable tranche; – how well GPE grant application processes are working for in-country stakeholders (e.g., are grant requirements clear? Are they appropriate considering available grant amounts?);	• ESP implementation data including joint sector reviews • GPE grant agent reports and other grant performance data • Secretariat reports, e.g., country lead back to office/mission reports • GPE ESP/TSP quality assurance documents • Other documents on GPE advocacy/facilitation • Country-specific grant applications • Interviews • Education sector analyses • Country's poverty reduction strategy paper	• Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews • Where applicable: Comparison of progress made towards ESPIG grant objectives linked to specific performance targets with those without targets (variable tranche under the New Funding Model)

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	b) Contributions through non-financial support • Types of GPE support (advocacy, facilitation, knowledge sharing) aimed at strengthening sustainable local/national capacities for plan implementation • Relevance of GPE non-financial support in light of DCP government's own capacity development plan(s) (where applicable) • Stakeholder views on relevance and effectiveness of GPE non-financial support with focus on: – GPE non-financial support contributing to strengthening sustainable local/national capacities relevant for plan implementation – GPE non-financial facilitating harmonized development partners' support to plan implementation • Possible causes for no/ limited GPE contribution to plan implementation.		
CEQ 1.5 How has education sector financing evolved during the period under review? a) Amounts of domestic financing b) Amounts and sources of international financing c) Quality of domestic and international financing	a) Amounts of domestic education sector financing • Changes in country's public expenditures on education during period under review (absolute amounts and spending relative to total government expenditure) • Extent to which country has achieved, maintained, moved toward, or exceeded 20% of public expenditures on education during period under review • Changes in education recurrent spending as a percentage of total government recurrent spending	• Creditor Reporting System (CRS) by OECD-DAC • UIS data by UNESCO • National data (e.g., Education Management Information Systems, National Education Accounts, Joint Sector Reviews, public expenditure reviews)	• Trend analysis for period under review • Descriptive analysis

[207] Where applicable.

[208] Facilitation provided primarily through the GPE Secretariat, the grant agent and coordinating agency. Advocacy – including inputs from Secretariat, grant agent, coordinating agency, LEG, and GPE at global level (e.g., Board meetings, agreed upon standards). Knowledge exchange - including cross-national/global activities related to the diffusion of evidence and best practice to improve sector planning and implementation.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
(e.g., short, medium and long-term predictability, alignment with government systems)? 1. If no positive changes, then why not?	b) Amounts and sources of international financing • Changes in the number and types of international donors supporting the education sector • Changes in amounts of education sector funding from traditional and non-traditional donors (e.g., private foundations and non-DAC members) • Changes in percentage of capital expenditures and other education investments funded through donor contributions c) Quality of sector financing • Changes in the quality (predictability, alignment, harmonization/modality) of international education sector financing to country • Changes in the quality of domestic education financing (e.g., predictability, frequency and timeliness of disbursements, program versus input-based funding) • Extent to which country dedicates at least 45% of its education budget to primary education (for countries where PCR is below 95%) • Changes in allocation of specific/additional funding to marginalized groups • Changes in extent to which other donors' funding/conditional budget support is tied to the education sector	• GPE results framework indicator 29 on alignment	
CEQ 1.6 Has GPE contributed to leveraging additional education sector financing and improving the quality of financing? If yes, then how? If not, then why not?	a) Through ESPIG funding and related requirements • Government commitment to finance the endorsed sector plan (expressed in ESPIG applications) • Extent to which GPE Program Implementation Grant-supported programs have been co-financed by other actors or are part of pooled funding mechanisms	• ESPIG grant applications and related documents (country commitment on financing requirement • Donor pledges and contributions to ESP implementation)	• Comparative analysis (GPE versus other donor contributions)

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MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
a) Through ESPIG funding and related funding requirements? b) Through the GPE multiplier funding mechanisms (where applicable)? 2. Through other means, including advocacy[209] at national and/or global levels?	• Stakeholder views on extent to which GPE funding requirements (likely) having influenced changes in domestic education financing • Changes in relative size of GPE financial contribution in relation to other donor' contributions • Trends in external financing and domestic financing channeled through and outside of GPE, and for basic and total education, to account for any substitution by donors or the country government • Alignment of GPE education sector program implementation grants with national systems[210] • Possible reasons for non-alignment or non-harmonization of ESPIGs (if applicable) b) Through the GPE multiplier funding mechanism • Amount received by DCP government through the GPE multiplier fund (if applicable) • Stakeholder views on clarity and efficiency of multiplier application process c) Through other means (especially advocacy) • Likelihood of GPE advocacy having contributed to country meeting/approaching goal of 20% of the total national budget dedicated to education • Changes in existing dynamics between education and finance ministries that stakeholders (at least partly) attribute to GPE advocacy[211] (e.g., JSRs attended by senior MoF staff)	• Creditor Reporting System (CRS) by OECD-DAC • UIS data by UNESCO • National data (e.g., Education Management Information Systems, National Education Accounts, Joint Sector Reviews, public expenditure reviews) • Interviews with national actors (e.g., Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Local Education Groups/ Development partner groups)	• Triangulation of quantitative analysis with interview data

[209] Through the Secretariat at country and global levels, and/or GPE board members (global level, influencing country-specific approaches of individual donors)

[210] GPE's system alignment criteria including the 10 elements of alignment and the elements of harmonization captured by RF indicators 29, 30 respectively.

[211] This advocacy can have taken place in the context of GPE support to education sector planning, sector dialogue, and/or plan implementation

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	• Amounts and quality of additional resources likely mobilized with contribution from GPE advocacy efforts at country or global levels • Amounts and sources of non-traditional financing (e.g., private or innovative finance) that can be linked to GPE leveraging		
CEQ 2 Has GPE contributed to strengthening mutual accountability for the education sector during the period under review? If so, then how?			
CEQ 2.1 Has sector dialogue changed during the period under review? If so, then how and why? If not, why not?	• Composition of the country's LEG (in particular civil society and teacher association representation), and changes in this composition during period under review; other dialogue mechanisms in place (if any) and dynamics between those mechanisms • Frequency of LEG meetings, and changes in frequency during period under review • LEG members consulted for ESPIG application • Stakeholder views on changes in sector dialogue in terms of: – Degree to which different actors lead, contribute to, or facilitate dialogue – Inclusiveness – Consistency, clarity of roles and responsibilities – Meaningfulness (i.e., perceptions on whether, when and how stakeholder input is taken into account for decision-making) – Quality (evidence-based, transparent) – Likely causes for no/limited (changes in) sector dialogue	• LEG meeting notes • Joint sector reviews or equivalents from before and during most recent ESPIG period • GPE sector review assessments • ESP/TSP, and documents illustrating process of their development • Back to office reports/memos from Secretariat • ESPIG grant applications (section V – information on stakeholder consultations) • Interviews	• Pre-post comparison • Triangulate results of document review and interviews • Stakeholder analysis and mapping
CEQ 2.2 Has sector monitoring changed?	• Extent to which plan implementation is being monitored (e.g., results framework with targets,	• LEG and JSR meeting notes • Joint sector review reports/aide memoires or equivalents from	• Pre-post comparison

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
If so, then how and why? If not, why not?	performance review meetings, annual progress reports… and actual use of these monitoring tools) • Frequency of joint sector reviews conducted, and changes in frequency during period under review; nature of JSR meetings held; and any other monitoring events at country level (e.g., DP meetings…) • Extent to which joint sector reviews conducted during period of most recent ESPIG met GPE quality standards (if data is available: compared to JSRs conducted prior to this period) • Evidence deriving from JSRs is reflected in DCP government decisions (e.g., adjustments to sector plan implementation) and sector planning • Stakeholder views on changes in JSRs in terms of them being: – Inclusive and participatory, involving the right number and types of stakeholders – Aligned to existing sector plan and/or policy framework – Evidence based – Used for learning/informing decision-making – Embedded in the policy cycle (timing of JSR appropriate to inform decision-making; processes in place to follow up on JRS recommendations)[212] and recommendations are acted upon and implemented • Stakeholder views on extent to which current practices of sector dialogue and monitoring amount to 'mutual accountability' for the education sector.	before and during most recent ESPIG period • GPE sector review assessments • Grant agent reports • Back to office reports/memos from Secretariat • Interviews	• Triangulate the results of document review and interviews

[212] Criteria adapted from: Global Partnership for Education. Effective Joint Sector Reviews as (Mutual) Accountability Platforms. GPE Working Paper #1. Washington. June 2017. Available at: https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/helping-partners-make-best-use-joint-sector-reviews

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	• Likely causes for no/ limited (changes in) sector monitoring.		
CEQ 2.3 Has GPE contributed to observed changes in sector dialogue and monitoring? If so, then how? If not, why not? a) Through GPE grants and funding requirements[213] b) Through other support (capacity development, advocacy, standards, quality assurance, guidelines, facilitation, cross-national sharing of evidence/good practice)[214]	a) Grants and funding requirements • Proportion of total costs for sector dialogue mechanisms (and/or related specific events) funded through GPE grants • Proportion of total costs for sector monitoring mechanisms (e.g., JSR) funded through GPE grants • Stakeholder views on extent to which GPE funding process (e.g., selection of grant agent, development of program document, grant application) and grant requirements positively or negatively influenced the existence and functioning of mechanisms for sector dialogue and/or monitoring b) Non-grant related support • Support is aimed at strengthening local/national capacities for conducting inclusive and evidence-based sector dialogue and monitoring • Support is targeted at gaps/weaknesses of sector dialogue/monitoring identified by DCP government and/or LEG • Support for strengthening sector dialogue/monitoring is adapted to meet the technical and cultural requirements of the specific context in [country] a) and b)	• LEG meeting notes • Joint sector reviews or equivalents from before and during most recent ESPIG period • GPE sector review assessments • Grant agent reports • Back to office reports/memos from Secretariat • Interviews • CSEF, KIX documents etc.	• Triangulate the results of document review and interviews

[213] All relevant GPE grants to country/actors in country, including CSEF and KIX, where applicable.

[214] Capacity development and facilitation primarily through Secretariat, coordinating agency (especially in relation to sector dialogue) and grant agent (especially in relation to sector monitoring). Advocacy through Secretariat (country lead), CA, as well as (possibly) GPE at the global level (e.g., Board meetings, agreed upon standards). Knowledge exchange includes cross-national/global activities organized by the Secretariat, as well as the sharing and use of insights derived from GRA and KIX grant-supported interventions. Knowledge sharing also possible through other GPE partners at country level (e.g., other donors/LEG members) if provided primarily in their role as GPE partners.

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MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	• Stakeholder view on relevance and appropriateness of GPE grants and related funding process and requirements, and of other support in relation to: – Addressing existing needs/priorities – Respecting characteristics of the national context – Adding value to country-driven processes (e.g., around JSRs) • Possible causes for no/ limited GPE contributions to dialogue/monitoring.		
CEQ 3: Has GPE support had unintended/unplanned effects? What factors other than GPE support have contributed to observed changes in sector planning, sector plan implementation, sector financing and monitoring?			
CEQ 3.1 What factors other than GPE support are likely to have contributed to the observed changes (or lack thereof) in sector planning, financing, plan implementation, and in sector dialogue and monitoring?	• Changes in nature and extent of financial/non-financial support to the education sector provided by development partners/donors (traditional/non-traditional donors including foundations) • Contributions (or lack thereof) to sector plan implementation, sector dialogue or monitoring made by actors other than GPE • Changes/events in national or regional context(s) – Political context (e.g., changes in government/leadership) – Economic context – Social/environmental contexts (e.g., natural disasters, conflict, health crises) – Other (context-specific)	• Documents illustrating changes in priorities pursued by (traditional/non-traditional) donors related implications for [country] • Relevant studies/reports commissioned by other education sector actors (e.g., donors, multilateral agencies) regarding nature/changes in their contributions and related results • Government and other (e.g., media) reports on changes in relevant national contexts and implications for the education sector • Interviews	• Triangulate the results of document review and interviews
CEQ 3.2 During the period under review, have there been unintended, positive or	• Types of unintended, positive and negative, effects on sector planning, financing, sector plan implementation,	• All data sources outlined for CEQs 1 and 2 above • Interviews	• Triangulate the results of

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
negative, consequences of GPE financial and non-financial support?	sector dialogue and monitoring deriving from GPE grants and funding requirements • Types of unintended, positive and negative, effects deriving from other GPE support.		document review and interviews
Key question II: Has sector plan implementation contributed to making the overall education system in [country] more effective and efficient?			
CEQ 4 During the period under review, how has the education system changed in relation to: a) Improving access to education and equity? b) Enhancing education quality and relevance (quality of teaching/instruction)? c) Sector Management?[215] If there were no changes in the education system, then why not and with what implications?[216]	a) Improving education access and equity - focus on extent to which DCP meets its own performance indicators, where available, e.g., related to:[217] • Changes in number of schools relative to children • Changes in the average distance to schools • Changes in costs of education to families • Changes in the availability of programs to improve children's' readiness for school) • New/expanded measures put in place to ensure meeting the educational needs of children with special needs and of learners from disadvantaged groups • New/expanded measures put in place to ensure gender equality in education b) Enhancing education quality and relevance (Quality of teaching/instruction) – focus on extent to which DCP meets its own performance indicators, e.g., related to:	• Education Management Information System (EMIS) • UIS data • World Bank data • Household survey data • ASER/UWEZO other citizen-led surveys • Grant agent progress reports • Implementing partner progress reports • Mid-term Evaluation reports • GPE annual Results Report • Appraisal Reports • Public expenditure reports • CSO reports • SABER database • Education financing studies	• Pre-post comparison of statistical data for periods under review • Triangulate the results of document review with statistical data, interviews and literature on 'good practice' in specific areas of systems strengthening

[215] The sub-questions reflect indicators under Strategic Goal #3 as outlined in the GPE results framework as well as country-specific indicators for system-level change and elements (such as institutional strengthening) of particular interest to the Secretariat.

[216] Implications for education access and equity, quality and relevance, and sector management, as well as likely implications for progress towards learning outcomes and gender equality/equity.

[217] The noted indicators are examples of relevant measures to indicate removal of barriers to education access. Applicability may vary across countries. Where no country specific indicators and/or data are available, the CLE will draw upon UIS (and other) data on the described indicators.

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MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	• Changes in pupil/trained teacher ratio during period under review • Changes in equitable allocation of teachers (measured by relationship between number of teachers and number of pupils per school) • Changes in relevance and clarity of (basic education) curricula • Changes in the quality and availability of teaching and learning materials • Changes in teacher pre-service and in-service training • Changes in incentives for schools/teachers c) Sector Management – focus on extent to which DCP meets its own performance indicators, e.g., related to: • Changes in the institutional capacity of key ministries and/or other relevant government agencies (e.g., staffing, structure, organizational culture, funding) • Changes in whether country has and how it uses EMIS data to inform policy dialogue, decision-making and sector monitoring • If no functioning EMIS is in place, existence of a realistic remedial strategy in place • Changes in whether country has and how it uses quality learning assessment system within the basic education cycle during period under review (a-c): • Likely causes for no/ limited changes at system level (based on literature review and stakeholder views)	• Literature on good practices in education system domains addressed in country's sector plan • Interviews • ESPIG grant applications • Relevant documents/reports illustrating changes in key ministries' institutional capacity (e.g., on restructuring, internal resource allocation)	
CEQ 5 How has sector plan implementation contributed to	• The specific measures put in place as part of sector plan implementation address previously identified bottlenecks at system level	• Sources as shown for CEQ 4 • Literature on good practices in education system domains	

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
observed changes at education system level?	• Alternative explanations for observed changes at system level (e.g., changes due to external factors, continuation of trend that was already present before current/most recent policy cycle, targeted efforts outside of the education sector plan)	addressed in country's sector plan • Education sector analyses • Country's poverty reduction strategy paper	
Key question III: Have improvements at education system level contributed to progress towards impact?			
CEQ 6 During the period under review, what changes have occurred in relation to: a) Learning outcomes (basic education)? b) Equity, gender equality and inclusion in education?	Changes/trends in DCP's core indicators related to learning/equity as outlined in current sector plan and disaggregated (if data is available). For example: a) Learning outcomes • Changes/trends in learning outcomes (basic education) during period under review (by gender, by socio-economic group, by rural/urban locations) b) Equity, gender equality, and inclusion • Changes in gross and net enrollment rates (basic education) during review period (by gender, by socio-economic group, by rural/urban) • Changes in proportion of children (girls/boys) who complete (i) primary, (ii) lower-secondary education • Changes in transition rates from primary to lower secondary education (by gender, by socio-economic group) • Changes in out-of-school rate for (i) primary, (ii) lower-secondary education (by gender, socio-economic group, rural/urban location) • Changes in dropout and/or repetition rates (depending on data availability) for (i) primary, (ii) lower-secondary education • Changes in the distribution of out-of-school children (girls/boys; children with/without disability; ethnic, geographic and/or economic backgrounds)	• Sector performance data available from GPE, UIS, DCP government and other reliable sources • Teacher Development Information System (TDIS) • Education Management Information System (EMIS) • National examination data • International and regional learning assessment data • EGRA/EGMA data • ASER/UWEZO other citizen-led surveys • Grant agent and Implementing partner progress reports • Mid-term Evaluation reports • GPE annual Results Report • Studies/evaluation reports on education (sub)sector(s) in country commissioned by the DCP government or other development partners (where available)	• Pre-post comparison of available education sector data (examination of trends) during and up to 5 years before core period under review • Triangulation of statistical data with qualitative document analysis

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
		• Literature on key factors affecting learning outcomes, equity, equality, and inclusion in comparable settings	
Key question IV: What are implications of evaluation findings for GPE support to [country]?			
CEQ 7 What, if any, aspects of GPE support to [country] should be improved? What, if any, good practices have emerged related to how GPE supports countries? [218]	• Insights deriving from answering evaluation questions above e.g., in relation to: – Clarity and relevance of the roles and responsibilities of key GPE actors at the country level (Secretariat, GA, CA, DCP government, other actors) – Strengths and weaknesses of how and whether GPE key country-level actors fulfill their roles (both separately and jointly i.e., through a partnership approach) – The relative influence/benefits deriving from GPE financial and non-financial support respectively (with focus on the NFM, where applicable) – Extent to which logical links in the GPE theory of change are, or are not, supported by evidence – Extent to which originally formulated underlying assumptions of the ToC appear to apply/not apply and why – Extent to which different elements in the theory of change appear to mutually enforce/support each other (e.g., relationship sector dialogue and sector planning) – Stakeholder satisfaction with GPE support	• All of the above as well as (for summative evaluations) sources applied for CEQs 9, 10 and 11 (part B below)	• Triangulation of data collected, and analysis conducted for other evaluation questions

[218] For both questions CEQ 7 and 8 the notion of 'good practice' refers to acknowledging processes, mechanisms, ways of working etc. that the CLE found to work well and/or that were innovative in that specific context. The intention is not to try and identify globally relevant benchmarks or universally 'good practice'.

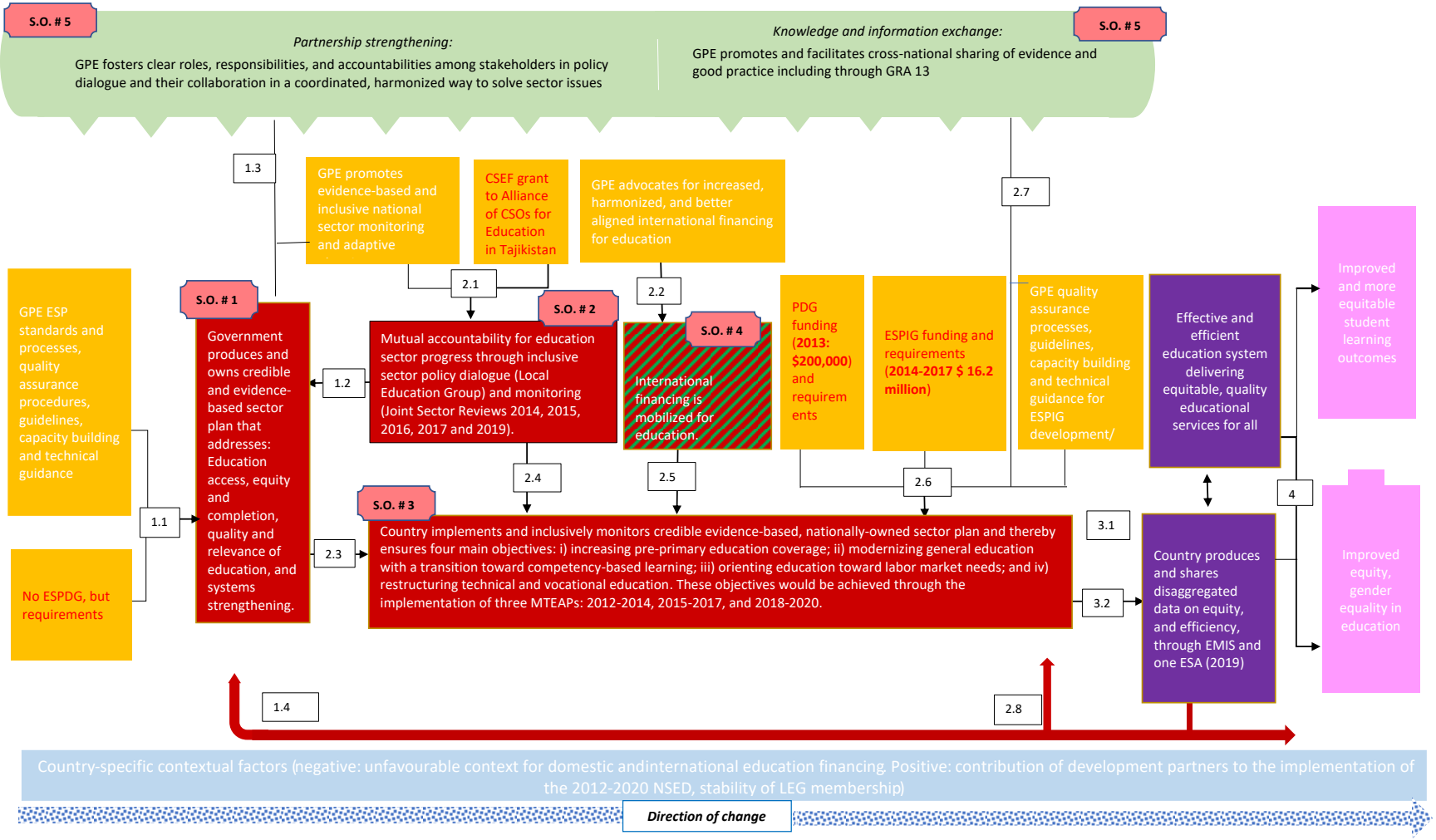
MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
CEQ 8 What, if any, good practices have emerged related to how countries address specific education sector challenges/how countries operate during different elements of the policy cycle?[219]	• Insights deriving from answering evaluation questions above e.g., in relation to: – Effectiveness of approaches taken in the respective country to ensure effective sector planning, sector dialogue and monitoring, sector financing, sector plan implementation. – Successful, promising, and/or contextually innovative approaches taken as part of sector plan implementation to address specific sector challenges[220]	• All of the above as well as (for summative evaluations) sources applied for CEQs 9, 10 and 11 (part B below)	• Triangulation of data collected, and analysis conducted for other evaluation questions

[219] This could mean, for example, highlighting strengths of existing mechanisms for sector planning that either reflect related GPE/IEEP guidelines and quality criteria or that introduce alternative/slightly different approaches that appear to work well in the respective context.

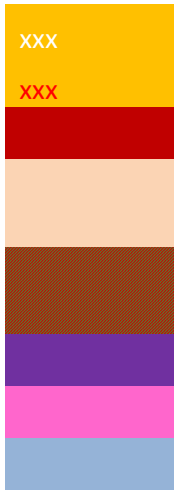
[220] For example, highlighting promising approaches taken by the respective government and development partners to try and reach out-of-school children. Please note that 'innovative' means 'innovative/new in the respective context', not necessarily globally new.

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Appendix II GPE Country-level Theory of Change for Tajikistan



LEGEND



Non-financial GPE inputs/support (technical assistance, facilitation, advocacy)

GPE **financial** inputs/support (grants) and related funding requirements

Country-level objectives that GPE support/influence directly contributes to.

Global-level objectives that GPE support/influence directly contributes, which have consequences at country level (policy cycle continuum)

Global-level objectives with ramifications at country level, that are influenced but not solely driven by GPE's global and country-level interventions and/or influence

Intermediate outcomes: Education system-level changes

Impact: Changes in learning outcomes, equity, equality, and inclusion

Contextual factors

Corresponding Strategic Objective in the GPE 2020 Strategic Plan

Numbers represent the key areas where **logical linkages** (explanatory mechanisms) connect different elements of the theory of change to one another ('*because of x, y happens*'). Numbers are aligned with the anticipated sequencing of achievements (1. sector plan development, 2. sector plan implementation, sector monitoring and dialogue, 3. education system-level changes, 4. envisaged impact.

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Appendix III Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation aims to assess the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of GPE's inputs at the country level and the validity of GPE's theory of change to establish if and how GPE outputs and activities contribute to outcomes and impact.[221] The guiding frameworks for the evaluation are the **evaluation matrix** (Appendix I) and the **country-level** theory of change for Tajikistan (Appendix II).[222]

The overall approach to this evaluation is theory-based and uses **contribution analysis** (CA). CA is a theory-based approach to evaluation designed to identify the contribution a program or (series of) interventions is making to observed results through an increased understanding of why observed changes have occurred (or not occurred) and the roles played by the intervention and by other internal and external factors respectively.[223]

The evaluation team chose contribution analysis as the main approach to this assignment as it is particularly useful in situations (i) where a program is not experimental, but has been implemented on the basis of a relatively clearly articulated theory of change; (ii) where the change processes in questions are complex rather than one-dimensional, i.e., where change is influenced due to a variety of inter-related factors as opposed to single policy interventions that could be isolated; (iii) where the change processes in question are highly context-specific. A report deriving from applying contribution analysis does not provide definite proof, but rather provides an evidence-based line of reasoning from which plausible conclusions can be drawn on the types and reasons for contributions made by the program/intervention in question. CA draws upon both quantitative and qualitative evidence to build the 'contribution story' for the program or intervention(s) under review.

This country level evaluation (CLE), of GPE's support to the national education system of the Republic of Tajikistan, is part of a larger GPE study that comprises a total of 20 summative and eight formative CLEs. In October 2018, the approach for the summative evaluations was slightly modified. Starting in FY18, these new 'summative plus' (including this evaluation) will have the following modifications:

- 'Summative plus' CLE will not only explore one policy cycle[224] and related GPE support ('first policy cycle'), but also include the beginning of the following policy cycle (the 'second policy cycle'). This will allow addressing questions around the transition from one ESP to the next and related GPE contributions,
- The CLEs will also explore strengths, weaknesses and value added of the revised GPE Quality Assurance and Review (QAR) and ESPDG mechanism.
- The reports for 'summative plus' will include a final section on Strategic Questions, which will summarize – if applicable – suggestions for how GPE support to the respective country can be

[221] In the context of this assignment, the term 'impact' is aligned with the terminology used by GPE to refer changes in the areas of learning, equity, gender equality and inclusion (reflected in GPE Strategic Goals 1 and 2 described in the 2020 Strategic Plan). While examining progress towards impact in this sense, the country evaluations do not constitute formal impact evaluations, which usually entail counterfactual analysis based on randomized controlled trials.

[222] This country-specific ToC was adapted from the generic country-level ToC that had been developed in the assignment Inception Report.

[223] See, for example: Mayne, J. "Addressing Cause and Effect in Simple and Complex Settings through Contribution Analysis". In *Evaluating the Complex,* R. Schwartz, K. Forss, and M. Marra (Eds.), Transaction Publishers, (2011).

[224] i.e. from sector planning and related sector dialogue to sector plan implementation and monitoring during the period covered by the most recent fully or mostly disbursed ESPIG.

improved, and/or which will outline overarching questions about the GPE operational model that may be worth further exploring in the context of other summative and prospective CLE.

The process for this country evaluation involved four stages: (i) assessing the availability and quality of data, adapting the country-level theory of change and conducting a country-specific stakeholder mapping to determine priorities for consultations during the in-country site visit (see Appendix IV); (ii) in-country data collection during a ten-working day mission to Tajikistan from October 7th to October 18th, 2019; (iii) assembling and assessing the GPE contribution story; and (iv) writing the evaluation report.

Data collection and analysis were conducted by a team of two international and one national consultant. Methods of data collection included:

- Document and literature review (see Appendix VI for a bibliography)
- Stakeholder consultations through individual and group interviews in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. In addition, telephone interviews were conducted with the Secretariat country focal point. Appendix V provides a list of consulted stakeholders. In total, the evaluation team interviewed 43 individuals (see Box iii.i), of which 14 were women.

Box iii.i: Consulted Stakeholders

Education ministry (including agencies): 17
Ministry of Finance: 1
Grant and coordinating agents: 7
Development partners/donors: 6
Civil Society: 6
Private sector: 5
GPE Secretariat: 1

- Education sector performance data analysis, drawing upon publicly accessible information on learning outcomes, equity, gender equality and inclusion, and education financing.[225]

The evaluation team analyzed the available data using qualitative (descriptive, content, comparative) and quantitative techniques, thereby triangulating different data sources and methods of data collection.

[225] The key sources of data are the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database, data.uis.unesco.org; the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS), https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1; and country-level datasets and data sources.

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Appendix IV Stakeholder Mapping

STAKEHOLDER	INTEREST IN/INFLUENCE ON GPE COUNTRY-LEVEL PROGRAMMING IMPORTANCE FOR THE EVALUATION	ROLE IN THE COUNTRY-LEVEL EVALUATION
Global		
Secretariat	Interest: High. Influence: High. The Secretariat operationalizes guidance on overall direction and strategy issued by the Board. Importance: High	The main internal stakeholders and users of the evaluation; Key informants; country lead facilitated the evaluation team's contacts with stakeholders.
Board members (from developing countries included in the sample)	Interest: High. Influence: High. Board members influence the direction, strategy development and management of GPE, and they ensure resources. The extent to which DCP Board members are involved in and intimately familiar with GPE grants in their respective countries likely varies. Importance: High	Tajikistan is represented on the GPE Board through the Eastern Europe, Middle East and Central Asia constituency. One board member was consulted during the course of this country evaluation.
Country-level		
MoES	Interest: High Influence: High. Responsible for shaping and implementing education sector policy and managing related financing. Focal point with GPE Secretariat. Importance: High. Main partner for GPE grant design and implementation.	Key informants at country level. Directors of all key MoES directorates were interviewed in person during the country visit (see Appendix V for a list of stakeholders).
Ministry of Finance	Interest: High Influence: High. Responsible for providing financing to the education sector. Importance: High.	One stakeholder from the Ministry of Finance was consulted during the course of this country evaluation.
Key Education Sector Stakeholders (national level)		
Grant Agent: World Bank and Islamic Development Bank	Interest: High Influence: High. Responsible for managing the ESPIG in Tajikistan. Importance: High	Key informant at country level. Consulted during the visit in Tajikistan and remotely using Skype.

STAKEHOLDER	INTEREST IN/INFLUENCE ON GPE COUNTRY-LEVEL PROGRAMMING IMPORTANCE FOR THE EVALUATION	ROLE IN THE COUNTRY-LEVEL EVALUATION
Coordinating Agency: UNICEF	Interest: High Influence: Medium-High. Through its facilitating role, the coordinating agency plays an important role in the functioning of the LEG, and other country-level dialogue bodies. Importance: High	Key informant at country level.
Development Partners (donor agencies, multilateral organizations): USAID, EU, AKF, OSI, GIZ	Interest: High Influence: Medium-High, through their participation in the LEG and other dialogue mechanisms, in sector monitoring exercises, as well as to their own activities in the education sector. Importance: High	Key informants at country level were interviewed in person during the country visit.
Multilateral organizations: World Bank, UNICEF	Interest: High Influence: Medium-High, through their participation in the LEG and other dialogue mechanisms, in sector monitoring exercises, as well as to their own activities in the education sector. Importance: High	Key informants at country level were interviewed in person during the country visit.
Domestic non-governmental organizations: Economics and Education	Interest: High Influence: Medium. One representative is member of the LEG since 2019 and participated in sector planning consultations. Importance: Medium-High.	Key informants at country level were consulted during the country site visit.
Teacher Training Institutes: Republican Teacher Training Institute	Interest: Medium Influence: Medium. Participate in some technical working groups, and sector planning consultations. Importance: Medium-High.	Key informants at country level were consulted during the country site visit.

Appendix V List of Consulted Individuals

#	LAST NAME	NAME	ORGANISATION	TITLE	M/F
1	ABDUJABBOR	Aliev	MOES	Head of EMIS	M
2	ABIDOV	Nasorolo	Methodological Center	Head of Department for Higher Education	M
3	ASOZODA	Muso	Republican Teacher Training Institute	Rector Assistant	M
4	BAZAROVA	Saodat	World Bank	Education Specialist	F
5	BIANCOLI	Alberto	UNICEF	Chief Education	M
6	BOBOBEKOV	Khusrav	Youth Union	Leader	M
7	DASTANBUEV	Nazarkhudo	Open Society Institute	Education Programme	M
8	DEVONSHEVA	Tutikhon	Republican Teacher Training Institute	Senior Teacher	F
9	DUSHANBIEV	Hurmat	USAID	Deputy Chief of Party	M
10	GILES	Terry	USAID	Chief of Party	M
11	HAITOVA	Shahrinisso	HUAWEI	Key Account Manager	F
12	KAHAGH	Mohammad Mirzaei	Islamic Development Bank	Senior Cooperation Specialist, Cooperation and Resources	M
13	KARIMOVA	Irina Kholovna	Academy for Education	Vice President	F
14	KHAN	Tariq	GPE Secretariat	CL for Tajikistan	M
15	KHORIROEV	Mullonawruz	Methodological Center	Head of Secondary	M
16	KIRBY	Mitch	USAID	Education Advisor	M
17	LATIPOV	Nuriddin	MFI Alif Capital	CEO	M
18	MAHMADALI MIRALI	Azizi	Directorate of Dushanbe	Head of Education Department of Dushanbe	M

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#	LAST NAME	NAME	ORGANISATION	TITLE	M/F
19	MALIKA		Children Development Center "NANARIS"	Director	F
20	MAMADFOZILOV	Zuloby	Aga Khan Foundation	Chief Education Officer	M
21	MAMAMDYOROVA	Madina	NGO Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities	Advisor	M
22	MAVJUDA	Nabieva	USAID	Education Management Specialist	F
23	MULLO-ABDOLOVA	Gulbegim	UNICEF	Education Programme Assistant	F
24	MUZAFFAROV		Ministry of Education and Science	Head of Department of Economics, Planning in the Field of Education and Science	M
25	NABIEVA	Mavjuda	USAID	Education Specialist	F
26	Name provided in Russian		Academy for Education	Head of Research institute	M
27	Name provided in Russian		Methodological Center	Head of Department for Secondary VET	M
28	Name provided in Russian		Republican Institute of Professional Development in Education	Education	M
29	NASRIDDINOV	Fazliddin	NGO Iroda	Board Member	M
30	NASRULLOEV	Bejan	Ministry of Finance, Department of Education, Science and Culture Sectors Budget Management	Senior Specialist	F
31	OLIMOVA	Diana	EU	Programme Manager Education Sector	F
32	QODIROV	Shodibek	NGO Economics and Education	Head of the Agency	M

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#	LAST NAME	NAME	ORGANISATION	TITLE	M/F
33	QURBONZODA	Khonali	Republican Teacher Training Institute	Rector	M
34	SALIMOVA	Farahbonu	Republican Teacher Training Institute	Specialist	F
35	SHERALI		Aga Khan Foundation	Head of Education	M
36	SULAIMONI	Parvina	NGO Peer to Peer	Head of the Agency	F
37	TESHABOEV	Abdullo	Republican Teacher Training Institute	Senior Specialist	M
38	USMONZODA	Fathiddin	MoES	Deputy Minister	M
39	VALIJONBEKOVA	Shahnoz	UNICEF	Education Specialist	F
40	VARBONOU	Jamshed	UNICEF	ECE Officer	M
41	YORMUHAMADZODA	Shermuhammad	Methodological Center	Head of Methodological Center	M
42	YRMAROVA	Nisso	Pre-school “Akhtarak”	Founder	F
43	ZOKIR		LLC IDEA	Commercial Director	M

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Appendix VII Achievement of results, 2013-2017 ESPIG (GPE-4)

GPE-4 COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGET	ACTUAL AS OF 2018	STATUS
Objective/Outcome 1: Contribute to Improving the Learning Conditions in Pre-School Education				
Improving the quality of primary education	The number of children enrolled at the pre-school institutions with improved learning conditions.	18 000	18 000	Met
	The percentage of primary grade teachers who are training-certified and follow the revised education program and apply improved teaching-learning practices in Mother-tongue Language and Mathematics.	50	54	Met
	The number of primary students enrolled at a school with improved learning conditions.	100 000	160 000	Met
	Number of students who benefited from physical infrastructure upgrades.	44 900	55 978	Met
	EMIS's data used for analysis by MoES.	Analytical report based on EMIS data is prepared and discussed.	Analytical report based on EMIS data is prepared and discussed.	Met
Objective/Outcome 2: Contribute to Improving the Learning Conditions in General Education				
Improving learning condition in Education	Pre-school sector analysis is conducted, and report is disseminated and discussed.	Yes	Yes	Met
	Number of additional qualified pre-primary teachers resulting from project interventions.	900	1034	Met
	Percentage of pre-primary students benefiting from a package of essential teaching-learning materials	28	38	Met

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GPE-4 COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGET	ACTUAL AS OF 2018	STATUS
	Standards and programs for the primary grades in key subjects are upgraded.	Standards and programs are upgraded for core subjects with focus on competencies and incorporating LSBE	Standards and programs are upgraded for core subjects with focus on competencies and incorporating LSBE	Met
	Teachers recruited or trained.	2 600	5 395	Met
	Percentage of primary school children who benefited from provision of supplementary teacher-learning materials.	100	100	Met
	Standards and programs for the secondary grades in Math and Tajik language are upgraded.	Standards and programs are upgraded for core subjects with focus on competencies and incorporating LSBE	Standards and programs are upgraded for core subjects with focus on competencies and incorporating LSBE	Met
	Number of additional children with disability benefiting from access to quality, inclusive education.	750	750	Met
	Number of additional classrooms constructed or rehabilitated resulting from the project intervention.	965	1185	Met
Objective/Outcome 3: Strengthen System Capacity at the Central and Local Level to Manage the Education System				
	Development of the NSED monitoring system	Report on the NSED Implementation progress is produced	Report on the NSED Implementation progress is produced	Met
	Percentage of general education School Directors who upgraded their knowledge in school management.	75	92	Met
	Percentage of Kindergarten School Directors who upgraded their knowledge in school management.	90	95.5	Met

GPE-4 COMPONENT	INDICATORS	TARGET	ACTUAL AS OF 2018	STATUS
	Percentage of districts whose RED and RFD representatives have been trained to provide PCF support to education institutions	100	100	Met
	Number of new EMIS modules generating a report based on actual data	9	17	Met
	EMIS for general education is assessed	Report is produced and discussed	Report is produced and discussed	Met

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Appendix VIII Achievement of results, 2012-2020 NSED

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS INCLUDED IN THE 2012-2020 NSED[226]	DATA
Increasing the coverage of children at the age of 3-6 by preschool education programs	The number of children enrolled in state preschool institutions **increased** from 74,448 in 2012 to 93,053 in 2017 (JSR 2019), and the number of children enrolled in ECE centers increased from 14,796 to 43,666 during the same period. According to UIS data, the ECE GER grew from 9.43 in 2012 to 9.91 in 2017.[227]
Increasing the share of children demonstrating readiness for school education	No relevant data available to measure progress, due to the indicator being poorly defined
Increasing the coverage of "street" children with informal education	No relevant data available to measure progress, the concept of "street children" not being defined. However, between 2012 and 2017, the number of OOSC of primary school age decreased from 5,662 to 4,181 and the proportion of OOSC of primary school age fell from 0.9 to 0.5 percent (UIS data).
Increasing the education coverage among the population at the age of 16-17	The total number of students enrolled in TVET education **increased** from 65,515 in 2012 to 104.608 in 2017 (JSR 2019). Data comparing enrollment with age population is not available.
Reducing the share of unemployed people at the age of 18-24 in the total number of unemployed	The proportion of people aged 15-29 that are unemployed **reduced** from 31.7 percent in 2012 to 29.3 percent in 2017 (JSR 2019). Data on the share of unemployed people at the age of 18-24 is not available.
Reducing the share of unemployed in the total number of HEI graduates	Data not available
Advancing in the volume of R&D activities, performed by HEI graduates in relation to budget financing of higher education	Data not available
Increasing the share of resources of enterprises in financing of higher education	Data not available

[226] These indicators are listed on p. 36 of the NSED. The plan mentions that the evaluation of the NSED is based on these indicators. As noted in the report, no baseline nor targets are included in relations with these indicators, they are simply listed. The indicators listed in the table are stated exactly as they are in the NSED.

[227] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

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KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS INCLUDED IN THE 2012-2020 NSED[226]	DATA
Increasing the population coverage with programs of BVE, SVE, short-term programs of vocational training, retraining and professional development	The total number of students enrolled in TVET education (which includes both BVE and SVE) **increased** from 65,515 in 2012 to 104.608 in 2017 (JSR 2019). No data available on the coverage of the population with retraining and professional development programs.
Increasing the share of population with vocational education	UIS data on the percentage of the population aged 25 years-old or older completing post-secondary education is available for the year 2017 only. UIS data indicates that 22.75 percent of the population aged 25 years-old or older completed post-secondary education. which includes both TVET and higher education (UIS data).
Reducing the respective number of children, not covered by education due to health condition	Data not available
Raising the gender parity Index based on graduation ration on all education levels	The proportion of children who complete primary education decreased from 98.2 percent to 94.9 percent between 2012 and 2017 (UIS data). The proportion of children who complete lower secondary education increased from 86.4 percent to 96.2 percent between 2012 and 2017 (UIS data). Data not available for other levels of education.
Increasing the share of young people from rural areas, enrolled in programs of secondary and higher vocational education	Data not available
Raising the share of young people from socially unprotected groups (from poor families, orphans), enrolled in programs of secondary and higher vocational education.	Data not available

Appendix IX Tajikistan Sector Financing Data

ISSUE	DATA
Total domestic educ. expenditure	**Increased** from US$226 million in 2010 to US$419 million in 2017[228]
Education share of total government Expenditures	**Increased** from 15.3 percent in 2010 to 16.4 percent in 2015[229]
% of domestic education financing allocated to basic education	**Decreased** from 74 to 58 percent between 2010 and 2017.[230]
Funding by expenditure type (recurrent)	**Decreased** from 21 percent in 2010 to nine percent in 2017.[231]
Total ODA (all sectors)	**Decreased** from US$407.2 million in 2010 to US$381.3 million in 2017 (OECD CRS)
Education ODA as share of overall ODA	**Increase** from 4.5 % in 2010 to 4.5 % in 2017 (OECD CRS)
ESPIG amount as % of education ODA during review period	GPE two recent ESPIGs represented 18.8 percent of all education ODA, and 35.9 percent of basic education ODA between 2010 and 2017.[232]
ESPIG amount as % of total estimated ESP financing	Data not available
ESPIG amount at % of actual ESP financing	Data not available

[228] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[229] Source: UIS data. GPE 2016 results framework data for indicator 10 shows Tajikistan allocating more than 20 percent of total government expenditure to education, with 21.5 percent and 23.1 percent of total government expenditure allocated to education in 2015 and 2016 respectively.

[230] The absolute amount spent on basic education increase by 30 percent, from US$ 168.1 million in 2010 to US$ 219.16 million in 2017 (in constant 2017 US$). Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[231] Domestic capital development expenditure in 2010 amounted to US$ 48.5 million and US$ 32.72 in 2010 and 2017 respectively, in constant 2010 US$. Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[232] GPE's two ESPIGs (2010-2013 and 2013-2017) provided US$29.7 million out of US$157.82 million in total education ODA and US$82.84 million basic education ODA between 2010 and 2017. This evaluation focuses on the contribution of the US$16.2 million ESPIG from 2013-2017.

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Appendix X Selected System-level Country Data

Changes suited to remove barriers to equitable access to education

ISSUE	OBSERVATIONS
Changes in # of schools	From 2012-2017, the number of general secondary schools[233] increased from 3,813 to 3,870.
Changes in average distance to school	Data not available
Changes in costs of education to families	Data not available
Changes in availability of programs to improve children's readiness for school	The number of preschool institutions increased from 451 to 636 between 2012 and 2017,[234] and the number of ECE centers increased from 1,400 to 1,647 during the same period.[235]
New/expanded measures put in place to meet the educational needs of children with special needs and learners from disadvantaged groups	The concept of school meals was approved by the GoT in 2015, resulting in increased number of students receiving meal in schools.[236] In 2017, the GoT adopted the Law on the Education of Adults, recognizing the right of adults to equal educational access at any point in their lives. In 2013, the Law on Preschool Education was also adopted, which guarantees the right to early childhood care and education to all Tajik citizens.[237] Available ECE curriculums, modules, and teacher guides were also translated from Tajik and Russian to some ethnic minority languages. [238] There were 28 schools teaching facilities specialized in teaching disadvantaged children in 2017.[239]
New/expanded measures put in place to further gender equality in education	Nothing implemented specifically aimed at expanding measures to further gender equality in education

[233] Schools in which different levels from primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary can be taught.

[234] Preschool institutions are state-funded kinder gardens. and ECE centers. It is not possible to know exactly how many preschool institutions were built, since some preschool institutions are installed in already existing buildings such as schools.

[235] As mentioned in chapter 2, ECE centers, which usually offer education services on a half-day basis, are predominantly located in rural areas and supported by development partners, both international and national. Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[236] Meals were provided to 370,000 students in 2017, an increase from 356,000 in 2014. Source: JSR 2016.

[237] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[238] Source: Tajikistan Education Sector Analysis (ESA). 2019.

[239] 20 schools for orphans, 2 schools providing medical rehabilitation courses, 3 courses for children with disability, and 3 schools for visually impaired children. An analysis over time on the number of specialized schools is not possible due to data limitations.

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Changes suited to remove barriers to quality education

ISSUE	OBSERVATIONS
Changes in Pupil/teacher ratios	The pupil-teacher ratio in ECE decreased from 12.65 in 2012 to 11.44 in 2017 (UIS data). The pupil-teacher ratio in primary education decreased from 23.00 in 2012 to 22.30 in 2017 (UIS data).
Changes in pupil/trained teacher ratio	Data not available
Changes in relevance and clarity of (basic education) curricula	With the introduction of the competency-based learning approach, curriculum was reviewed in primary and lower secondary education. The curriculum for ECE was revised in accordance with the Law on Preschool Education.
Changes in availability and quality of teaching and learning materials	A total of 52 types of learning materials were developed for pre-primary education, including teaching programs, textbooks, teacher's guides, and subject standards. The new learning materials were done in accordance with the Law on Preschool Education and learning adopted in 2015. Available ECE learning materials were also translated into some ethnic minority languages. Teacher training packages[240] were developed in accordance with the new competency-based approach to learning. MoES developed and approved 25 professional standards for TVET. It also started the development of competency standards and standards for learning assessment in five sectors and 17 pilot professions for TVET education. In relation to the new standards, 120 training curricula were approved for TVET institutions for grades 9-11.
Changes to teacher training	More than 80 percent of primary school teachers received training on the new competency-based curriculum. 900 teachers received training to deliver ECE curriculum.
Changes in incentives for schools/teachers	To increase the number of qualified teachers, the GoT implemented a strategy that focused on teacher training, curriculum development, enforcement of new teaching standards, and increased remuneration.

[240] Teachers guides and subject standards

Progress in strengthening sector management

ISSUE	OBSERVATIONS
Changes in the institutional capacity of key ministries and/or other relevant government agencies (e.g. staffing, structure, organizational culture, funding)	n/a
Is a quality learning assessment system (LAS) within basic education cycle in place?	There is no quality learning assessment system in Tajikistan. Its development is planned in the upcoming 2021-2030 NSED.
Changes in how country uses LAS.	n/a
Does country have functioning EMIS?	Yes. Education data is collected on an annual basis via surveys circulated by the MoES. Data provided by the EMIS covers all public and private schools in the country and includes student administrative data (such as enrollment numbers, age, gender), and basic teacher information (such as teacher qualifications and allocations).
Changes in how country uses EMIS data to inform policy dialogue, decision-making and sector monitoring	The 2013-2017 ESPIG funded training, resulting in increased MoES capacity to use EMIS data for decision-making. While previously only statistical reports were prepared using EMIS data, analytical reports showing trends over time based on EMIS data are prepared and used in JSRs.

Appendix XI Selected Impact-level Country Data

Impact level trends

ISSUE	OBSERVED TRENDS (UP TO AND INCLUDING DURING REVIEW PERIOD)
Learning outcomes	
Changes/trends in **learning outcome**s (basic education) during period under review (by gender, by socio-economic group, by rural/urban locations)	n/a
Equity, gender equality and inclusion	
Changes in (i) **gross and (ii) net enrollment rates** (basic education including pre-primary) during review period (by gender, by socio-economic group, by rural/urban	The number of children enrolled in state preschool institutions increased from 74,448 in 2012 to 93,053 in 2017 (JSR 2019), and the number of children enrolled in ECE centers increased from 14,796 to 43,666 during the same period. According to UIS data, the ECE GER grew from 9.43 in 2012 to 9.91 in 2017. However, data from the EMIS shows an ECE GER of 10.6 percent in 2017. The ECE GER only counts children enrolled in state preschool institutions. The ECE gender parity index decreased from 0.90 to 0.87 between 2012 and 2017, indicating that the ECE GER is lower for girls than for boys. Finally, the ECE NER grew from 7.38 in 2012 to 8.42 in 2917 (UIS data). Between 2012 and 2017, the primary GER remained constant at 100.9, with the gender parity index improving slightly, from 0.98 to 0.99. The primary NER also underwent a very small improvement, growing from 98.1 to 98.3 between 2012 and 2017, with the gender parity index remaining at 0.99 (UIS data). Lower secondary GER grew from 94.7 in 2012 to 98.7 in 2017, with the gender parity index increasing from 0.94 to 0.97. The lower secondary NER improved slightly from 94.0 in 2012 to 97.8 in 2017 (UIS data). Data not available for upper secondary.
Changes in (i) **primary completion rate** and (ii) **lower secondary completion rate** (by gender)	The proportion of children who complete primary education decreased from 98.2 percent to 94.9 percent between 2012 and 2017. The adjusted parity index rate of the proportion of children completing primary education has increased from 0.98 to 1 during the same period. (UIS data). The proportion of children who complete lower secondary education increased from 86.4 percent to 96.2 percent between 2012 and 2017. The adjusted parity index rate of the proportion of children completing lower secondary education increased from 0.91 to 0.96 during the same period. (UIS data). Data not available for upper secondary.

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ISSUE	OBSERVED TRENDS (UP TO AND INCLUDING DURING REVIEW PERIOD)
Changes in **out of school rates** for (i) **primary** and (ii) **lower secondary**	Between 2012 and 2017, the number of OOSC of primary school age decreased from 5,662 to 4,181 and the proportion of OOSC of primary school age fell from 0.9 to 0.5 percent. The adjusted parity index rate of out-of-school children remained above 1 (from 1.48 in 2014 to 1.50 in 2016), indicating that the out-of-school rate is higher for girls than for boys. (UIS data). Data not available for lower secondary.
Changes in the **distribution of out of school children** (girls/boys; children with/without disability; ethnic, geographic, urban/rural and/or economic backgrounds depending on data availability)	Data not available
Changes in **transition rates** from primary to lower secondary education (by gender, by socio-economic group)	The effective transition rate from primary to lower secondary increased slightly from 99.03 percent in 2013 to 99.49 percent in 2016. The gender parity index of the transition rate remained at 0.99 between 2013 and 2016 (UIS data).
Changes in **dropout and/or repetition** rates (depending on data availability) for (i) primary, (ii) lower-secondary education	The 4th grade dropout rate fell from 1.6 to 1.0 percent between 2013 and 2016 (UIS data). Between 2013 and 2016, the 4th grade repetition rate increased slightly, from 0.04 to 0.08 percent (UIS data).