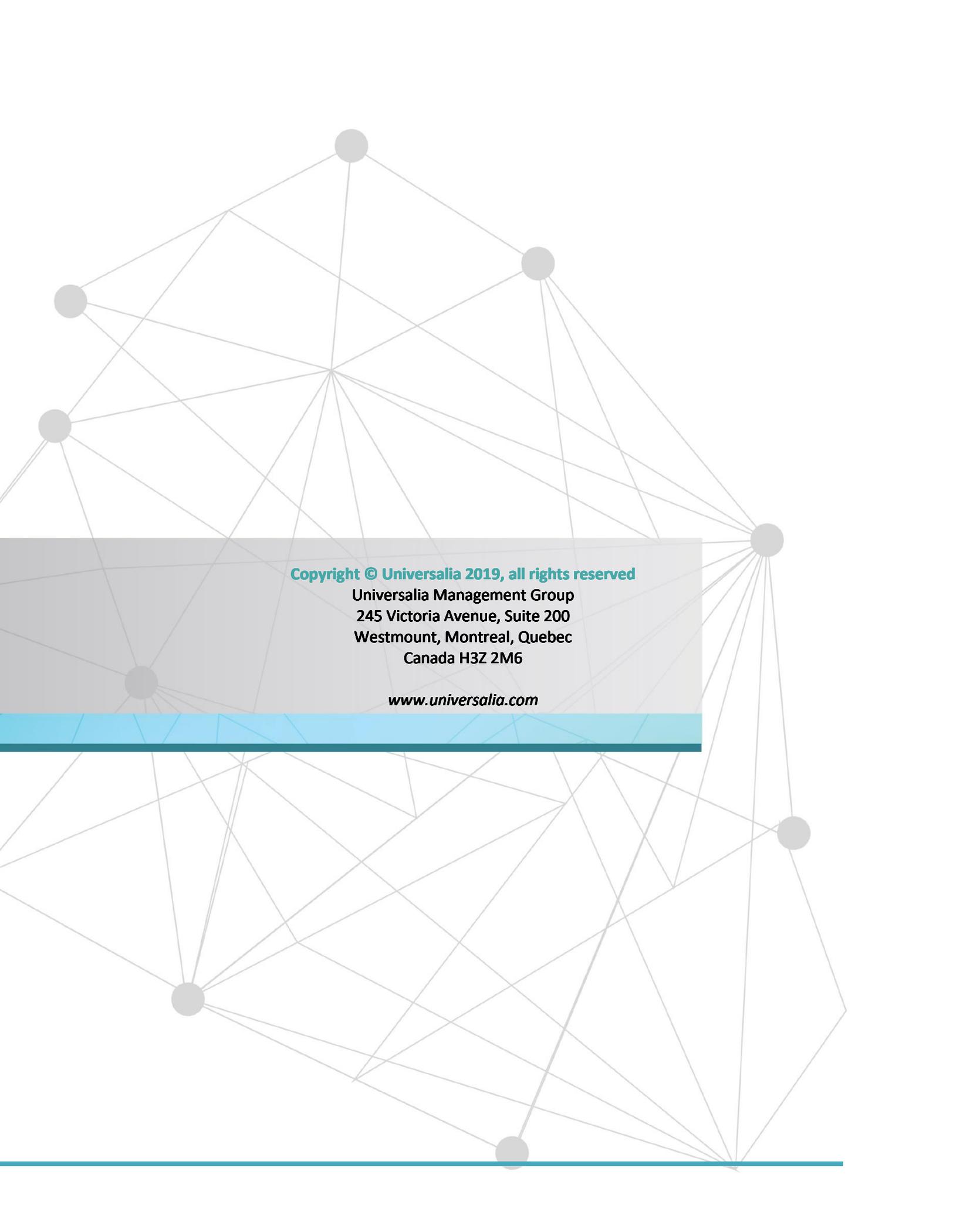


Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-Level Support to Education

Batch 5, Country 17: Kyrgyz Republic

EVALUATION REPORT (FINAL) | FEBRUARY 2020





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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AKF	Aga Khan Foundation
AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
CBK	Community-Based Kindergarten
CEATM	Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods
CFPR	Centralized Fund for Poverty Reduction
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
DPCC	Donor Partnership Coordination Council
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EDI	Early Development Index
EGMA	Early Grade Math Assessment
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GIR	Gross Intake Rate
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GNI	Gross National Income
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HDI	Human Development Index

HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IER	Internal Efficiency Rate
KAE	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
KGS	Kyrgyz Som (National Currency of the Kyrgyz Republic)
LSG	Local Self-Government (municipality)
LMIC	Lower Middle-Income Country
ME	Ministry of Economy
MICS	Multi-Cluster Indicators survey
MOES	Ministry of Education and Science
MF	Ministry of Finance
MLSD	Ministry of Labour and Social Development
NEET	Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSBA	National Sample Based Assessment of Student Achievements
NSC	National Statistical Committee
NTC	National Testing Center
OOSC	Out of School Children
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
OSI	Open Society Institute
ORF	Oral Reading Fluency
ORT	<i>Obsherespublikanskoe testirovanie</i> ” (ORT), University admission testing modelled on the American SAT
PCR	Primary Completion Rate
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPE	Primary Professional Education
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results

SPE	Secondary Professional Education
STR	Student-Teacher Ratio
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations' Children's Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States dollar (\$)
WB	World Bank

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 <i>motivation</i> (political will, social norms, habitual processes), <i>opportunity</i> (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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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 July 2019 and November 2019 and covered GPE support from 2012 to 2019. It draws on document, database and literature review, as well as on consultations with a total of 40 governmental, multilateral, bilateral, and non-governmental stakeholders in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Education in the Kyrgyz Republic

The Kyrgyz Republic, also known as Kyrgyzstan, is a landlocked country located in Central Asia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Kyrgyz Republic attained independence in 1991 and has since experienced political turbulence in its transition towards a democratic system. As of July 2019, Kyrgyzstan's total population reached 6.4 million, a third of whom are children under 15 years of age, with an annual growth rate of 1.9 percent. In 2014, Kyrgyzstan was officially reclassified as a low-middle-income country by the World Bank, as its GNI per capita increased from US\$ 1,040 in 2012 to US\$ 1,200 in 2013. As of 2016, 25.4 percent of the population living

under the national poverty line of US\$ 3.20 a day, with only 1.5 percent of the population below the World Bank's extreme poverty line of US\$1.90 (2011 PPP US\$) a day. From 1994 to 2017, the Kyrgyz Republic's annual GDP growth rate averaged 3.95 percent.

The Kyrgyz Republic's Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) plans, regulates, and oversees general, higher, and technical education at the national level, and is responsible for developing sector planning documents.

The education system is composed of three main sub-systems, namely pre-school education, general education (covering primary and secondary), and post-secondary education (provided by vocational schools, specialized technical schools, and universities). In 2019, there were a total of 1.4 million school-aged children from ages 3 to 18, which accounts for roughly 22.3 percent of the country's population, with 1.38 million children enrolled in schools from pre-primary to upper secondary levels.

Since 2007, the Kyrgyz Republic's education sector has been guided by two Education Development Strategies (EDS), covering the periods 2007-2010 and 2012-2020 (EDS 2020). EDS 2020 was accompanied by three-year action plans. **This evaluation focuses on the period covered by the 2012-2020 Education Development Strategy (EDS 2020), which includes the process of developing the 2021-2030 EDS through November of 2019. It also coincides with the period covered by the most recent, completed GPE ESPIG (2014-2017).**

GPE in the Kyrgyz Republic

The Kyrgyz Republic joined GPE in 2006 and is represented on the Board through the Eastern Europe, Middle East and Central Asia constituency. Since joining GPE, the Kyrgyz Republic has received six grants from GPE: one Education Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG), two Program Development Grants (PDG), and three Education Sector Plan

Implementation Grants (ESPIG), one of which was through FTI. As of 2017, the Kyrgyz Republic was no longer eligible to receive traditional ESPIG funding (i.e., with a fixed part and a variable part), a determination made by the GPE Board using a needs-based allocation formula. However, the Kyrgyz Republic remains eligible for GPE Multiplier funding, for which it is currently preparing an application. This evaluation covers the 2014-2017 ESPIG, which was provided as project support of US\$ 12.7 million.

GPE contributions to sector planning

State of sector planning in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2012-2019

Although the 2012-2020 EDS met four out of seven GPE quality standards for Education Sector Plans, this did not reach the minimum (five out of seven) required by GPE. In light of a turbulent political context, EDS 2020 was still considered a credible plan and was endorsed by development partners. EDS 2030 is still in draft form and has not yet been rated by GPE, externally appraised, or endorsed by partners. Preliminary analysis based on the draft plan shows some improvements in strategic nature, evidence use and attention to disparities, but deterioration in terms of achievability.

Participatory processes involving formal consultations with donor partners, government ministries, CSOs, and school representatives, were used to develop both EDS 2020 and EDS 2030. While there were some improvements over the EDS 2020 planning process in the availability of evidence to inform EDS 2030, evidence is still not consistently used to inform planning. MOES stakeholders expressed that sector planning has strong government ownership, while donor views on government ownership, especially of EDS 2030, were mixed,

especially in light of reductions in the Ministry's strategic planning capacity.

The 2012-2020 EDS centered on the overall goal of equal access to quality education. While the MOES originally intended to extend EDS 2020 to 2022, to align with a new National Sustainable Development Strategy approved in 2018, in 2019, the Ministry decided to develop a new EDS for the period 2021-2030. In 2018, in coordination with the MOES, the World Bank had begun to draft a six-year plan for the years 2021-2026, which was ultimately folded into the ten-year EDS 2030. The draft of EDS 2030 takes the same goal as EDS 2020, adding to it a focus on efficient use of resources in the education system.

Despite the strengths noted above, education sector planning in the Kyrgyz Republic has faced several challenges in the 2021-2030 EDS development process, which include weaker central strategic planning capacity than during the previous planning cycle due to key MOES departures; an inadequate evidence base to inform sector planning and management; a rushed timeline for EDS 2030 development; and a less achievable draft three-year action plan, with some priorities that are not yet resourced. These challenges may negatively affect government ownership (due to greater reliance on consultants, instead of Ministry staff, for planning) and the extent to which evidence and lessons from past plan implementation are incorporated.

GPE contributions

During the 2012-2019 period, **GPE's BELDS programme** is supporting the MOES to incorporate ECCE needs and priorities into EDS 2030 and to build ECCE capacity. **GPE's Secretariat support** helped the MOES and development partners consolidate the six-year and ten-year planning processes into one MOES-led process. **GPE's ESPDG funding** supported the development of an education sector analysis and two other analyses, however it is unclear to what

extent they informed planning. It also supported planning, though much of the available funding supported the six-year plan development, with **PDG funding** allocated to support the 10-year plan. **GPE’s ESPIG funding requirement 1** (credible, endorsed plan) provided an incentive for partners to develop a quality EDS 2030 that would help secure MF-ESPIG resources.

Implications for GPE

For the MOES, political and practical considerations often superseded concerns over technical quality during the sector planning experience. In this context, and in a state of diminished strategic planning capacity within MOES, it is not surprising that GPE support was not utilized to maximum effect. This experience raises questions about GPE’s definition of plan quality, which could be broadened to include, alongside technical quality, the political and operational relevance, of planning processes and documents.

GPE contributions to sector dialogue and monitoring

State of sector dialogue and monitoring in the Kyrgyz Republic

The Kyrgyz Republic has increasingly active and inclusive education sector dialogue mechanisms, centered around the Development Partners Coordinating Committee (DPCC), Public Advisory Councils, a National Project Steering Committee, and thematic working groups to input into the EDS development process, which meet regularly at varying frequencies. The membership of these groups include representatives from the MOES and Parliament, donors, and CSO and school representatives.

Existing sector dialogue facilitates the exchange of information between development partners and alignment of their programming with the EDS. Stakeholders noted shortcomings, however, in relation to a focus on information-sharing instead of collaboration and problem-solving, limited representation from within MOES, more donor leadership than MOES leadership, fragmentation of different stakeholder groups across separate dialogue fora, inadequate inclusion of NGOs and CSOs, and inadequate representation of provincial and local-level actors.

The Kyrgyz Republic lacks an institutionalized mechanism for sector monitoring, with no functioning EMIS and a lack of regular, annual Joint Sector Reviews. Existing data collection systems are split between MOES tracking of EDS and action plan indicators, financial data collected by the Ministry of Finance, some learning outcome data collected by testing institutions, and donor data collection, using their own indicators, on specific projects and programs. While the MOES does report on sector performance based on the percentage of indicators achieved under each three-year action plan, donor stakeholders have pointed to a number of issues with this reporting system in terms of robustness, comprehensiveness, continuity, and inadequate baseline measures, among others.

GPE contributions

During the 2012-2019 period, GPE has integrated into the Kyrgyz Republic’s pre-existing dialogue body, the DPCC, consolidating a separate LEG into this group. **The GPE coordinating agency, UNCIEF, also serves as DPCC co-chair and provided strong leadership for sector dialogue** during the latter part of the review period. **GPE’s 2014-2017 ESPIG also supported the use of two assessment tools**, which informed MOES decisions on preschool curriculum and teacher training. **GPE guidelines for ESP development have also contributed modestly** to improved donor coordination and

greater attention to equity and inclusion issues, and **GPE country lead guidance** in 2019 has helped clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations in the context of GPE as a partnership, contributing to mutual accountability.

Implications for GPE

Overall, the Kyrgyz Republic's sector dialogue and monitoring mechanisms have historically been fragmented, with different groups of stakeholders participating in different dialogue bodies and using disparate measurement frameworks to track progress. This limits GPE's ability to influence dialogue and monitoring inclusiveness and effectiveness. The absence of a shared monitoring framework and regular Joint Sector Reviews present areas of potential impact for future GPE support.

GPE contributions to sector financing

State of sector financing in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2012-2019

Domestic financing for education in the Kyrgyz Republic has remained at around nineteen percent of total government expenditure for over a decade, with absolute amounts rising steadily since 2010. Although annual nominal increases in education expenditures are positive, they may not be on pace to address the growing needs of the sector, which faces growth in the number of school-aged children. Estimates of domestic financing coverage of EDS 2020 costs were not available at the time of the evaluation. Recurrent expenditure as a percentage of total education spending declined from 90 percent in 2013 to 82 percent in 2016, although absolute recurrent spending increased. Greater capital expenditures on food and energy drove an overall increase in the general education budget.

During the evaluation period, Government expenditure on pre-primary education as a share of total education spending increased, as the share of primary and secondary spending decreased from 62 percent in 2013 to 56 percent in 2017, still exceeding GPE's recommended allocation of 45 percent of total government education expenditure. Higher education expenditure as a share of total education spending remained at 13 percent on average between 2013 and 2017.

The decentralized nature of the education sector in the Kyrgyz Republic contributed to significant challenges in public expenditure tracking, with no accurate data on budget execution rates available for the evaluation period.

Although the overall volume of donor funding to the Kyrgyz Republic's education sector fluctuated between 2011 and 2015, **aid to education has increased since 2016, a signal that the country's reclassification from low to lower middle income has not affected ODA volume for the sector. Gross ODA disbursements to education rose from US\$ 16.4m in 2013 to US \$27.7m in 2017.** Although donor partners expressed a desire to establish a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) to education during the early years of the review period, this did not materialize, due to donor preferences to maintain control over the choice of funding modalities and the lack of a satisfactory fiduciary system and reliable monitoring mechanisms. Instead, external financing was provided through a mix of project support, sector budget support, and general budget support modalities. The MOES has a preference for direct project funding over general or sector budget support, given its limited ownership over funds provided through these modalities.

GPE contributions

GPE's 2014-2017 ESPIG grant significantly contributed to the amount of available pre-primary education financing in the Kyrgyz

Republic. 2014 to 2017 ESPIG funding of US \$12.7 million, while small in absolute terms, constituted nearly 90 percent of funding to the sub-sector. It also helped catalyze domestic financing, with an MOES commitment to fund teacher salaries and infrastructure costs for new kindergartens and preschools established through the ESPIG. The \$12.7m ESPIG, combined with a 2011-2012 ESPIG of \$5.9m, accounted for 13 percent of all international financing disbursements to education. The ESPIGs also used MOES's preferred modality of project support.

GPE's advocacy and funding requirements have had no observable influence on the volume of domestic resources dedicated to education. Given the Kyrgyz Republic's historically high government budget allocation to education, there was no evidence that GPE's advocacy or requirements had influenced the Government's budget allocation decisions.

There was no evidence that GPE catalyzed additional international financing. Donors cited their own strategies and national strategy documents as the most important factors in determining external financing to the sector.

While Kyrgyzstan is no longer eligible for traditional ESPIG funds, the Multiplier Fund is viewed as an important potential source of finance. However, stakeholders have cited that the heaviness of the multiplier application process may be disproportionate to the funds available

Implications for GPE

GPE's influence on sector financing in the Kyrgyz Republic comes primarily through its role as a fund, rather than as a partnership or Secretariat. GPE's model and theory of change do not provide clear guidance on what role, if any, it should play in the promotion of donor. Harmonization or moving toward a pooled fund or sector budget support.

GPE contributions to sector plan implementation

State of sector plan implementation in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2012-2019

As noted above, the MOES does not have a systematic approach to tracking the implementation of Education Development Strategies. Although progress against activity-level indicators set out in the APEDs is independently monitored and reported by the MoES, the monitoring process does not systematically track outcome-level indicators described in the EDS 2020. A new monitoring and evaluation framework introduced by MOES in 2016 has yet to be fully institutionalized. Thus, triangulating sources including the ESA, World Bank documents and donor evaluation reports indicates that the majority of actions outlined in the 2012-2020 EDS were delivered or partially delivered during the review period. Available data suggests that the MOES achieved 97 percent of the 290 indicators established in the 2020 EDS. However, as noted previously, the establishment of a SWAp did not materialize. More broadly, challenges during plan implementation included lower-than-predicted levels of domestic resources, lack of a common, reliable framework to track implementation progress, and capacity constraints, mainly at sub-national levels.

Examples of planned EDS activities that were largely achieved between 2012-2019 include pre-primary expansion and school readiness, a new primary curriculum, multilingual education, school modernization, per capita school funding mechanisms, national student assessments, a national qualification system, textbook publishing regulation, and financing and management reforms.

GPE contributions

During the period under review, the funds provided by GPE via the 2014-2017 US\$ 12.7 million ESPIG supported EDS implementation. The ESPIG represented 90 percent of all international financing and 9 percent of all financing to the pre-primary sub-sector over the same period. The **ESPIG Grant Agent** also provided value in managing the Kyrgyz Early Childhood Education Project (KEEP), providing technical assistance, and engaging with the government. A **2013 PDG grant of \$200k** supported the development of a program proposal for KEEP, a key input into the 2014-2017 ESPIG application package. **ESPIG financing to the KEEP project helped to expand coverage of the national school readiness program and increase enrollment in community-based kindergartens.**

Implications for GPE

GPE's contributions to pre-primary implementation reflect smooth integration into EDS-aligned efforts, as well as thoughtful targeting of the ESPIG to a specific sub-sector. While well-targeted to address a sub-sector area of need, for which there was strong political will and good implementation capacity, ESPIG support to pre-primary came at the expense of progress on other fronts, including developing a functioning EMIS.

In addition, GPE ESPIG support was channeled through a project implementation unit, which means that the **direct benefits of GPE Secretariat support were directed to a mechanism parallel to the MOES, potentially missing an opportunity to strengthen MOES capacity.**

Factors other than GPE contributions affecting change

Factors that positively influenced change in the above described areas included major EDS-aligned initiatives from development partners, such as: the Asian Development Bank's education system strengthening program; EU sector support; UNICEF support for multilingual education; USAID's work to improve reading skills; and the World Bank's support for teacher training, textbook provision, curriculum revision and assessment.

System level change

System level change

During the 2012-2019 period, the education system improved in terms of curricula, teaching and learning materials, and learning assessment. Changes include:

Access and equity

- **Increase in the number of preschool institutions** from 819 in 2012 to 1,296 in 2016
- **Modest increases in the number of general education schools**, from 2,168 schools in 2007 to 2,236 in 2016
- **An increase in government capital investment in school infrastructure** for preschool and general education of KGS 300 million and KGS 2 billion in 2017
- **Provisions to address low enrollment of children with special needs**, including development of an inclusive education policy, establishment of teacher training resource centers, and provision of specialized TLM

Quality

- **Improvements in primary textbook provision and quality**, including in textbook design, procurement, and delivery
- A **gender assessment of textbook content**
- An **improved policy framework on teacher development and management**
- The **development of new education standards**
- A **revised curriculum for Grades 5 – 9**

Sector Management

- **The introduction of Public Financial Management reforms, including a Medium-Term Budget Framework** to move to more strategic budget planning, and a Public Debt Management Strategy
- **Establishment of a framework for monitoring and evaluating policy implementation**
- **Piloting of an EMIS system**

Likely links between sector plan implementation and system level change

Sector plan implementation likely contributed to most of the noted system-level improvements in the Kyrgyz Republic. Development partners supported key areas of improvement, which were implemented in partnership with the MOES.

Implications for GPE

The linkages between EDS implementation and observed system-level changes in the Kyrgyz Republic support a key element of the GPE country-level Theory of Change, even in the absence of a high-quality EDS.

While EDS 2020 lacked technical strength, it was operationalized and implemented mostly as intended, raising the possibility that implementation quality may have mattered

more than plan quality. This reinforces the suggestion that GPE consider a broader definition of plan quality to include political and practical dimensions.

Learning outcomes and equity

Changes in learning outcomes, equity and gender equality

From 2012-2019, the Kyrgyz Republic made modest improvements in access to basic education. Despite some deterioration at the lower secondary level, overall system-level efficiency remains high.

- **Access improved.** Pre-primary enrollment increased from 106k children to 221k children between 2012 and 2017. Over the same period, primary enrollment grew from 405k to 501k, as did lower secondary enrollment from 481k to 497k.
- **Primary education remains relatively efficient**, with a high primary to lower secondary transition rate of 99 percent as well as a high primary completion rate of 99 percent.
- **Education efficiency remains high but decreased slightly at the secondary level**, with lower secondary dropout rates increasing from 0.70 percent in 2012 to 1.11 percent in 2016, and completion decreasing slightly from 96.7 percent to 95.7 percent from 2012 to 2014.
- **Gender equality has been achieved** (and remains stable) in primary and lower secondary enrollment.
- **Major regional and wealth disparities in ECD programmes persisted but narrowed** from 40.5 percent of children in urban areas and only 16 percent in rural areas enrolled in 2014, to 47

percent in urban areas and 35 percent in rural areas enrolled as of 2018.

- **Inadequate data is available to determine progress on access to education for the poorest children or children with special needs.**

The findings of the 2009, 2014, and 2017 National Sample-Based Assessment suggest that learning outcomes improved and learning disparities based on geography and language modestly decreased during the review period.

- Fourth grade students' learning outcomes improved between 2009 and 2017, with a decrease of nearly 10 percentage points in the number of children performing at “below basic” levels on reading comprehension. However, by 2017, nearly 60 percent of Grade 4 children still had not achieved minimum acceptable reading levels.

Likely links to observed system level changes

Strong progress in increased pre-primary enrollment and decreasing disparities in pre-primary access are likely linked to growth in the number of preschool institutions during the review period. Modest learning gains may be linked to a combination of wider textbook availability, teacher pedagogical training, and curricular changes.

There is **less evidence** that identified system-level changes contributed to steadily high levels of primary enrollment, increases in lower secondary enrollment, modest learning gains, or decreased geographic disparities in Grade 8 learning outcomes. For most system-level improvements related to quality and sector management, it is too soon to determine whether they have or will influence impact-level improvements.

Implications for GPE

GPE's theory of change implies that sector plan implementation and subsequent system-level changes will lead to improvements in equity, access and learning. However, the experience of the Kyrgyz Republic illustrates the lag between system-level and impact-level change.

Conclusions/ Overall observations

GPE contributions

During the 2012-2019 review period, GPE contributed to progress in Kyrgyz education sector reform primarily by supporting implementation through ESPIG funding to help expand access to and the quality of preschool education.

GPE's ESPIG funding provided substantial international financial to pre-primary education, and helped catalyze government commitment to fund pre-primary teacher salaries. However, GPE had little influence on the amount or quality of international financing.

The Coordinating Agency for GPE, which also serves as DPCC co-chair, made several notable contributions to sector dialogue by expanding inclusiveness and through consistent and transparent communication to DPCC members. There is little evidence of GPE influence in dialogue beyond the CA's contributions.

GPE contributions to sector monitoring and sector planning were less tangible. Beyond a clarifying Secretariat visit in March 2019, stakeholders felt that planning processes and plan quality would not look meaningfully different in the absence of GPE. While ESPDG funding supported an education sector analysis and two other analyses, it is unclear how well they informed planning, and annual JSRs and a comprehensive monitoring framework are still absent.

Emerging good practice

The Kyrgyz Republic experienced a positive evolution of dialogue mechanisms. Originally, a local education group was set up separately from the DPCC, but was eventually merged with it to create efficiencies. In addition, DPCC meeting frequency improved and a National Project Steering Committee was formed to provide cross-cutting, instead of project-by-project, Parliamentary oversight. Such changes reflect how dialogue mechanisms can evolve to ensure they are fit-for-purpose.

Stakeholders chose to direct ESPIG funds in a targeted way, which, backed by political will and strong implementation, yielded progress in the pre-primary sub-sector. The targeted use of ESPIG funds implied a tradeoff in not dedicating GPE resources to other major systemic gaps, but suggests developing country partners could consider targeting ESPIG investments, especially when issues have adequate political will and implementation capacity to facilitate progress.

The GPE Secretariat demonstrated flexibility in applying GPE's model in-country. Although the EDS 2020 did not meet GPE criteria, it was still considered as having met the ESPIG requirement of a credible, endorsed plan. GPE also supported the strengthening of an existing dialogue body, the DPCC, instead of creating a separate LEG. GPE also flexibly provided PDG funds, which are not typically used to support planning, for EDS 2030 and the ESA.

Strategic Questions for GPE

- 1) In light of limited influence on sector plan development processes, **does GPE's theory of change depend upon country stakeholders perceiving ESPIG funding to be sufficiently large as to incentivize them to closely follow GPE's standards for sector planning?**
- 2) **Should GPE revisit its definition of a high-quality, credible education sector plan?**

What place is there, if any, for political and operational relevance in GPE's definition of plan quality? Especially in situations where government planning capacity is weak, how should GPE weigh the importance of a plan's technical quality versus its political and operational relevance?

- 3) **How can GPE minimize the negative impacts of Secretariat turnover on developing partner countries' understanding of GPE as a partnership and of sector planning requirements in particular?**
- 4) **In the face of uncertainty about planning timelines, how can GPE support developing country partners to decide whether to initiate GPE support for planning or wait to engage it? How can GPE funding mechanisms be pivoted to meet country needs, as was done with PDG funding to support planning in the Kyrgyz Republic?**
- 5) **How can GPE most effectively sensitize and support country stakeholders to regularly carry out annual comprehensive review and planning exercises and encourage the establishment and regular use of ongoing monitoring mechanisms?**
- 6) **Can GPE strike an appropriate balance between rigor and ease of its application processes, especially for countries only eligible for Multiplier Funding and not traditional ESPIG funding?**
- 7) **To what extent should GPE support mechanisms such as project implementation units (instead of ministries directly) to accomplish the dual aims of improving outcomes while building national capacity?**

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.¹⁰ 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 Kyrgyz Republic, is part of a larger GPE study that comprises a total of 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.¹¹ The Kyrgyz Republic was selected as one of 20 summative CLE countries based on sampling criteria described in the study's inception report.¹² 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.¹³

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.

¹⁰ Global Partnership for Education (2016): GPE 2020. Improving learning and equity through stronger education systems. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/gpe-2020-strategic-plan>.

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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

¹³ 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 the Kyrgyz Republic (GoKR), of other in-country partners and stakeholders, or of specific GPE grants.

The core review period for this CLE runs from the start of the 2012-2020 Education Development Strategy (EDS) to the present development of the 2021-2030 EDS, as of September 2019. The CLE therefore includes one ESPIG which fell under the 2012-2020 EDS, two PDGs (2013 and 2017), one ESPDG, and the Kyrgyz Republic's application for GPE Multiplier funds.

1.2 Methodology overview

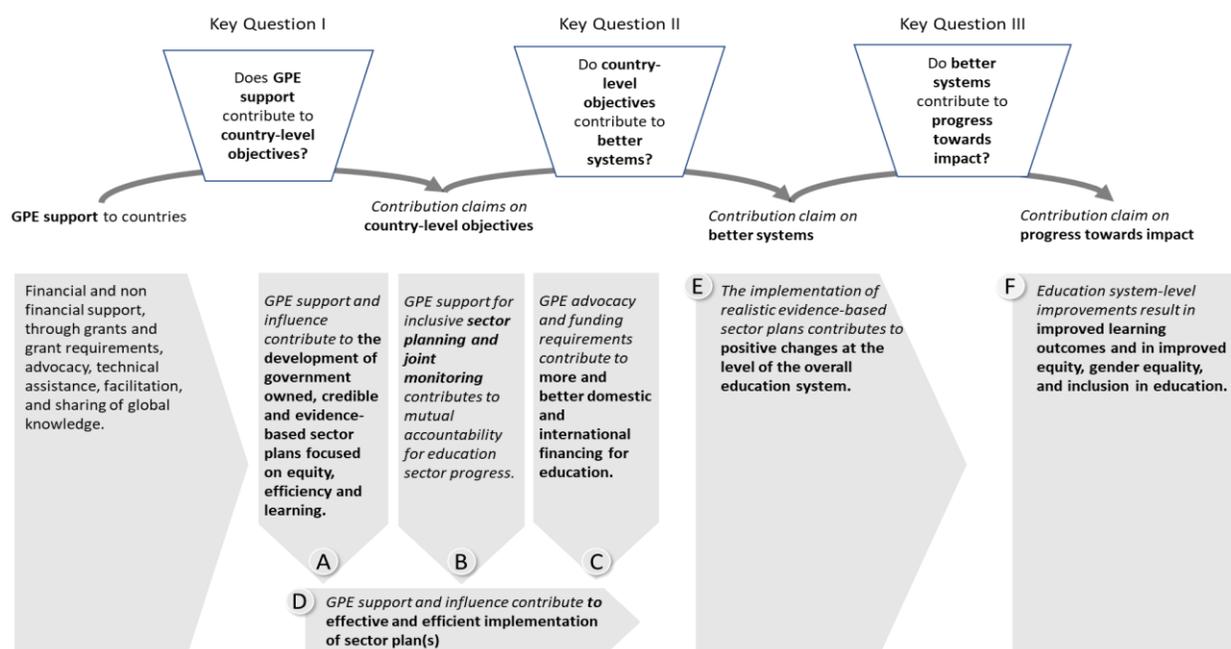
4. The guiding frameworks for the evaluation are the evaluation matrix (Appendix I) and the country-level theory of change for the Kyrgyz Republic (Appendix II).¹⁴ A brief summary of the CLE methodology is provided in Appendix III of this report. For further details, please refer to the final Inception Report for the overall assignment (January 2018).

5. For the Kyrgyz Republic CLE, the evaluation team consulted a total of 40 stakeholders from the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and its agencies, from bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, from civil society and non-governmental organizations, from the GPE Secretariat, and from other backgrounds (see Appendix V for a list of consulted stakeholders). Most of these stakeholders were consulted in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic between July 2 and 12, 2019, while the remainder were consulted by phone shortly before or after the country visit. The evaluation team also reviewed a wide range of relevant documents, databases, 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.

¹⁴ This country-specific ToC was adapted from the generic country-level ToC that was developed in the assignment Inception Report.

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. Limitations of this evaluation are listed in the Appendix III Methodology. It is important, however, to state the implications of these limitations on the analysis and report.

9. First, the timing of the evaluation was such that the Kyrgyz Republic had not completed the implementation of its 2012-2020 Education Development Strategy, or the 2019 planning cycle for the 2021-2030 Education Development Strategy. As noted in Section 3.2, a final version of EDS 2030, and GPE’s ratings of the new plan’s quality, were not yet available at the time of the evaluation. This limits the evaluators’ ability to make a full judgment with regard to whether and how GPE contributed to the development of a government-owned, credible and evidence-based sector plan. However, the evaluators have reviewed the November 2019 EDS 2030 draft, and compared it against EDS 2020 to identify discernible changes in plan quality at this draft stage, offering preliminary judgments on this basis in Section 3.2. These findings should, however, be viewed with some caution, as neither a final draft of EDS 2030, nor the independent appraisal of the plan, as required by GPE’s quality assurance process, became available before the finalization of this country-level evaluation.

10. Second, the absence of both a monitoring framework for the sector that is shared by MOES and partners, as well as a regular, annual Joint Sector Review, means that while data from UIS, the country’s National Statistical Committee, learning assessments, and other sources are used to report outcome data throughout the evaluation, data on activities, inputs and outputs were limited. When such data existed, they were often not comparable to other sources, and in many cases, were not accessible to the evaluators.

This limited availability of activity, input, and output data creates specific limitations for this evaluation, given the intent to assess contribution claims related to the effectiveness and efficiency of sector plan implementation. As a result, the evaluation team was not able to complete Appendix VII: Progress on 2012-2020 EDS implementation, which has been left blank. However, the evaluators have attempted to mitigate this limitation by using data from the 2018 ESA, donor evaluation reports, and the November 2019 draft of the EDS 2030, which reviews progress made in the sector, to review implementation progress in Section 3.5.

1.3 Structure of the report

11. Following this introduction, **Section 2** gives an overview of the national context of the Kyrgyz Republic, with a focus on the education sector (section 2.2), and on 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; to mutual accountability in the education sector through inclusive policy dialogue and sector monitoring; to education sector plan implementation; and to domestic and international education sector financing.
13. **Section 4** discusses education system-level changes in the Kyrgyz Republic during the period under review (2012-2019), as well as any likely links between these changes and the four areas of changes discussed in section 3 (sectoral planning, mutual accountability, financing, and plan implementation).
14. **Section 5** presents an overview of the impact-level changes in terms of learning, equity, gender equality and inclusion observable in the Kyrgyz Republic 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 regards to the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of GPE's country level theory of change (ToC) and of its country-level operational model.

2 Context

2.1 Overview of Kyrgyz Republic

16. The Kyrgyz Republic, also known as Kyrgyzstan, is a landlocked country located in Central Asia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Kyrgyz Republic attained independence in 1991 and experienced years of political turbulence as it transitioned towards a democratic system. Widespread dissatisfaction with high poverty rates, widening socioeconomic disparities, a slow economic recovery process, and government corruption led to the Tulip Revolution of 2005, which installed a new government.¹⁵ However, the country's dire economic situation and low living standards were exacerbated by the global financial crisis of 2008, which reduced the country's GDP growth from 8.42 percent to -0.472 percent in 2010.¹⁶ In the same year, rising social tensions and anti-corruption protests precipitated another coup and fomented violent ethnic clashes and civil unrest, resulting in the deaths of over 400 people, widespread internal displacement, heavy infrastructural damages, and a negatively impacted investment climate.¹⁷

17. Over the next decade, Kyrgyzstan has successfully restabilized its GDP growth, which reached a peak of 4.7 percent in the first half of 2019. It also reduced the share of the population living below the national poverty line from 40 percent in 2006 to 25.6 percent in 2017, raising the GNI per capita to US \$3317 (2011 PPP).¹⁸ The three economic activities accounting for the largest share of employment include the agricultural sector, wholesale and retail trade, and manufacturing.¹⁹ In 2014, Kyrgyzstan was officially reclassified as a low-middle-income country by the World Bank. Despite a peaceful transition of power in the last election cycle, the country continues to experience political turmoil amid recent allegations against the ex-President of corruption, an attempted coup, and murder.

18. As of July 2019, Kyrgyzstan's total population reached 6.4 million, a third of whom are children under 15 years of age, with an annual growth rate of 1.9 percent.²⁰ The country currently holds a Human Development Index (HDI) score of 0.672, which places it in the medium human development category and corresponds with a rank of 122 out of 189 countries.²¹ Although the average life expectancy at birth has risen to 71 years (a 4.8-year increase) between 1990 and 2017, Kyrgyzstan's infant mortality stands at 14.8 deaths per 1,000 people – almost three times higher than the total mortality rate.²² The total fertility rate in 2017 was 3 births per woman.²³ During the same period, mean years of schooling has also increased from

¹⁵ Agadjanian, Victor, and Evgenia Gorina. "Economic Swings, Political Instability and Migration in Kyrgyzstan". *European Journal of Population* vol. 35,2 285-304. 20 March, 2018.

¹⁶ World Bank. World Development Indicators. (2019).

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=KG>

¹⁷ Agadjanian, Victor, and Evgenia Gorina. "Economic Swings, Political Instability and Migration in Kyrgyzstan".

¹⁸ World Bank, Poverty and Equity Data Portal. <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/KGZ>

¹⁹ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. "Open Data". (accessed August 2019).

<http://www.stat.kg/en/opendata/>

²⁰ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic.

²¹ United Nations Development Programme. "Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update, Kyrgyzstan".

²² National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic.

²³ World Bank. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=KG>

8.6 years in 1990 to 10.9 years in 2017 and the literacy rate for individuals 15 years and older is near universal at 99.24 percent.²⁴ In 2017, the gross enrolment ratio of primary and lower secondary students exceeded 100 percent, but this rate is much lower at the pre-primary, upper secondary, and tertiary levels (39 percent, 83 percent, and 44 percent, respectively).²⁵ Kyrgyzstan has also made significant progress between 2011 and 2012 when it reduced the number of out-of-school children from 20,018 to 6,137 children (less than 1 percent of the school-aged population). However, these figures have remained stagnant over the past six years and 6,773 school-aged children remain excluded from the education system.²⁶ According to UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), no significant correlations were observed between out-of-school children and mother's education, socioeconomic background, or region. MICS data also point to a sharp decrease in upper secondary attendance rates for the 15-17 age range.²⁷

19. The Government of Kyrgyzstan aims to implement a number of social and economic reforms at the national and local levels through the Kyrgyz Republic's National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) "Zhany Doorgo – Kyrk Kadam" (40 Steps to the New Era) 2018-2040.²⁸ This strategic plan succeeds the 2013-2017 National Sustainable Development Strategy, which broadly prioritized relying on the country's own resources, ensuring rule of law, and ensuring unity.²⁹ The NSDS 2013-2017 also includes a chapter on reform of the education and science system, which prioritized improving the quality of human capital and ensuring competitiveness and economic prosperity, and focused on the preschool and secondary school subsectors. The 2018-2040 NSSD will institute 9 development programs and 9 reform programs to boost investments and exports as well as diversifying economic activities; develop robust physical and IT infrastructures; reform public institutions and electoral processes; institute high-quality science and education systems; and promote civic integration through language and culture initiatives. The government has already established the Agency for Promotion and Protection of Investments of the Kyrgyz Republic, which has a mandate to implement Zhany Doorgo Kyrk Kadam policies aimed at improving the investment climate and supporting agricultural and industrial production. These actions are part of Kyrgyzstan's continued efforts to transition away from its former Soviet-style economic planning and to support the private sector as its main driver of economic growth.³⁰

²⁴ United Nations Development Programme Human Development Indicators. "Kyrgyzstan".

²⁵ UNESCO Institute for Statistics Open Data. "Kyrgyzstan." <http://uis.unesco.org/country/KG>

²⁶ UNESCO Institute for Statistics Open Data. "Kyrgyzstan." <http://uis.unesco.org/country/KG>

²⁷ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF. "Kyrgyzstan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014, Final Report". Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF.

²⁸ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. "Zhany Doorgo – Kyrk Kadam: Forty Steps to the New Future". http://www.oda.go.kr/opo/cmcd/comm/downloadFile.do?P_STRE_FILE_NM=F0BC7A92-177D-8A5D-B73E-92148156553E.pdf.

²⁹ National Council for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic, "National Sustainable Development Strategy for the Kyrgyz Republic, 2013-2017." https://www.un-page.org/files/public/kyrgyz_national_sustainable_development_strategy.pdf

³⁰ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the World Bank. "Climate Investment Programme: Operational Framework for Managing and Accessing Climate Finance in the Kyrgyz Republic", May 2018. https://www.climateinvestmentfunds.org/sites/cif_enc/files/ppcr_strategic_program_for_climate_resilience_for_kyrgyz_republic_final.pdf

2.2 Education sector in the Kyrgyz Republic

20. The Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic and the 1992 Law on Education are the foundational documents that established the vision, policies, and organizational structure of the education system. The primary principles outlined in Article 3 of the Law on Education include: education as a right for all Kyrgyz citizens; free and compulsory education for the first nine years of schooling; education provided in four languages (Kyrgyz, Russian, Tajik, and Uzbek); meeting international standards and achieving scientific progress; equality of access; and an emphasis on humanistic and secular values.³¹

21. Under the latest National Development Strategy for 2018-2040 (Zhany Doorgo), the government affirms its priority to achieve universal access to high-quality education, stating: “Decent, safe and productive work, well-deserved remuneration, justice in access to public education and health care are the cornerstones of social policy of the state.” The plan further details activities aimed toward strengthening the education system, such as: increasing investments in early childhood development and care to achieve country-wide coverage of pre-school education; enhancing the quality of vocational training and higher education; creating more school-to-work linkages; improving the efficiency of public allocations; and redefining the state’s role as a regulator rather than a major education service provider.

22. The Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) acts as the main administrative body for the sector, housing both the Kyrgyz Academy of Education (whose role is to develop curricula and learning materials for all grade levels) and the National Institute for Raising the Qualifications of Teachers and Teacher Training. The MOES holds responsibility for multiple system functions, including: education policy and implementation; development of sector strategies, education standards, curriculum, and examination procedures; teacher training; data collection and monitoring; ensuring equal access between regions; administering national education institutions at the postsecondary level; and international cooperation.³²

23. Kyrgyzstan’s education system consists of pre-school education, general education (covering primary and secondary schools), and post-secondary education (provided by vocational schools, specialized technical schools, and universities). Pre-school education is provided by nurseries for children under 3 and kindergartens, orphanages, child development centres and pro-gymnasiums for children between 3–7 years of age. General education consists of primary (grades 1–4), lower secondary (grades 5–9), and upper secondary education (grades 10–11). While pre-primary and upper secondary education are non-compulsory, nine years of primary and lower secondary education are mandatory. After graduating from lower secondary school, students have the option to complete upper secondary or receive vocational education. Primary vocational education for lower secondary graduates is governed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and is provided by technical colleges and professional lyceums. Secondary vocational education for upper secondary graduates offers programmes through technicums – institutions sponsored by various government bodies such as MOES, MLSP, Ministry of Health, and the State Commission on Culture. Higher education is provided by universities, academies, and specialized institutes that offer different degrees of varying duration.³³

³¹ International Bureau of Education, UNESCO. “World Data on Education: Kyrgyz Republic”, August 2011.

³² International Bureau of Education, UNESCO. “World Data on Education: Kyrgyz Republic”, August 2011.

³³ International Bureau of Education, UNESCO. “World Data on Education: Kyrgyz Republic”, August 2011; UNICEF. “All Children in School by 2015. Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children. Kyrgyzstan Country Study”, 2012.

Table 2.1 Official school age, by level³⁴

LEVEL AND GRADE	AGE GROUP (IN YEARS)	CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE	STUDENTS IN SCHOOL	ENROLLMENTS (AS A PERCENT OF AGE GROUP)
Pre-primary	3 – 6	566,169	221,803	39.2
Primary	7 – 10	489,849	501,011	102.3
Lower Secondary	11 – 15	485,689	497,542	102.4
Upper Secondary	16 – 17	189,302	162,521	85.9
Total:	-	1,731,009	1,382,877	79.9

24. Based on the most recent data available from UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSCKR), the country’s education system includes the following:

- Children of school age:** According to the NSCKR, the total number of school-aged children (between the ages of 3–18) was 1,424,529 in 2019, which accounts for roughly 22.3 percent of Kyrgyzstan’s population.³⁵ UIS data, as presented in Table 2.1 above, suggests the school-age population is even higher at 1,731,009 students based on 2017 and 2018 statistics, representing a 27 percent share of the total population.³⁶
- Students in school:** In 2017, UIS reported a total number of 221,803 students enrolled in pre-primary institutions and 1,161,074 students enrolled in general education schools. Private schools accounted for only 2.88 percent, 1.67 percent, 2.72 percent, and 5.73 percent of enrollment in pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary education, respectively.³⁷ While both NSCKR and UIS data show a high percentage of students attending public institutions, the two sources differ in the total number of students and distribution of enrollment by level of education.³⁸
- Schools:** As of 2018, there were 1,497 pre-schools, 2,265 general education schools, and 51 higher education institutions, of which 88.5 percent, 95 percent, and 66.7 percent are operated by the state, respectively, with 475 total private schools across all levels (or 8 percent of all educational institutions).³⁹ Within the general education level, 130 are elementary, 195 are junior/basic secondary, and 1,922 are upper secondary schools.⁴⁰
- Teachers:** In 2018, a total of 7,694 teachers were employed in pre-school institutions, 77,639 teachers were employed in general education schools (96% of whom work in state-owned institutions), and

³⁴ UNESCO Institute for Statistics Open Data. “Kyrgyzstan.” <http://uis.unesco.org/country/KG>

³⁵ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic.

³⁶ UNESCO Institute for Statistics Open Data. “Kyrgyzstan.” <http://uis.unesco.org/country/KG>

³⁷ UNESCO Institute for Statistics Open Data. “Kyrgyzstan.” <http://uis.unesco.org/country/KG>

³⁸ NSCKR statistics indicate over one million students enrolled in upper secondary school (Grades 10-11) in 2018, while UIS data lists 162,521 students enrolled in upper secondary school in 2017.

³⁹ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic.

⁴⁰ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic.

11,665 teachers were employed in higher educational institutions.⁴¹ No data is readily available on the percentage of trained and/or qualified teachers in educational institutions.

25. Since 2007, the Kyrgyz Republic's education sector has been guided by education sector plans (ESP) which identify and guide implementation of sector priorities over a specified period. Two plans, known as Education Development Strategies (EDS), have been approved, with the first covering the period of 2007-2010 and the second covering 2012-2020 (known as EDS 2020). Since 2018, MOES has been in the process of developing a third education sector plan covering the years 2021 to 2030 (EDS 2030), with an anticipated finalization date of March 2020. MOES operationalizes its sector plans through three-year action plans for educational development (APEDs), which describe the short- and medium-term activities to be carried out in executing education sector plans. This evaluation focuses on the period covered by the 2012-2020 Education Development Strategy, and includes the process of developing the 2021-2030 EDS, up to November of 2019. Table 2.2 provides an overview of the review period and the main policies, plans, and GPE grants in the Kyrgyz Republic between 2010 and 2020.

Table 2.2 *Timeline of key policy documents in the Kyrgyz education sector, 2012-2019*

CATEGORY	PRE 2010	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	POST 2020
Review Period				Review period for this CLE: 2012-2019									
National policies				National Sustainable Development Strategy 2013 - 2017					National Sustainable Development Strategy 2018 - 2040				
Sector plans	2007 – 2010 Education Development Strategy												
	Annually updated three-year operational plans			2012 – 2014 APED				2016 – 2017 APED		2018 – 2020 APED			
				2012-2020 Education Development Strategy									
													2021 – 2030 EDS
Joint Sector Reviews									•			•	
GPE Grants	FTI 2007-10, 8.99m		ESPIG 2011-2012, 5.9m			ESPIG 2014-2018, 12.7m							
					PDG, 200k				PDG, 400k				
									ESPDG, 500k				
									Multiplier Fund, \$5m				

⁴¹ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic.

2.3 GPE in the Kyrgyz Republic

26. The Kyrgyz Republic joined GPE in 2006 and is represented on the Board through the Eastern Europe, Middle East and Central Asia constituency.⁴² Since joining GPE, the Kyrgyz Republic has received six grants from GPE: one Education Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG), two Program Development Grants (PDG), and three Education Sector Plan Implementation Grants (ESPIG), one of which was through FTI. As of 2017, the Kyrgyz Republic was no longer eligible to receive traditional ESPIG funding (i.e., with a fixed part and a variable part), a determination made by the GPE Board using a needs-based allocation formula.⁴³ However, the Kyrgyz Republic remains eligible for GPE Multiplier funding and is currently in the process of preparing an application for this.⁴⁴ This application is tentatively scheduled to be completed in October 2020.⁴⁵ This evaluation includes a review of the 2014-2017 ESPIG, the 2013 and 2017 PDGs, and the 2017 ESPDG. Dates and values for all grants are shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 GPE grants to the Kyrgyz Republic⁴⁶

GRANT TYPE	YEARS	ALLOCATIONS (US\$)	DISBURSEMENTS (US\$)	GRANT AGENT
Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG)	2014 – 2018	12,699,459	12,699,459	IBRD
	2011 – 2012	5,908,730	5,908,730	IBRD
	2007 – 2010	8,990,278	8,990,278	IBRD
Program Development Grant (PDG)	2017 - 2020	400,000 ⁴⁷	-	IBRD
	2013 - 2014	200,000	192,023	IBRD
Sector Plan Development Grant (ESPDG) ⁴⁸	2017 - 2018	500,000	113,735	IBRD

⁴² https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2012-11-Board-Constituency-Composition_processed.pdf, 9

⁴³ GPE, “Status of future GPE Country Allocations for Kyrgyz Republic,” 23 December 2015. See also <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/global-partnership-education-program-implementation-grant-guidelines>, 5.

⁴⁴ GPE. “Eligibility for Additional Funding from the GPE Multiplier Fund to support the Education Sector Plan of the Government of Kyrgyz Republic,” 21 August 2017.

⁴⁵ DPCC, “Timeframe for finalization of the Education Sector Strategy 2021-2030 (ESS 2030) and Action Plan 2021-2023 for Education Sector Strategy (ESAP 2021-2023) and Multiplier Grant application,” November 2019.

⁴⁶ Source: “Kyrgyz Republic”, GPE website, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/country/kyrgyz-republic>. All links in this document are as of July 2019. All figures in the table are in current US\$ (as of year of grant approval).

⁴⁷ The 2017 Program Development Grant was revised in 2018 from the original amount of USD\$ 250,000 to include an additional USD\$ 150,000 to support ESA and ESP development. Source: GPE. “Program Development Grant (PDG) Revision Request Assessment – Internal,” 16 April 2018.

⁴⁸ Global Partnership for Education (GPE). “Global Partnership for Education grants US\$ 2.4 million to support education planning”, April 15, 2019. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/news-and-media/news/global-partnership-education-grants-us24-million-support-education-planning>

27. The Kyrgyz Republic received grants through CSEF III, which were directed to the Association for Education Development (AED), a newly formed civil society organization which includes 22 expert and organizational members.⁴⁹ The Kyrgyz Republic was included in one GPE Global and Regional Activities (GRA) grant.⁵⁰ Finally, the country participated in the Better Early Learning and Development at Scale (BELDS) initiative in 2018 and 2019 to support quality early childhood care and education at scale.⁵¹

3 GPE contributions to sector planning, dialogue/monitoring, financing, and implementation

3.1 Introduction

28. This section summarizes findings related to Key Question I of the evaluation matrix: “Has GPE support to the Kyrgyz Republic 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?”⁵²

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

30. 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 the Kyrgyz Republic, what characterized sector planning, mutual accountability, sector financing or 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?

⁴⁹ AED registered as a formal organization in April 2019, but operated informally for 3.5 years before that under the name ‘Education Coalition in Kyrgyzstan.’

⁵⁰ Specifically, the country took part in Grant 13 – Assessment systems and learning outcomes implemented by NEQMAP/UNESCO Bangkok. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2017-12-gpe-global-regional-activities-program-report-june-2017.pdf>.

⁵¹ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/consultative-approach-targeted-work-early-childhood-education>

⁵² 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.

3.2 GPE contributions to education sector planning⁵³

Overview

31. 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)⁵⁴ 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)
 - What are implications of evaluation findings for GPE support to the Kyrgyz Republic? (Key Question IV)
32. 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.

⁵³ 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.

⁵⁴ 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).

Table 3.1 Overview: CLE findings on sector planning and related GPE contributions in 2012-2019⁵⁵

DEGREE OF PROGRESS TOWARDS A GOVERNMENT-OWNED, ROBUST ESP ⁵⁶	DEGREE OF GPE CONTRIBUTION ⁵⁷	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS LIKELY HELD TRUE ⁵⁸				
		1	2	3	4	5
<p>Insufficient data: While the 2018-19 ESA marked an improvement over the previous period, for which no ESA was conducted, moderately participatory plan development and a mixed picture of plan achievability did not change significantly between the two planning periods. Government ownership decreased, due to reductions in MOES capacity. As it is currently in draft form, EDS 2030 has not yet gone through the external appraisal or endorsement processes.⁵⁹</p>	<p>Limited: While evidence suggests that GPE financial and non-financial support contributed to the availability and synthesis of evidence through support to an ESA and additional analyses, this evidence was not consistently deployed in planning.</p>					

⁵⁵ Colors stand for ‘strong’ (green) ‘modest’ (amber), ‘minimal to not detectable’ (red), or ‘insufficient data’ (grey)”.

⁵⁶ In this case, the objective is considered ‘achieved’ if a sector plan underwent a rigorous appraisal process, as per GPE/IIEP guidelines, and was endorsed by development partners in country.

⁵⁷ 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 (iii) 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 chapters.

⁵⁸ 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 has sufficient leverage within the country to influence sector planning, and (5) EMIS and LAS produced relevant and reliable data to inform sector planning.

⁵⁹ This rating should be considered preliminary, due to several limitations of data and timing affecting the evaluation team’s ability to determine the degree of planning progress in the Kyrgyz Republic. First, only a draft of EDS 2030 was available at the time of the evaluation. Second, as a result, the full planning process, including an external appraisal of plan quality, had not been completed at the time of the evaluation. As such, this evaluation makes observations and assessments about planning based on data available through November 2019, which does not cover the complete EDS 2021-2030 planning process or a final EDS 2030 draft. See Section 1.2 on Methodology and Limitations, as well as Appendix II, for further discussion of limitations.

Characteristics of sector planning during the 2012-2019 review period⁶⁰

Finding 1: During the review period, sector planning were characterized by inefficiency and confusion due to: (i) delays in planning decisions and the planning process itself, (ii) limited understanding of GPE’s intended support to planning, and (iii) lack of consensus on how to use GPE support.

33. **Sector planning history.** Though it obtained independence in 1991, it is only recently that the Kyrgyz Republic has undertaken national and education sector planning. Sector planning in the country is guided by four classes of documents, each with distinct periods, purposes, and levels of specificity. First, national sustainable development strategies (NSDS) present the economic and social priorities of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. Secondly, the MOES develops a 15-20-page Concept for education development⁶¹ and thirdly, a corresponding education sector plan (known as an Education Development Strategy, or EDS) outlining key priorities for the sector over the implementation period, in line with the priorities expressed by the NSDS. Finally, education sector plans are operationalized by three-year action plans (known as Action Plans for Educational Development (APEDs) or Education Sector Action Plans (ESAP)), which are aligned with Government budget forecasting cycles and describe the short- and medium-term activities that will be carried out to execute the education sector plan.

34. The Kyrgyz Republic’s education sector has been guided by sector-wide strategic plans (EDS) since 2007. The first EDS was developed in 2006 and covered the period 2007-2010.⁶² From 2010 to 2012, political turmoil resulted in the absence of an education strategy.⁶³ The second education sector plan, Education Development Strategy 2012 – 2020 (EDS 2020), was approved by Parliament in March 2012.⁶⁴ 2018 marked the start of the country’s second National Sustainable Development Strategy, which runs until 2040. In April 2018, Parliament approved the first phase of the NSDS, which covers the period 2018 to 2022. In 2019, MOES⁶⁵ began the process of developing the third education sector plan for 2021-2030, known as Education Development Strategy 2021 – 2030 (EDS 2030), and its accompanying three-year action plan for 2021-2023

⁶⁰ The review period of the evaluation covers from 2011 to July 2019. This period includes the development of the 2012-2020 EDS, three APEDs (2012-14, 2016-17, 2018-20) and the ongoing development of the 2021-2030 EDS.

⁶¹ DPCC, “DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting,” 27 April 2018, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. MOES stakeholders described the “concept” as a level between doctrine and the EDS. For planning and accountability purposes in the sector, the EDS and APEDs are most central.

⁶² Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic. “Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic (2007-2010),” 2006, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.

⁶³ World Bank, “Implementation completion and results report on a grant in the amount of US\$12.7 million to the Ministry of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic For the Kyrgyz Global Partnership for Education (GPE) – 3”, 10 December 2018. Report No: ICR00004616, 5.

⁶⁴ Source: Delegation of the European Union to the Kyrgyz Republic. “Support to the reform of the Education Sector in the Kyrgyz Republic.” Accessed 24 July 2019. https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kyrgyz-republic/50040/support-reform-education-sector-kyrgyz-republic_en. The EDS and the 2012-2014 APED were endorsed by members of the DPCC (local education group equivalent) in 2013. Sources: No author, no date. “Endorsement Letter – EDS 2012-2020,” Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

⁶⁵ Education sector planning in Kyrgyzstan is formally led by the Monitoring, Strategic Planning, and Information Unit of the MOES (known as the Strategic Planning Unit for short), but informally is run by a key advisor to the Minister of Education who previously led this same Unit and who is now employed as a consultant. MOES prepares a decree that sets up sub-sector working groups who consult and provide input to the EDS, appoints heads of these groups, and establishes the timeline for EDS development. Source: DPCC, “DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting,” 8 February 2017, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

(ESAP 2021-2023), with an anticipated finalization date of March 2020.⁶⁶ As of the writing of this evaluation in November 2019, EDS 2030 is still under development. Background and context for the current EDS 2030 planning process are discussed below.

35. **EDS 2030 planning process timeline, confusion, and delays.** In 2017 and 2018, delays in the overall government strategy process resulted in MOES putting off their decision on what coverage period the education sector plan following EDS 2020 would use. In April 2018, Parliamentary approval of a 2018-2022 phase of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) prompted the MOES, which faced limited planning capacity, to update and extend the EDS 2020 to align to the new NSDS through the year 2022, rather than develop a new, longer-term education sector plan. The MOES thus postponed the development of a longer plan until summer 2019. The MOES decided to develop a plan to cover the years 2021 to 2030, secured Parliamentary approval for its Education Concept in June 2019, and subsequently drafted EDS 2030 in July 2019.⁶⁷

36. Both GPE ESPDG and PDG grants were approved in late 2017, with activities commencing in 2018, with the intention to support the MOES extension of EDS 2020 to 2022. Thus the delayed decision to develop a 10-year plan resulted in the need to fold previously initiated activities, supported by ESPDG and PDG funding, into the new plan development process. These activities included consultant support hired in December 2018⁶⁸ by the World Bank (as ESPDG grant agent) in coordination with the MOES,⁶⁹ which was used to create a medium-term, six-year plan for education from 2021 to 2026.⁷⁰ The World Bank team reported consulting with the GPE Secretariat, UNICEF (the coordinating agency), and other DPCC stakeholders about the development of this medium-term plan, which was supported by ESPDG funding. World Bank stakeholders noted that the consultant worked with an MOES point person to conduct two rounds of consultations with MOES-established working groups, which included members of the DPCC. In spite of these consultations, most DPCC stakeholders did not consider the development of a six-year plan to be a joint effort; rather, they perceived it to be World Bank (and not Ministry)-led and cited the six-year plan as undertaken mainly for the World Bank's purposes as PDG Program Agent to develop a GPE Multiplier application that would include World Bank co-financing.⁷¹ After the MOES decided to develop a 10-year plan, the GPE Secretariat clarified during a March 2019 DPCC meeting that GPE ESPDG funding was intended to support the development of the Ministry-led plan. However, at that point, ESPDG funds for planning had already been spent. The six-year planning work supported by the World Bank was incorporated into the MOES-led draft of EDS 2030 in summer 2019, thus streamlining ongoing activities into one, MOES-led

⁶⁶ As noted in Section 1.2 on limitations, since the 2021-2030 EDS development process is still ongoing, this evaluation will make observations about the EDS 2030 planning process through November 2019, but is unable to comment on the finished plan, which is expected to become available in March 2020.

⁶⁷ DPCC, "DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting," 27 April 2018, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

⁶⁸ This occurred before the MOES made the decision to develop a 10-year plan.

⁶⁹ DPCC, "DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting," 19 December 2018, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

⁷⁰ Internal documents. The six-year plan, which was drafted by a World Bank-hired consultant, incorporated the findings of the 2018 ESA, and identified functional literacy as a major challenge, as well as three focus areas of (i) teacher quality; (ii) early learning and primary education, and (iii) digitization and e-learning.

⁷¹ During DPCC meetings, the World Bank had expressed concerns that an education sector plan led by the MOES and aligned to NSDS would not meet GPE's plan quality guidelines and would not be completed by November 2019, initially set as the end of the country's eligibility window to apply for MF-ESPIG funding. This contributed to stakeholders' perceptions of the six-year plan as a World Bank-led plan.

planning process.⁷² The delayed decision regarding the time period for the new plan meant that the GPE PDG grant, and the country's window to submit an MF-ESPIG funding application, also required extensions from their original 2019 ending dates to 2020, to give adequate time for the MOES to develop the EDS 2030 and for the World Bank to develop the MF-ESPIG application.

37. Against this backdrop, this evaluation specifically compares both the contents of EDS 2020 and the November 2019 EDS 2030 draft, as well as related planning processes, to understand any resulting changes in the content and quality of EDS 2020 and the draft EDS 2030 as planning instruments.

Finding 2: While EDS 2020 did not meet minimum GPE quality standards, it was endorsed by partners and met GPE's requirement of a credible plan. Although the EDS 2030 remains in draft form and has not yet been rated, this evaluation's preliminary analyses suggest minor improvements in quality over the 2020 plan.⁷³

38. Plan goals, priorities, and continuity. The Kyrgyz Republic's education sector plans follow the basic structure of: a discussion of progress made under the previous plan, a vision, objectives and principles for the education system during the planning period, and sub-sector specific strategies.⁷⁴ EDS 2020 emphasized an overall goal of equal access to quality education. Though not final⁷⁵, the draft EDS 2030 uses the same goal and adds an emphasis on "the efficient use of internal and external resources for the sustainable development of the education system."⁷⁶ Out of five high-level priorities of EDS 2020⁷⁷, three (early childhood education, inclusion and equitable access, and labor market relevance of education) remain central in the November draft of EDS 2030. ⁷⁸ The draft EDS 2030 includes additional priorities not continuous with EDS 2020, such as digital education, gender equality, functional literacy, and higher education and online learning, among others.⁷⁹ The right column of Table 3.2 below presents 12 objectives established in EDS 2020, as well as the 15 objectives of the EDS 2030 draft. Both EDS 2020 and draft EDS 2030 priorities and content generally reflect issues identified in key sector analyses.

⁷² DPCC, "Extraordinary DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting," 20 March 2019, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The priorities presented in Table 3.2 reflect those in the November 2019 draft (which incorporated inputs from the World Bank six-year plan).

⁷³ The three GPE dimensions for which the draft EDS 2030 has shown some improvement are strategic nature, use of evidence, and attention to disparities. One of the dimensions for which EDS 2020 did not meet minimum standards, use of evidence, has shown some improvement.

⁷⁴ Primary and secondary education are referred to as "school education," or sometimes "secondary education."

⁷⁵ Similarly, the Education Sector Analysis has been drafted but has not yet been finalized, and there has been no endline evaluation of the 2012-2020 EDS, which means priority challenges have only partially been identified.

⁷⁶ November 2019 draft EDS 2030, 13.

⁷⁷ The EDS itself does not identify priorities, but rather lays out a vision of education in 2020, identifies 12 objectives to get there, and also suggests principles for EDS implementation. Thus, these are high-level priorities of the plan as identified in McLean's appraisal. Source: McLean, "EDS 2012-2020 Appraisal Report," 19.

⁷⁸ DPCC, "Education DPCC Meeting Minutes," 11 March 2019, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. While still reflected in EDS 2030 sub-sector plans, two EDS 2020 priorities of curriculum reform and the teaching profession, and multi-level, accessible professional education for adults, were not highlighted as priorities by the EDS 2030 draft.

⁷⁹ DPCC, "Education DPCC Meeting Minutes," 11 March 2019, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Table 3.2 Key sector issues and plan priorities for the 2012-2020 and 2021-2030 planning cycles

SECTOR ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY ANALYSIS	EDUCATION SECTOR PLAN PRIORITIES
EDS 2020 APPRAISAL, 2013⁸⁰	EDS 2012-2020
<p>Key issues identified (as per EDS Appraisal review of existing analyses):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pre-primary enrollment rates • Access to and inclusion in education for children of “at risk” groups⁸¹ • Low learning levels • Poor school-level ICT • Inadequate supply of books • Aging teacher workforce too small relative to school population 	<p>The 2012-2020 EDS identifies 12 objectives to achieve by 2020:⁸²</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase preschool access 2. Equitable access to primary and secondary education 3. Specialized upper secondary school opportunities 4. Develop skills relevant to the labor market 5. Create conditions for continuous lifelong learning 6. Partner with employers 7. Introduce competence-based learning⁸³ 8. Provide flexibility to students to combine work and higher education 9. Preserve cultural and linguistic diversity and a multilingual educational environment 10. Support education financing and fair distribution of financial resources 11. Develop a strategic planning and management system including gender disaggregated statistical data 12. Efficiently manage human resources and launch an M&E system
ESA 2019	EDS 2021-2030 (NOVEMBER 2019 DRAFT)
<p>Key issues identified (as per the “summary of key issues in education”)⁸⁴:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low learning levels in all tested grades (2, 4, 8) in international and national sample-based assessments • Low access to pre-primary education • Low access of children with disabilities and minority ethnic groups to basic education • Disparities in access to upper secondary education • Low assessment capacity • Pre-service and in-service teacher training challenges 	<p>The 2021-2030 EDS⁸⁵ identifies 15 objectives to achieve by 2030:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create conditions for lifelong learning; 2. Focus learning on student needs; 3. Prioritize early childhood education; 4. Full and equal access to the education system; 5. Ensure inclusion in the educational system; 6. Address gender segregation in vocational education; 7. Promote human rights and freedom, inclusiveness, gender equality, diversity, and sustainability; 8. Make evidence-informed policy decisions;

⁸⁰ McLean, H., “Education Sector Group’s Appraisal Report: Education Development Strategy 2012 – 2020. Action Plan for Education Development 2012 – 2014. The Kyrgyz Republic”, January 2013. Although no formal Education Sector Analysis was conducted to inform EDS 2020, the January 2013 Appraisal of EDS 2020 summarises background analyses that were used to develop the plan, as well as key sector issues that they identified. See “Table 1: Main Documents for the Technical Appraisal,” pages 6-7, for a list of analyses of the education sector conducted from 2009 to 2012. Sector issues summarized in Table 3.2 are drawn from McLean pages 19 to 29.

⁸¹ “At risk” groups include: children with disability, children without one or both parents, children in new settlements (novoistroyki), rural migrant children, boys from low-income families, working children, street children, children affected by ethnic conflict and those in intersecting risk groups. McLean, 12.

⁸² MOES, “Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2020,” no date, 3-4. The exact wording from the EDS is used here.

⁸³ This refers to skills such as metacognition, decision-making, analysis, communication, and critical thinking.

⁸⁴ UNICEF, “Kyrgyz Republic: Education Sector Analysis. Strategic Choices for the Government to Improve Education. DRAFT”, June 2018, 12-16.

⁸⁵ Objectives are taken from pages 11-13 of the translated English draft EDS 2021-2030 dated November 2019.

- Inadequate policies on data collection, school governance and management, inclusive education, and multilingual education
 - Gaps in data and policy implementation
9. Use the National Qualification Framework to meet labor market needs;
 10. Create a diversified adult education system;
 11. Develop additional education for children and adults;
 12. Digitize education, including e-learning;
 13. Provide results-based funding;
 14. Undertake results-based management;
 15. Support differentiated responsibilities of educational institutions

39. **Preliminary assessment of improvements in plan quality and planning processes.** Table 3.3 below compares the quality of EDS 2020 to the draft EDS 2030 according to the GPE quality standards for Education Sector Plans (ESPs). The GPE’s assessment of the quality of the final EDS 2020 is presented in the second column under the heading “GPE Results Framework Ratings.” The GPE’s assessment of plan quality for EDS 2030 was not available at the time of the evaluation, thus the the third column is left blank. In the fourth column, the evaluation provides a preliminary analysis of the changes between the two plans using the GPE ESP standards as the measurement of comparison.

Table 3.3 *GPE ratings of plan quality, and evaluator assessment of difference between plans*⁸⁶

ESP STANDARDS	GPE RESULTS FRAMEWORK (RF) RATINGS		CHANGE/IMPROVEMENT OVER PERIOD OF REVIEW (EVALUATOR ASSESSMENT BASED ON INTERVIEWS AND DOCUMENTS, E.G. PLAN APPRAISALS)
	EDS 2020	EDS 2030	
Overall vision	2/2		No change: For both EDS 2020 and the draft EDS 2030, analysis, strategies, and action plans include all sub-sectors of the education system.
Strategic	9/14		Some improvement. Although EDS 2020 was not informed by a sector analysis, it did incorporate findings from other donor-led analyses. ⁸⁷ The November 2019 EDS 2030 was informed by a 2018 draft ESA, and the draft 2030 plan generally links priorities to ESA-identified issues. However, a finalized ESA only became available at the same time as the November draft plan. The November plan only selectively cites positive ESA data on learning outcomes.
Holistic	6/6		No change: For both EDS 2020 and the draft EDS 2030, analysis, strategies, and action plans include all sub-sectors of the education system.

⁸⁶ GPE ratings are taken directly from GPE’s results framework data, indicator 16a, 2015. The numbers inside the second and third column cells 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 being rated by GPE can be rated zero (not addressed), one (partially addressed), or two (fully addressed), though detailed rating guidelines vary.

⁸⁷ McLean, EDS 2012-2020 Appraisal, 7. These analyses were from the OECD, World Bank, EU, UNICEF, and USAID. One stakeholder noted that EDS 2020 was not based on assessments of the implementation of the previous 2007 – 2010 EDS.

ESP STANDARDS	GPE RESULTS FRAMEWORK (RF) RATINGS		CHANGE/IMPROVEMENT OVER PERIOD OF REVIEW (EVALUATOR ASSESSMENT BASED ON INTERVIEWS AND DOCUMENTS, E.G. PLAN APPRAISALS)
	EDS 2020	EDS 2030	
Evidence-based	0/2		Some improvement. Although EDS 2020 was not informed by a sector analysis, it did incorporate findings from other donor-led analyses. ⁸⁸ The November 2019 EDS 2030 was informed by a 2018 draft ESA, and the draft 2030 plan generally links priorities to ESA-identified issues. However, a finalized ESA only became available at the same time as the November draft plan. The November plan only selectively cites positive ESA data on learning outcomes.
Achievable (ESP)	11/19		Some deterioration: Similar to EDS 2020, the draft of EDS 2030 lacks accompanying financial frameworks and simulations, although as with the 2012-2020 period, related action plans include costing. Unlike previous plans, the 2021-2023 action plan estimated a significant financing gap, with only 16.8 percent of plan costs covered. An improvement over EDS 2020 with no results framework, EDS 2030 includes a results framework with well-defined indicators. Neither EDS specified ministry capacity building measures.
Sensitive to context	0/2		No change: Neither EDS 2020 nor EDS 2030 explicitly identify risks to implementation, or present solutions or mitigating measures.
Attentive to disparities	3/6		Some improvement: EDS 2020 recognized and proposed solutions to meet the needs of children with disabilities. It cited some data on regional disparities, but did not cite gender parity data, and did not propose solutions based on either disparity. ⁸⁹ EDS 2030 acknowledges that children with disabilities are still out of school, provides some analysis of geographic disparities, and cites gender parity data, but still does not systematically propose solutions to address disparities. ⁹⁰
Overall, at least 5/7 met?	No (4/7)		Some improvement: Out of GPE's seven framework rating categories, three categories (strategic; evidence-based; achievable; attentive to disparities), showed modest improvement for EDS 2030 compared to EDS 2020. One category that showed improvement for EDS 2030 (evidence-based) was one for which EDS 2020 did not meet minimum standards.

⁸⁸ McLean, EDS 2012-2020 Appraisal, 7. These analyses were from the OECD, World Bank, EU, UNICEF, and USAID. One stakeholder noted that EDS 2020 was not based on assessments of the implementation of the previous 2007 – 2010 EDS.

⁸⁹ GPE, Results Framework Indicator 16a. Assessment Kyrgyz Republic, GPE Secretariat provided document.

⁹⁰ MOES, Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2021-2030," 31 July 2019, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Finding 3: The EDS 2030 planning process has so far seen mixed progress in its use of evidence, plan achievability and operationalization, and participation. Government ownership of the 2030 plan is, thus far, weaker than for EDS 2020, due to capacity reductions and over-concentration of ownership among key individuals.

40. **Changes in the sector planning process:** While the evaluation did not note areas of **significant improvement** in the sector planning process and/or the resulting sector plan, it did find several areas of **mixed progress**:

41. **Use of evidence.** The Kyrgyz Republic lacks regular joint sector reviews, comprehensive learning assessment systems, and a functioning EMIS, which impose significant limits on the availability and use of evidence for education system planning and management. However, the development of an ESA in 2018 and 2019 marked an improvement in the synthesis of existing evidence in the sector. Evidence was also slightly better utilized in the EDS 2030 planning process as compared to EDS 2020, but several issues still limited evidence use in the 2030 draft plan. Since data gaps and disagreements over resources stalled work on the ESA in 2018, it was only finished in 2019 after the EDS 2030 had already been drafted and only the incomplete 2018 draft ESA informed the plan.⁹¹ In addition, 2030 learning-related plan priorities are not clearly linked to ESA data on learning outcomes; only the ESA data that reflects well on on primary-level learning outcomes is cited in the draft 2030 plan, omitting discussion of negative outcomes. Whether updated findings from the finalized ESA will be reflected in the final EDS 2030 remains to be seen.⁹² In addition to an ESA, supplementary analyses including a skills study undertaken by the World Bank using the OECD's PIAAC instrument to assess the skills of adults ages 16 to 65 and a rapid public expenditure review were conducted with the support of ESPDG funding. However, aside from citing a few statistics, it is unclear how exactly these analyses were used in the plan development process.⁹³ Finally, while the draft EDS 2030 discusses progress made under EDS 2020, no comprehensive evaluation of plan implementation has been conducted, limiting the incorporation of lessons learned under EDS 2020 into the new plan.

42. **Plan achievability and operationalization through action plans.** EDS 2030 represents a modest improvement over EDS 2020 in measuring plan implementation progress. Although available data indicate that the majority of EDS 2020 plan indicators were achieved, it is important to note that EDS 2020 monitoring mechanisms and chosen outputs and outcomes lacked coherence and robustness, due to generally weak monitoring and assessment systems and limited ministry capacity.⁹⁴ The EDS 2030 draft

⁹¹ In the absence of regular annual reviews of progress in the sector, a June 2018 ESA validation workshop ended up taking on a similar function to a joint sector review. However, in contrast to typical JSR preparation, workshop preparations were led primarily by one individual, the ESA consultant, rather than all stakeholders in the sector. Differences of opinion between the CA and the ESA consultant over resources required to finalize the ESA led to the halt of work on the document in June 2018. The CA hired other consultants, who resumed the work in 2019, but the delay meant that the ESA was only finalized in November 2019, after the EDS 2030 had already been drafted. Furthermore, the MOES took part in the June 2018 ESA workshop, but did not comprehensively or explicitly cite the ESA in the EDS 2030 draft. Source: DPCC, "DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting," 27 April 2018, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

⁹² Ministry of Education and Science, "Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2021-2030," 31 July 2019, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 20.

⁹³ Neither the skills study nor the rapid public expenditure review is directly cited in either the ESA or draft EDS 2030.

⁹⁴ The legacy of Soviet central planning and domestic political scrutiny also contributes to government ministries designing targets and tracking outcomes in such a way that they are met and thus counted as having achieved the

introduces a results framework that includes four to six indicators per sub-sector, along with 2020, 2023, and 2030 targets for each, improving upon EDS 2020. Both EDS 2020 and EDS 2030 use three-year action plans to operationalize education sector plans, aligned to the Government’s three-year budget cycle. Comparing the 2012-2020 and 2021-2030 planning periods, changes in action plan quality and more broadly, plan achievability, are mixed. Stakeholder interviews and the evaluators’ review of documents indicate that APEDs under EDS 2020 were not consistently well-aligned to the EDS 2020 and to other APEDs, nor did they systematically track EDS 2020 objectives.⁹⁵ The draft 2021-2023 action plan is better aligned to EDS 2030, in particular for the results frameworks in both documents.⁹⁶ Notwithstanding the addition of a solid results framework, the financing gap of nearly 10,081 million KGS, or 83.2 percent of plan costs, cited in the 2023 action plan is concerning and represents a major negative change relative to EDS 2020.⁹⁷ Stakeholders noted that APEDs under EDS 2020 did not include priorities or reforms that lacked dedicated financial resources, which is not the case for 2021-2023.

43. **Participatory plan development:** The MOES has an established practice of holding formal consultations during the planning process. As such, sub-sector working groups of MOES, NGO, donor partner, and school representatives, provided feedback on both EDS 2020 and EDS 2030 drafts.⁹⁸ Draft plans were also shared for consultation in regional discussions, posted on Government websites, and discussed and revised with other government ministries and MOES departments before finalization and Parliamentary approval. Donor and government stakeholders noted that while the EDS 2030 process was marginally more inclusive of civil society organizations and NGOs than that for EDS 2020, both processes could have been stronger in the extent to which they meaningfully incorporated stakeholder input.⁹⁹ The EDS 2020 appraisal found that “even while genuine efforts were made to consult the public, effective discussion around reform priorities remained at the top.”¹⁰⁰ Donor stakeholders felt similarly about EDS 2030, noting that while they were consulted, they lacked opportunities to provide input at the plan’s conceptualization stage, and not all suggestions voiced by partners in working groups were ultimately included in the draft strategy. While planning processes in the Kyrgyz Republic are ostensibly participatory, the extent to which education sector stakeholders have meaningful voice in the planning process remains in question.

44. The evaluation also noted one area where the EDS 2030 process has thus far been **weaker** than the EDS 2020 planning process:

45. **Government ownership:** While MOES has always played a central role in the creation of education development strategies, stakeholders held mixed views on progress in government ownership during the review period. According to the appraisal of EDS 2020, the government managed collaboration for the sector and coordinated with donor partners to develop EDS 2020 and the first accompanying APED 2012 –

plan. Developing a clear and robust monitoring framework thus became a priority for EDS 2030. Development partners viewed the inclusion of a clear results framework in EDS 2030 as a prerequisite for plan endorsement.

⁹⁵ See, for example, APED

⁹⁶ DPCC, “DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting,” 8 February 2017, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.; DPCC, “DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting,” 27 April 2018, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

⁹⁷ Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), “Explanatory Note to the Cost Estimates for All Activities of the Action Plan for 2021-2023 by Program”, November 2019. While possible that some of these activities will be covered by donor funds, it is unlikely that all of them will be, so it is likely that a significant financing gap will remain.

⁹⁸ McLean, EDS 2012-2020 Appraisal, 43.

⁹⁹ EDS 2012-2020 Endorsement Letter, 2.

¹⁰⁰ McLean, EDS 2012-2020 Appraisal, 43.

2014.¹⁰¹ However, the same appraisal suggests that the catalyst for the creation of EDS 2020 was external, with the potential for an envisaged donor sector-wide approach sparking plan development.¹⁰² One donor stakeholder corroborated this, also noting the role of EU general budget support requirements in pushing the Ministry to develop a full sector plan for 2012-2020 instead of merely an education chapter in the national sustainable development strategy. Several stakeholders also suggested that the EDS 2020 process was centralized among only a few key MOES individuals, which limited broader government ownership over the plan. For EDS 2030, MOES stakeholders expressed a clear sense of ownership over the development process, citing their central role in soliciting and coordinating input from donor partners, civil society, and other parts of government. However, donor stakeholders perceived weaker government ownership compared to EDS 2020. Specifically, they cited concerns over reductions in MOES strategic planning capacity, a persistence of over-concentration of plan ownership among only a handful of MOES stakeholders, and the development of the six-year plan, which they perceived as led by the World Bank.¹⁰³

GPE contributions to sector planning¹⁰⁴

Finding 4: Preliminary analyses of the ongoing planning process and November draft EDS 2030 suggest that GPE’s financial and non-financial sector planning support made minor contributions to improvements in plan or process quality through BELDS, Secretariat support, and ESPDG funding. The late-stage shift to use GPE mechanisms to support 10-year planning instead of a plan extension, and lack of DPCC stakeholder alignment on the use of ESPDG and PDG funds, hampered the effectiveness of GPE support.

46. GPE offers a series of financial and non-financial mechanisms to support sector planning. Table 3.4 provides an overview of these mechanisms, grouped by whether they are likely to have made a significant,¹⁰⁵ moderately significant, or limited/no contribution to planning in the Kyrgyz Republic. This grouping does not constitute a formal score.

¹⁰¹ McLean, EDS 2012-2020 Appraisal, 42.

¹⁰² McLean 2013, 9.

¹⁰³ DPCC, “Extraordinary DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting,” 20 March 2019, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

¹⁰⁴ While the 2021-2030 EDS is not yet complete, it is in a sufficiently advanced state to make observations on its development and GPE’s support to date.

¹⁰⁵ 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.

Table 3.4 GPE contributions to sector planning during the 2012-2019 review period

2012-2020 EDS PLANNING CYCLE	2021-2030 EDS PLANNING CYCLE
SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLANNING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BELDS¹⁰⁶: The Kyrgyz Republic is one of four countries where GPE is piloting support for ECCE planning in 2019. A March 2019 workshop was conducted for ECCE stakeholders on teacher capacity, curriculum, legislation, parents and monitoring and evaluation. GPE BELDS funding of \$113k is supporting a national consultant to work with MOES to incorporate ECCE needs and priorities into EDS 2030 and to build ECCE capacity, among other activities. While no final EDS 2030 draft is available, BELDS is expected to contribute to the preschool subsection of EDS 2030 and related plan components, including results framework indicators and other sections.¹⁰⁷ MOES and donor stakeholders also held positive views of GPE’s BELDS support.
MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLANNING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretariat support: Both MOES and donor stakeholders noted that a March 2019 visit and DPCC presentation by the GPE Secretariat country lead helped clarify GPE requirements, processes, and partner roles.¹⁰⁸ Support provided during this visit helped the MOES and development partners consolidate the 10-year and 6-year planning processes into one MOES-led process. While this visit was specifically cited as positive, overall, Secretariat support to the country has been inconsistent, primarily due to a lack of continuity in GPE Secretariat country leads assigned to support the country . Several stakeholders informed that that it would have been better to get the clearance/guidance earlier. During the review period, there have been five changes in the

¹⁰⁶ The Better Early Learning and Development at Scale (BELDS) initiative is a pilot GPE initiative that aims to support countries with knowledge and good practice of how to bring quality early childhood care and education to scale within national education systems. Source: Maguire and McConnell, “A consultative approach for targeted work in early childhood education,” 11 April 2018. Accessed 25 July 2019. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/consultative-approach-targeted-work-early-childhood-education>.

¹⁰⁷ No author, no date, “KYRGYZ REPUBLIC Work plan and proposed tasks for BELDS: March 1, 2019 till May 30, 2020.”

¹⁰⁸ Sources: GPE, “New Country Lead for Kyrgyz Republic,” 21 November 2018. GPE, Announcement, New Country Lead,” 28 January 2014.

2012-2020 EDS PLANNING CYCLE	2021-2030 EDS PLANNING CYCLE
	<p>Secretariat's designated country lead for the Kyrgyz Republic.¹⁰⁹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPDG funding for ESA¹¹⁰: US\$ 250k supported the development of a World Bank-led a skills study using the OECD's PIAAC instrument to assess skills of adults ages 16 to 65.¹¹¹ While designed to fill a gap in data on education outcomes and skills to complement PISA data, several issues limited the impact of GPE support to sector analysis. First, this allocation of funding is unusual; the same amount of funding, \$250k, is often used in other countries to produce one main education sector analysis document, which, in this case received only \$100k from the ESPDG funding for ESP development as discussed below. Second, while the survey of skills has taken place, only preliminary findings have been shared and the full report will not become available until April 2020, thus calling into question their utility for planning.¹¹² • ESPDG funding for ESP: Out of \$250k in ESPDG funding dedicated to developing an education sector plan, \$100k was allocated to UNICEF for "stocktaking" of the education system (which became the main ESA document) and a review on ECCE, with \$150k for the World Bank to assist in the preparation of the ESP, and to conduct an efficiency and equity-focused expenditure review. Several factors limit the contributions of this support to planning. First, the 2018 draft ESA findings were only selectively used to inform the EDS 2030 draft. Second, the draft EDS 2030 does not cite the expenditure review, thus it is unclear how it was used. Finally, it is not clear how funds were allocated across activities related to the development of the Bank-led six-year sector plan versus the MOES-led 10-year planning.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Secretariat country lead changes occurred in February 2012, July 2013, January 2014, July 2015, and November 2018.

¹¹⁰ The Kyrgyz Republic application for ESPDG funding was submitted in 2016, with ESPDG support originally intended to update EDS 2020 and the 2017-2020 APED for 2022.

¹¹¹ As mentioned previously, internal documents suggest that \$250k of the ESPDG funding was intended to support the World Bank skills study. They also note ESPDG support for a World Bank-led Public Expenditure Review to inform the EDS 2020 update. Other internal documents specify an amount of \$250k for the ESA. The ESPDG GA has clarified that "ESA" was interpreted to mean any analysis supporting the sector planning process, not just the main Education Sector Analysis as typically understood by GPE.

¹¹² This analysis is a separate document, and will not be integrated into the main ESA.

¹¹³ Internal GPE documents specify an amount of \$250k intended to support EDS development, of which \$100k was allocated to UNICEF and \$150k to the World Bank. No documentation was available to establish how the World Bank as ESPDG GA spent these funds. However, in light of the timing of the MOES decision to develop a 10-year plan, and

2012-2020 EDS PLANNING CYCLE	2021-2030 EDS PLANNING CYCLE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPIG funding requirement 1 (a credible, endorsed plan): Although the Kyrgyz Republic is no longer eligible for traditional ESPIG funding, it is eligible to receive GPE Multiplier Funds, which are also subject to ESPIG requirements. The availability of GPE Multiplier Funds, and a potential \$50m in World Bank co-funding in a joint IDA-GPE program, helped spur partners' desire to develop a quality plan that would meet GPE requirements and secure these resources.¹¹⁴ Yet this requirement also had unintended consequences, as discussed below.
LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLANNING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPIG funding requirement 1 (a credible, endorsed plan): As noted above, stakeholders attributed the development of EDS 2020 primarily to the potential availability of SWAp and EU general budget support funding, rather than GPE ESPIG funding.¹¹⁵ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE guidelines on ESA: While the ESA consultant and partners indicated an awareness of GPE guidelines, stakeholders noted that not all guidelines were followed due to limitations on available data and insufficient resources to support the ESA. • CSEF grants: The Education Coalition in Kyrgyzstan (ECK), now known as the Association for Education Development (AED), was the recipient of CSEF III grants in 2016, 2017, and 2018¹¹⁶, ahead of the EDS 2030 development process. CSEF III grants funded AED activities, which included supporting members to conduct budget analyses, advocate for integration of SDGs into national planning, and improve legal regulations on non-formal education.¹¹⁷ While AED is a member of both the Parliamentary Committee on Education and a government working group focused

based on the fact that ESPDG funding was then deemed insufficient to support plan quality, prompting GPE to allocate PDG funding for the ESA and ESP, it is reasonable to assume at least some of the original amount of ESPDG funding supported activities related to the six-year plan.

¹¹⁴ Internal GPE document. As of October 2019, DPCC members identified misalignment in the GPE Multiplier Fund and IDA funding application timelines, with a requirement to submit the IDA application by October 2019, far in advance of the Multiplier Fund application, which will not be submitted until 2020 after the 2030 EDS is endorsed. This raises uncertainty around the relationship between GPE Multiplier Funding and World Bank IDA funding. However, the prospect of unlocking IDA funding through the Multiplier still contributed to the impetus for EDS 2030 planning.

¹¹⁵ The 2012-2020 EDS was also subject to an external appraisal, which evaluated the quality, credibility, and feasibility as satisfactory, leading to the endorsement of the plan by DPCC partners. This external appraisal was funded by UNICEF Source: McLean, "Education Sector Group's Appraisal Report: Education Development Strategy 2012 – 2020. Action Plan for Education Development 2012 – 2014. The Kyrgyz Republic", January 2013.

¹¹⁶ Stakeholders confirmed that AED received CSEF allocations in the amount of \$29k in 2016, \$39k in 2017, and \$38k in 2018. Source: No author, "Kyrgyzstan CSEF Profile One Pager," no date.

¹¹⁷ Sources: AED, "Education Coalition in Kyrgyzstan Narrative CSEF Proposal," 29 June 2016. Global Campaign for Education, "Annex C: Summary of Coalitions' Key Education Focus Areas and Key Achievements January-December 2016," no date.; "No author, "Kyrgyzstan CSEF Profile One Pager," no date.

2012-2020 EDS PLANNING CYCLE	2021-2030 EDS PLANNING CYCLE
	<p>on SDGs, and regularly meets with the MOES system budgeting office, it is not a member of the DPCC.¹¹⁸ As such, stakeholders had little awareness of AED's activities or how CSEF grants influenced the development of EDS 2030.</p>
INSUFFICIENT DATA TO DETERMINE CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLANNING	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat comments on EDS 2020: In December 2012, GPE provided comments on the draft 2012-2020 EDS.¹¹⁹ However, when asked about these comments, MOES stakeholders could not recall receiving them (Most of the stakedholers involved have either moved to new positions or left the country because of regular rotation of DPs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDG funding: In May 2018 \$150k of additional GPE Program Development Grant (PDG) funds¹²⁰ were approved for use towards the ESA and EDS, with the closing date extended to May 2020.¹²¹ Internal GPE documents suggest that funds were granted out of concern that the quality of the ESA and EDS would not meet GPE requirements. As of March 2019, \$140k of the additional PDG funding was unspent, but intended to be used to complete EDS 2030 and develop an MF-ESPIG application using IDA funding.¹²² At the time of the evaluation, there was not enough information to determine the impact of PDG funding on planning processes or plan quality.

47. DPCC and MOES stakeholders alike agreed that sector planning would have followed the same general process, with or without GPE support. Some stakeholders recognized GPE contributions to analytical work to inform planning; specifically, two stakeholders cited GPE contributions to the ECCE sub-sector thematic working group through BELDS, and two stakeholders acknowledged the role of GPE funds in hiring external experts for the ESA and other analyses. However, three other stakeholders, including one from MOES, stated that they were not aware of what support GPE provided for analysis or planning. When asked how GPE supported sector planning, MOES stakeholders cited GPE's 2014-2017 ESPIG as a contribution that helped implement EDS 2020 priorities, but made no mention of ESPDG funding or GPE planning requirements.

48. This suggests little awareness among MOES stakeholders of GPE's main mechanisms to support sector planning. Furthermore, the fact that the ESPDG GA initiated planning activities before the MOES had decided on a 10-year plan, with the aim of ensuring the country would have a plan that would meet GPE quality standards, implies the MOES was not using GPE standards as a guide for their own planning. This is perhaps unsurprising in light of the Ministry's limited capacity and concerns around domestic political scrutiny. Donor partners who *were* aware of GPE's planning guidelines and ESPDG support emphasized the

¹¹⁸ AED, "Education Coalition in Kyrgyzstan Narrative CSEF Proposal," 29 June 2016.

¹¹⁹ GPE, "KYRGYZ REPUBLIC Education Development Strategy Comments from the GPE Secretariat," December 2012.

¹²⁰ According to GPE's website, PDG funds are typically used for the design of programs to implement education sector plans: "countries can receive US\$ 200,000 (up to US\$ 400,000 in exceptional cases) for the design of an education program that will help the country to implement its national sector strategy." Sources: GPE, "GPE Grants," <https://www.globalpartnership.org/funding/gpe-grants>, accessed 13 August 2019.

¹²¹ According to internal GPE documents, the original \$250k in PDG funding, approved in December 2017, was granted to support the design of a co-financed IDA-GPE operation to support ESP implementation, with GPE contributing \$5m in Multiplier Funds and World Bank expected to contribute co-funding of \$30m.

¹²² No documentation is available to establish how the remaining \$140k of PDG funding has been used to support EDS 2030 development or the joint IDA-GPE program in relation to the Kyrgyz Republic's MF-ESPIG application.

heaviness of related requirements and application processes for a Ministry with limited capacity, suggesting that they were disproportionate relative to GPE resources available. On the whole, the GPE Secretariat did not adequately or evenly sensitize DPCC partners to essential GPE planning support. Even when partners had a better understanding of the GPE partnership model, available support and processes were too time- and labor-intensive to use. These factors led to the World Bank having a more full understanding of GPE processes and requirements relative to other actors in the partnership. The World Bank moved forward with an understanding of these requirements, though not all DPCC actors understood that GPE planning support had been initiated.

Unintended positive and negative consequences of GPE support

49. One donor stakeholder noted an unexpected positive consequence of GPE support, viewing GPE's prioritization of educational equity and inclusion as contributing to policy rhetoric in planning documents, which reinforced the funder's own priorities. As the individual noted, "when keywords are embedded in official policies and planning documents, that creates major leverage. It is not me just making things up."

50. One potential negative consequence of GPE support relates to the interaction of the Multiplier Fund application timeline with the education sector planning timeline. The World Bank identified misalignment in the GPE Multiplier Funding and World Bank IDA funding application timelines, with a requirement to submit the IDA application by October 2019, far in advance of the Multiplier Fund application, which will not be submitted until 2020 after the 2030 EDS is endorsed.¹²³ As a result, the World Bank de-coupled the two processes and will submit aligned but separate applications for each programme, consulting with GPE to modify the MF-ESPIG application process as needed.

Additional factors beyond GPE support

51. The evaluation did not note additional **positive** factors beyond GPE support that likely contributed to sector planning during the 2012-2019 review period, but did note several factors that **negatively** affected sector planning during the review period.

52. First, multiple stakeholders noted the dramatic reduction in MOES-SPU capacity over the review period, with the Unit reduced to only one full-time employee as of July 2019.¹²⁴ As in 2012, sector planning is still led by one key individual who joins and consolidates inputs from all working groups. However, the difference in 2019 is that this individual, formerly an MOES-SPU employee, no longer sits within the department and is now technically employed as an external consultant, resulting in insecurity of the little planning capacity that remains. Several stakeholders pointed out how parallel and potentially less sustainable pipelines of capacity have been created instead, including the use of advisors to the minister who are paid as consultants, rather than MOES employees, as well as ADB- and World Bank- specific project implementation units.¹²⁵

53. Secondly, a highly critical domestic political environment, with regular media scrutiny over MOES's actions, negatively affected the Ministry. More specifically, this led to reluctance to publicly and openly acknowledge or learn from any less-than-positive experiences or results, as well as significant space in the EDS 2030 draft devoted to reflection on achievements under the previous plan, without incorporating

¹²³ DPCC, "Minutes from the DPCC Education Working Group Meeting," 10 September 2019.

¹²⁴ This sole employee is not the same individual (a consultant) who is leading working group consultations and plan development.

¹²⁵ Project implementation unit (PIU) staff are housed within the MOES, but are not officially MOES employees. Interviewees noted that they are generally paid higher salaries than their MOES counterparts. (Source: ESA 2019)

implementation lessons.¹²⁶ Overall, the MOES de-prioritized adherence to GPE guidelines and use of evidence relative to actively managing domestic politics, which is crucial for the MOES's basic authorizing environment to do its work.

One final factor potentially affecting planning is the 25 September 2019 transition in ministerial leadership. Kanybek Isakov was appointed Minister of Education, replacing Gulmira Kudaiberdiyeva, who had served in the role since 2016.¹²⁷ The implications for the EDS 2030 planning process are as yet unclear, but the new Minister has so far supported ongoing planning activities.

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

Finding 5: The Kyrgyz Republic's sector planning experience raises questions about GPE's definition of plan quality, and how well its theory of change can work when (i) GPE is not well-understood as a partnership, (ii) incentives to meet GPE requirements are perceived as limited, and (iii) planning processes experience late-stage shifts. Overall, GPE support to planning had limited impact in improving sector planning processes and the quality of plans during the review period.

54. In spite of the Kyrgyz Republic's comparatively short history of education sector planning with three national education development strategies created to date, foundational elements of planning are in place, including a consultative process and practical, three-year action plans. However, the evaluation found that GPE processes and mechanisms to support sector planning had limited impact in improving planning processes and plan quality. In particular, GPE quality standards for sector planning have held minimal importance for the MOES during the EDS 2030 planning process. When asked about GPE support to sector planning, MOES stakeholders were not aware of ESPDG and PDG funding, or GPE requirements for sector plan quality, citing only the contributions of the 2014-2017 ESPIG and noting that managing GPE support was primarily the responsibility of UNICEF as the CA and the World Bank as the GA.

55. This experience raises bigger questions about the GPE definition of 'plan quality,' which focuses on the technical strength of education sector plans. While this evaluation has documented the ways in which EDS 2020 and the draft EDS 2030 could be of greater technical strength, particularly in terms of evidence use, it is important to recognize these documents' political and practical strengths, aspects which are not comprehensively reflected in the GPE definition of plan quality. In particular, EDS 2020 and the draft EDS 2030 are well-aligned to National Sustainable Development Strategies, giving them policy and political relevance. The fact that APEDs, while not always directly aligned with the EDS 2020, were prepared in connection with the government's three-year budget cycle and included only measures for which funding was available, highlights their operational relevance. If the questions of whether and how planning documents are used by a developing partner country are considered equally, if not more, important than technical quality, then GPE might consider revising the definition of plan quality to acknowledge education sector plans as both political and technical documents, and to give greater weight to the political and operational relevance of such documents.

56. It is not surprising in a context in which political and practical concerns often superseded technical ones, that GPE support, which is mainly directed at improving the technical strength of planning processes

¹²⁶ DPCC, "Education DPCC Extraordinary Meeting Minutes," 16 July 2019, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. In explaining the political context, one stakeholder noted that MOES has been strongly criticized by Parliament in the last several years for inadequate implementation, though it is sometimes Parliament itself that does not provide adequate funding for MOES priorities.

¹²⁷ Podolskaya, "[President asks to support new Minister of Education of Kyrgyzstan](#)," 24.kg News Agency, 25 September 2019, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.

and documents, was not utilized to maximum effect. Several additional factors limited the impact of GPE support. Most fundamentally, until the last year of the review period, stakeholders did not clearly understand GPE as a partnership in which they have a stake and say. Historically, and leading up to the EDS 2030 planning process, GPE's sector planning support was not consistently well-communicated by the Secretariat. Multiple stakeholders understood GPE primarily to be the Secretariat, rather than seeing a role for themselves in the partnership. Several stakeholders characterized GPE ESP requirements and the preparation of GPE grant applications as “matters between GPE, the MOES and the World Bank,” a notion reinforced by the behavior of these three actors.

57. Available evidence indicates that one country-level theory of change assumption about sector planning held **partially true** in the context of the Kyrgyz Republic during the 2012-2019 evaluation period, which is that stakeholders have the (iii) **motivation** to jointly improve sector analysis and planning. MOES and donors alike noted that the process of creating education development strategies has been sufficiently institutionalized in the Kyrgyz Republic such that planning would not look dramatically different in the absence of GPE. This simultaneously reflects both the Government and other stakeholders' own motivation for developing education sector plans, as well as the lack of GPE leverage over the process. While many stakeholders are individually motivated to improve sector analysis and planning, sector stakeholders have not consistently worked *jointly* in a meaningful, aligned way to do so.

58. The evaluation found that four country-level theory of change assumptions **did not hold true**: that stakeholders have the (i) *capabilities* or (ii) *opportunities* (resources, time, conducive environment) to jointly improve sector analysis and planning, that (iv) GPE has sufficient leverage within the country to influence sector planning, and that (v) EMIS and LAS produce relevant and reliable data to inform sector planning.

- a. **Capabilities:** MOES and donor representatives noted significant reductions in sector planning capacity in light of a shrinking Strategic Planning Unit during the evaluation period. While sufficient capacity remains among MOES stakeholders to create politically relevant, consultative sector plans, capacity to significantly improve plan technical quality is lacking. Although analyses were used to inform both EDS 2020 and draft EDS 2030 plans, evidence is not consistently well-deployed to identify or address the root causes of education challenges, in part due to the shortage of dedicated personnel and inadequate technical expertise among existing MOES staff. In addition, frequent turnover of GPE Secretariat country leads during the evaluation period also contributed to a lack of understanding of GPE as a partnership by DPCC and MOES stakeholders.
- b. **Opportunities:** On the whole, stakeholders did not have adequate time, resources, or a conducive environment for improving sector analysis and planning. Stakeholder interviews indicate that domestic political scrutiny has curbed MOES's open acknowledgment of challenges and hindered evidence use and course correction in 2020 and 2030 planning processes. The evaluation found that MOES postponement of the decision on the new plan's coverage period, combined with early initiation of key GPE planning support mechanisms, resulted in an inefficient use of resources and time for EDS 2030 analysis and planning.
- c. **GPE leverage:** Although multiple stakeholders expressed that in light of growing needs, any funding to the education sector is welcome, they also noted that available GPE funding amounts, with eligibility only for USD\$ 5 million in MF-ESPIG funding, are small in comparison to other donor funding. Combined with a lack of MOES capacity and enabling environment to engage with GPE's sector planning support mechanisms and requirements, and because MOES planning processes and documents prioritize policy, political and practical concerns over technical aspects emphasized by GPE requirements, this amounts to insufficient leverage on GPE's part to substantially influence sector planning processes or plan quality during the review period.

- d. **EMIS and LAS:** Although it was included as a priority under EDS 2020, the country's EMIS is not functional (as elaborated in Section 3.3. below), which significantly hampers evidence-based strategic planning. While large amounts of data are collected by MOES and donor partners, MOES-developed indicators face quality issues, and no system is in place for transparent data-sharing or integration across data sources. Without such a system, much of the available data is not analyzed and therefore not used.

3.3 GPE contributions to mutual accountability through sector dialogue and monitoring

Overview

59. 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 the Kyrgyz Republic? (Key Question IV)

60. A high-level overview of evaluation findings on sector planning is provided in Table 3.5. These observations are elaborated on through the findings and supporting evidence presented below.

Table 3.5 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 ¹²⁸			
		1	2	3	4
Sector Dialogue: Stable – Dialogue processes showed modest improvements over the evaluation period, including in CSO/NGO inclusion and in efficiency. However, considerable room remains to improve the substance, depth, and inclusiveness of dialogue and to address fragmentation.	Moderate: GPE activities have integrated into pre-existing sector dialogue mechanisms, namely the DPCC. While a strong CA has improved transparency and collaboration, this is mainly due to the initiative of individuals, rather than particular GPE mechanisms.				

¹²⁸ 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.

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY	DEGREE OF GPE CONTRIBUTION	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING TOC ASSUMPTIONS LIKELY HELD TRUE ¹²⁸			
<p>Sector Monitoring: Stable – Several learning assessments were conducted during the review period, but did not lead to an improved understanding of education system status overall. The sector still lacks a shared monitoring framework for jointly reporting on plan implementation progress, with existing mechanisms remaining fragmented and no annual joint sector review event or process.</p>	<p>Low: Although GPE has encouraged the establishment of an annual joint sector review, limited progress has been made in regularizing this mechanism due to inadequate resources and capacity. However, GPE made discrete contributions to sector monitoring through two assessment tools under the 2014-2017 ESPIG.</p>				

Characteristics of sector dialogue during the 2012-2019 review period

Finding 6: While the Kyrgyz Republic’s education sector dialogue mechanisms are increasingly active, dialogue is not fully government-led or inclusive of civil society and focuses more on information-sharing than collaboration.

61. The Kyrgyz education sector is coordinated by several dialogue bodies that are active at various levels, which are summarized in Table 3.6. Two substantial changes in the organization of sector dialogue mechanisms – namely, the creation of Public Advisory Councils and a National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) – have occurred during the 2012-2019 review period.

62. The Development Partners Coordination Council Education Working Group, known as “DPCC”, consists mainly of donor partners with some representation of the MOES, NGOs, and independent consultants and experts. It meets on a quarterly basis to discuss sector planning, analysis, donor activities, and project implementation progress, among other issues.¹²⁹ While the DPCC effectively functions as the Local Education Group (LEG) for the Kyrgyz Republic, notably, the establishment of the DPCC pre-dates the country’s GPE/FTI membership.¹³⁰ Despite its mandate to coordinate development aid in-country, the DPCC has not historically included most of the sector’s NGOs and CSOs. However, in recent years, representatives of several non-donor organizations have been added as regular DPCC members.¹³¹ Unlike a typical LEG, the DPCC has historically expected donors, rather than the Ministry, to lead the group.

63. Although regular DPCC meetings cover high-level planning matters related to EDS and action plan development, MOES-led working groups, as described in Chapter 3.2, serve as the main channel through which sector stakeholders provide input into education sector plans. In addition, and unique to Kyrgyzstan, based on legal provisions passed in 2011 and 2014, the Ministry of Education and Science has also created

¹²⁹ DPCC Meeting Minutes, 2017 – 2019.

¹³⁰ The DPCC umbrella organization was established in June 2002 to coordinate and harmonize development aid in the Kyrgyz Republic. It has a Secretariat, a co-chairs’ group, and various sector-specific working groups, including one for education. One donor stakeholder noted that the Education Working Group was formed in 2006, though documentation to corroborate this timeline was not available. Source: Development Partners’ Coordination Council, “About Us,” accessed 25 July 2019. <http://www.donors.kg/en/about-us#.XVazwC2ZPU>.

¹³¹ As of 2019, non-donor DPCC members include: American University of Central Asia, the Center for Social Integration (CSIP), OSCE, and Peace Corps.

Public Advisory Councils (PACs), which serve as the main official channel for Ministry interaction with NGOs and CSOs.¹³² Finally, with some overlap in membership with the DPCC, the National Project Steering Committee (NPSC) was established in 2018 for the purposes of Parliamentary accountability and oversight over donor-funded projects in the education sector. The NPSC replaced a previous system of per-project steering committees that performed the same function.¹³³

Table 3.6 Overview of coordination bodies and meetings in the Kyrgyz Republic

BODIES	MANDATE	MEMBERSHIP	MEETING FREQUENCY
Development Partners Coordination Council Education Working Group (DPCC)	Support the MOES to plan and implement EDS and action plans. Promote effective coordination, joint analysis, and improved dialogue among development partners to increase the impact of aid. ¹³⁴	Co-chaired annually by two development partner members on a rotating basis ¹³⁵ ; members mainly composed of donor partners active in the sector, MOES representatives, and select NGOs. Non-members, including think tanks, NGOs, and other government representatives invited to meetings on ad-hoc basis. ¹³⁶	Meets at least three times a year and on an ad-hoc basis as needed, with meetings typically lasting 1.5 to 2 hours.
National Project Steering Committee¹³⁷	Parliamentary and MOES review of donor-supported projects, including approving annual budgets and activity plans, reviewing implementation progress, providing guidance, and ensuring policy issues	Consists of Parliamentary and MOES representatives, as well as DPCC co-chairs and other donor representatives. ¹³⁹	Meetings held twice a year. ¹⁴⁰

¹³² It is unclear, based on available information, how many public advisory councils have been established and are currently active for the education sector. PACs do not include donor members. Initiated by the Government, PACs do not have ties to the GPE CSEF mechanism.

¹³³ DPCC, “DPCC Education Working Group Meeting,” 8 February 2017.; DPCC, “DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting,” 27 April 2018, 2.

¹³⁴ DPCC Education Working Group, “DPCC WG: Education. Terms of Reference,” 2018, 1.

¹³⁵ DPCC, “DPCC WG: Education. Terms of Reference,” 2018, 2.

¹³⁶ DPCC, “DPCC WG: Education. Terms of Reference,” 2018, 2.

¹³⁷ Also known as the National Steering Committee for Coordination of Donor Projects.

¹³⁹ DPCC Education Working Group, “DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting,” 27 April 2018, 2.

¹⁴⁰ DPCC Education Working Group, “DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting,” 27 April 2018, 2.

BODIES	MANDATE	MEMBERSHIP	MEETING FREQUENCY
	affecting implementation are addressed. ¹³⁸		
Public Advisory Councils	Established for all sectors by 2011 decree and 2014 law to provide CSO and NGO oversight, monitoring, expert advice and advocacy to Government work. ¹⁴¹ Provide quality assurance of educational reforms, increase accountability of Government to public, and strengthen voice of public in policy-level decision-making processes. ¹⁴² Exist at federal ministry level, but not established at city or rayon level. ¹⁴³	Composed of least 7 but no more than 15 not-for-profit representatives selected by application and committee; must be KR citizens ages 25 years or older; elected for a period of 2 years. ¹⁴⁴ No ties to GPE CSEF mechanism.	Required to meet at least once a month, with each council's meeting schedule determined according to work plan. ¹⁴⁵
Education Development Strategy Working Groups	Created by MOES for each sub-sector to provide input to draft EDS and action plans. Working group TORs specify section of plan assigned to each group.	Includes MOES representatives as well as NGOs, donor partners, and representatives of schools, kindergartens, and universities.	Created on ad-hoc basis as needed for planning purposes.

64. There is broad consensus among stakeholders that the structure and quality of education sector dialogue has improved during the review period, especially during 2019, with the addition of several key individuals in dialogue-related leadership roles and clarification from the GPE Secretariat on stakeholders' roles. Stakeholders also noted that dialogue is strong in comparison to the health sector and to education sector dialogue in other Central Asian countries. Several changes were made to reorganize or consolidate the sector's groups during the review period, resulting in modest efficiency improvements in dialogue

¹³⁸ DPCC, "DPCC Education Donor Group Meeting," 27 April 2018, 2.; DPCC, "DPCC Education Working Group Meeting," 8 February 2017; Asian Development Bank, "Project Administration Manual. Kyrgyz Republic: Strengthening Education System Sector Development Project," February 2017, 11. Previously, Government steering committees were set up for each donor project. In a February 2017 DPCC meeting, ADB suggested setting up one committee as a permanent body to review all donor-funded projects. This recommendation was accepted, leading to the formation of the NPSC in 2018.

¹⁴¹ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2014_09_24_cs_roadmap_final.pdf, 3

¹⁴² EU SBS Evaluation, 33

¹⁴³ MOES, "Education Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2020," 31.

¹⁴⁴ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, "Law of the Kyrgyz Republic, No. 74: On Public Councils of the State Bodies," 24 May 2014, Article 14. <http://www.icnl.org/research/library/files/Kyrgyzstan/publiccouncils.pdf>.

¹⁴⁵ Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, "Law of the Kyrgyz Republic, No. 74: On Public Councils of the State Bodies," 24 May 2014, Article 17. <http://www.icnl.org/research/library/files/Kyrgyzstan/publiccouncils.pdf>.

structure. In particular, two donor stakeholders noted that a Local Education Group, separate from DPCC, was previously set up per GPE's requirements, but that the two groups were merged. Both stakeholders saw this as a positive development that reduced duplication and fragmentation of dialogue. Another donor stakeholder noted that the regularity of DPCC meetings improved during the review period. Yet another noted the creation of the NPSC as an improvement in efficiency over the previous model of project-by-project steering committees.

65. According to available evidence, sector dialogue mechanisms show areas of **strength** as described below during the review period. It should be noted that the majority of positive stakeholder reflections below refer specifically to 2019, during which the addition of several key personnel helped catalyze improvements in dialogue and clarify stakeholders' respective roles in GPE as a partnership.

- a. Several donor stakeholders cited **a stronger relationship and growing trust between donor partners and the MOES during the review period**¹⁴⁶, which allows for greater transparency and closer collaboration. In particular, one stakeholder cited DPCC as a forum that has increased stakeholders' familiarity with each other, resulting in greater levels of comfort to communicate informally as well as through formal channels.
- b. Three donor stakeholders noted **improvements in donor coordination that reduced duplication of effort and created greater alignment to EDS 2020** over the review period, which they credited to the DPCC and efforts on the part of MOES and DPCC members to create a donor matrix which maps partners' projects, expertise, analytical materials, and financial support.¹⁴⁷
- c. **Regular participation by the MOES at DPCC meetings, and greater government leadership in dialogue**, were also identified as areas of progress by a handful of partners. As one donor put it, "there is MOES representation at every DPCC meeting, and they are always communicating their top priorities, which is extremely helpful." Compared with the health sector, the individual noted, "the MOES takes a stronger leadership and ownership role." Other stakeholders cited the fact that the MOES sometimes calls ad-hoc DPCC meetings, and regularly proposes agenda items for DPCC meetings, as signs of increased leadership and ownership in sector dialogue.
- d. Six stakeholders cited **UNICEF's strong, inclusive leadership in co-chairing the DPCC** as a factor contributing to more active dialogue in the sector. Stakeholders noted that UNICEF has adequate staff and convening power to play this role, and that under their leadership, the group has become more inclusive of NGOs and that "there is room for critical questions and discussions." Three individuals also cited proactive communication of both DPCC co-chairs (UNICEF and USAID) in disseminating draft planning documents and soliciting feedback to share with MOES.
- e. With some increase in civil society involvement in education through the public advisory council and limited membership in the DPCC¹⁴⁸, NGO stakeholders perceived **increased space for advocacy in the sector relative to years past**, and felt that they had the freedom to voice their opinions. While they felt that they had voice, they questioned whether their advocacy influenced government priorities or policy formation.

¹⁴⁶ However, one stakeholder acknowledged the negative impact of staff turnover, especially departures from MOES, on this otherwise largely positive trajectory.

¹⁴⁷ While acknowledging improvement, one stakeholder also noted that higher levels of coordination still did not amount to a true sector-wide approach, which had been the ambition of sector stakeholders in the early 2000s.

¹⁴⁸ EU SBS Evaluation, 24.

66. While there is wide recognition of recent improvements in sector dialogue, stakeholders also identified a number of **weaknesses** present during the review period that prevent dialogue mechanisms from functioning as effectively as they could for shared accountability and decision-making:

- a. Twelve stakeholders noted that **both DPCC and MOES-led working group meetings focus too much on information-sharing and not enough on deeper collaboration and input.**¹⁴⁹ Several reasons were cited as contributing to this issue, including: (a) meeting duration of 90 minutes to 2 hours is too short to accommodate multiple agenda items, updates, and meaningful discussion on each topic; and (b) DPCC members have different areas of sub-sector expertise, which means that not every discussion is relevant to every member, and that at times members cannot make more than very general comments or suggestions if the topic at hand does not fall within their area of expertise.¹⁵⁰
- b. Although several stakeholders acknowledged the MOES's regular and active participation in DPCC meetings as a positive development, several also **cited a desire for participation from a broader cross-section of MOES staff.** When asked about MOES participation in DPCC meetings, three stakeholders noted occasional participation from line ministries or other departments, beyond the advisor who was appointed by MOES as DPCC's main point of contact. However, according to DPCC minutes, although MOES participated in 7 out of 8 DPCC meetings that took place between February 2017 and July 2019, one individual was the only representative of MOES present in each of four meetings, with a second MOES colleague joining in three instances.¹⁵¹
- c. Stakeholders also expressed a desire for the **MOES to take a more active role in setting a sector-wide agenda and leading sector dialogue and coordination.** Historically, the DPCC has had the norm of being donor- rather than ministry-led. Indeed, one individual expressed that development partners are in the driver's seat of the DPCC, a notion corroborated by the 2018 ESA's characterization of the DPCC as a body that functions primarily to facilitate harmonization of donor-defined priorities and donor-funded propositions, instead of a sector-wide agenda defined by the Ministry.¹⁵² The ESA also suggested that MOES should move from "ownership of individual policies and programmes" to "ownership of the sector agenda and reform management process."¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹ The ESA also notes that, "existing coordination mechanisms such as the DPCC are good for high-level reporting, but do not allow for substantive methodological discussions or analytical assessments of various concurrent initiatives undertaken by international actors and the Government. While thematic "working groups" attempt to fill a void, there is a critical need to vigorously examine the potential system's efficacy, implementation feasibility and the cost-benefit efficiency of the various policy and programme proposals across thematic domains and education levels." UNICEF, "Education Sector Analysis," June 2018, 146.

¹⁵⁰ This is less of an issue in MOES-led working groups, which are thematic and sub-sector-specific. However, these groups do not meet in non-planning times.

¹⁵¹ Evaluators' analysis from available DPCC minutes. It is also important to note that the evaluation is taking place in a moment of reduced MOES capacity in relative terms, with departures of key Strategic Planning Unit staff from the Ministry. It is possible that MOES's participation in this subset of DPCC meetings from 2017 to 2019, for which minutes and lists of participants are available, is not representative of their level of participation over the entire evaluation period. It should also be noted that the entire MOES has a staff of around 30 people, making it one of the smallest of all ministries, which poses challenges in sparing personnel and time to participate in additional meetings.

¹⁵² UNICEF ESA June 2018, 146.

¹⁵³ UNICEF ESA June 2018, 146.

- d. Stakeholders also noted that **the Ministry’s use of separate sector dialogue fora to interact with different stakeholder groups¹⁵⁴ can create inefficiencies as well as obstacles to transparency and information-sharing in the sector.** In one example, one partner noted that without donor prompting to create NPSC to consolidate MOES and Parliamentary oversight of donor projects, “every single project would have had its own steering committee, and the Minister would have ended up chairing 25 different committees.” A second example is AED, which receives GPE CSEF support. As noted in Section 3.2, while AED participates in both the Parliamentary Committee on Education and a government working group focused on SDGs, and regularly meets with the MOES system budgeting office, it is not a member of the DPCC.¹⁵⁵ As such, DPCC stakeholders had little awareness of AED’s activities.
- e. Although several organizations are now included in DPCC and there are some opportunities for MOES-NGO interaction through Public Advisory Committees, there was wide consensus among stakeholders that the **main sector dialogue bodies are not inclusive enough of NGOs and CSOs.** If they are not DPCC or PAC members, which most are not, NGOs and CSOs have few channels through which to interact with MOES and donor partners. The result, as one interviewee phrased it, is that there is “no Bishkek-level awareness of what NGOs and CSOs are doing in the sector.” One stakeholder hypothesized that the lack of broader NGO and CSO representation is a function of both structure (with DPCC still seen as primarily a donor forum) as well as outreach and sensitization (NGOs and CSOs may not be aware of opportunities to participate in DPCC or PAC).
- f. Several stakeholders also noted that **central dialogue bodies lack representation of provincial and local-level actors, and that inadequate localized fora exist for dialogue at these levels.** While the MOES holds regional consultations during the EDS development process, it is unclear whether rayon-level public advisory committees have been formed, as was indicated as an EDS 2020 plan goal.

Strengths and weaknesses of sector monitoring

Finding 7: The Kyrgyz Republic lacks a centralized mechanism for sector monitoring, with no functioning EMIS and no annual Joint Sector Review mechanism. This significantly hampers the sector’s ability to systematically use education data to make strategic decisions or understand reasons for system- or outcome-level change.

67. There is no single, integrated data collection system for monitoring education sector implementation in the Kyrgyz Republic. Data collection systems are split between EDS and action plan indicators developed by MOES, financial data collected by the Ministry of Finance, learning outcome data through testing institutions, administrative data available through the National Statistical Committee, and donor data collection on specific education projects and programs, among others. While the creation of an education management information system was included as an EDS 2020 priority, limited progress has been made to date to develop a functional EMIS. The Kyrgyz Republic’s education sector monitoring systems, including learning assessments, EMIS, and joint sector reviews, are discussed in-depth below.

68. **Learning Assessment System.** A 2016 EU review of education quality assessment found that while systems for assessing learning quality in the Kyrgyz Republic are beginning to evolve from “loosely controlled, fragmented and short-term influences on the schooling system” to informing policy and

¹⁵⁴ As noted in Table 3.6 above, the DPCC is the primary forum for MOES - donor partner interaction, while the PAC is a forum for MOES - NGO/CSO interaction. Sub-sector thematic groups include multiple stakeholders, but are only active during planning cycles and are limited in the number of participants.

¹⁵⁵ AED, “Education Coalition in Kyrgyzstan Narrative CSEF Proposal,” 29 June 2016.

partnerships, challenges including a persistent lack of coordination and inadequate funding, human resources, and leadership, present ongoing obstacles to establishing a comprehensive learning assessment system. Key available learning assessments include the National Sample-Based Assessment (NSBA) and USAID’s Early Grade Reading Achievements (EGRA) assessment, which are elaborated below.

69. The NSBA is used to monitor educational achievement relative to national standards for Grades 4 and 8. It has been conducted for Grade 4 four times, out of which two instances fell during the review period (2014 and 2017).¹⁵⁶ NSBA assesses mathematics, reading and comprehension, and natural sciences using a multiple choice test questionnaire.¹⁵⁷ In addition to the NSBA, the OECD’s PISA and USAID’s Early Grade Reading Achievements (EGRA) have also assessed reading and comprehension in the primary grades.¹⁵⁸ Results from the NSBA, corroborated by those of other assessments, showed that over 60 percent of students did not demonstrate the minimal acceptable reading and comprehension skills when dealing with texts similar to those they read daily in classrooms.¹⁵⁹ While EDS 2030 prioritizes literacy¹⁶⁰, which was acknowledged in DPCC meetings by both the MOES and donor partners as an important focus area for improvement, the EU’s review of assessment systems points to shortcomings of the NSBA that limit its usefulness for planning and informing policy. More specifically, when NSBA was implemented in 2014, schools had not yet adopted 2011 learning standards, methods, or curriculum, and existing State standards in use lacked clearly defined, measurable learning outcomes, posing a serious obstacle to the usefulness of NSBA results.¹⁶¹ EDS 2020 indicated an intention to conduct standardized national assessments after 9th and 11th grades (in addition to Grade 4 in NSBA) to measure the quality of schools, teacher performance, and identify problems at school level, but this did not occur during the review period.¹⁶²

70. While a concept for a comprehensive learning assessment was developed in 2014, it has not been finalized or officially adopted.¹⁶³ Numerous obstacles to establishing a comprehensive national assessment systems in the Kyrgyz Republic remain. These include: a lack of adequate funding to implement NSBA for more grades; changing curricular standards and insufficient consideration of assessment system linkages to curricula, textbooks, teacher training, standards, and objectives; and inadequate resources needed for the system to function and lack of quality assurance for technologically enabled assessment tools, processes,

¹⁵⁶ ESA, 52. The NSBA is also known as NASEA, which stands for the “National Assessment of Student Educational Achievements,” and NASLA, or “National Assessment of Student Learning Achievements.” The NSBA was also conducted in 2007 and 2009.

¹⁵⁷ ESA, 52.; European Union, “Review of Education Quality Assessment System in the Kyrgyz Republic (EQAS): From Conceptual Framework to Quality Assurance Tools,” 2016, 47.

¹⁵⁸ ESA, 52. Table 6.5 on page 18 of the ESA also reviews other large-scale assessment tools used in the Kyrgyz Republic.

¹⁵⁹ ESA, 52.

¹⁶⁰ It is unclear, based on available information, whether the draft EDS 2030 prioritized literacy in response to NSBA results or for some other reason.

¹⁶¹ Sources: DPCC Meeting Minutes, 11 March 2019; European Union, “Review of Education Quality Assessment System in the Kyrgyz Republic (EQAS): From Conceptual Framework to Quality Assurance Tools,” 2016, 49.

¹⁶² European Union, “Review of Education Quality Assessment System in the Kyrgyz Republic (EQAS): From Conceptual Framework to Quality Assurance Tools,” 2016, 43. In addition, while the National Statistical Committee publishes data on coverage, financing, and staffing of ECD institutions, no robust quality assurance framework or learning assessment system exists for the preschool level.

¹⁶³ European Union, “Review of Education Quality Assessment System in the Kyrgyz Republic (EQAS): From Conceptual Framework to Quality Assurance Tools,” 2016, 43. In addition, while the National Statistical Committee publishes data on coverage, financing, and staffing of ECD institutions, no robust quality assurance framework or learning assessment system exists for the preschool level.

and procedures.¹⁶⁴ As a result, learning assessments have not been adequately linked to other system components so as to improve education quality, and their data has not been used to systematically inform planning.¹⁶⁵

71. **EMIS and EDS monitoring frameworks.** According to multiple sources, the Kyrgyz Republic lacks a functioning Education Management Information System (EMIS), although initial efforts have been made to establish one under the current 2012-2020 EDS. Stakeholder interviews, EDS planning documents, and the ESA suggest that the main reasons for the lack of a functioning EMIS are: (a) inadequate financial resources; (b) inadequate human capacity; and (c) the lack of a legislative framework to implement such a system at nation-wide scale.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, other available sources suggest that some limited steps were taken towards establishing a functional EMIS during the 2012-2019 review period of this evaluation, which are elaborated below.

72. The ESA notes that donors have increased support to the development of a functional EMIS, and cites the development of an MOES EMIS concept paper that was approved in 2015¹⁶⁷; however limited progress was made between 2015 and 2018.¹⁶⁸ In 2019, with support from UNICEF, the World Bank, and Community Systems Foundation, a core OpenEMIS system was piloted in 19 schools in early 2019. A subset of 250 school-level indicators were included in the pilot, but the piloted system does not yet include indicators on learning outcomes, inclusive education, or vocational education, which are expected to be introduced during the 2019-2020 school year.¹⁶⁹

73. While these are positive developments, the education system's ability to collect, process, analyze and report on education information is currently constrained by the absence of a fully functioning Education Management Information System.¹⁷⁰ Furthermore, it is unclear whether or how the EMIS will help the sector use data that is collected to report on and assess EDS implementation. Although the EDS 2020 and draft 2030 plans and accompanying action plans include indicators developed by MOES to track plan progress, to date, EDS 2020 indicators have not been systematically used by sector stakeholders and have not yet been integrated with OpenEMIS.

74. Under EDS 2020, the MOES reported on sector performance and progress made under the plan based on the percentage of indicators achieved under each three-year APED. According to interviews, 91 percent of indicators were achieved under APED 2012-2014, while 98 percent were achieved under APED 2016-2017, with the results for APED 2018-2020 still to be determined. However, donor stakeholders pointed out

¹⁶⁴ European Union, "Review of Education Quality Assessment System in the Kyrgyz Republic (EQAS): From Conceptual Framework to Quality Assurance Tools," 2016, 43.

¹⁶⁵ European Union, "Review of Education Quality Assessment System in the Kyrgyz Republic (EQAS): From Conceptual Framework to Quality Assurance Tools," 2016, 44.; ESA, 138 - 139.

¹⁶⁶ ESA, 15.

¹⁶⁷ ESA, 15.

¹⁶⁸ A 2016 internal GPE briefing note mentions the absence of an EMIS in the Kyrgyz Republic.

¹⁶⁹ The EMIS website, <https://isuo.avn.kg>, includes information on schools, kindergartens, and universities that is updated by school administrators and shared with the National Statistical Committee. Source: DPCC Meeting Minutes, 27 April 2018; DPCC Meeting Minutes, 23 May 2019. April and December 2018 DPCC minutes note four main levels of users identified for the OpenEMIS system: 1) MOES-level stakeholders; 2) rayon-level education departments; 3) school administrators; and 4) students, teachers, and parents. The meeting notes also indicate that the OpenEMIS does not yet address education financing, although the World Bank is supporting an "Open Budget" project that will incorporate teacher salary information.

¹⁷⁰ Brief and talking points March 2016, GPE document

a number of issues with this reporting system, including: (a) lack of comprehensiveness of chosen indicators; (b) limited continuity in indicators used across EDS 2020 and the APEDs; (c) inadequate baseline measures against which to determine progress made on indicators; and (d) that reporting on the percentage of indicators achieved does not reflect the diversity of importance in activities captured by different indicators. In addition, it is unclear how and whether EDS 2020 implementation progress has been tracked at activity and output levels. Some donor-reported data is ostensibly integrated into MOES reporting, but how comprehensively this is done remains in question, especially because data shared with MOES must be reconciled across different indicators and reporting formats. Several interviewees indicated that the current process of reporting the percentage of indicators achieved reflects favorably on MOES performance, which is important in light of political pressure. However, monitoring sector progress in this way has numerous weaknesses in that it is overly generic, does not connect plan implementation to outcome-level indicators, and does not reflect prioritization of strategic issues.

75. Using the World Bank SABER assessment rubric, the Kyrgyz Republic's EMIS can be considered "latent" for the four policy areas of focus, which are discussed in turn below¹⁷¹:

- Enabling environment:** While 2004 and 2014 state standards make provisions for basic learning assessments, existing frameworks do not provide the legal basis for a nation-wide EMIS. Education system capacity for monitoring, evaluation, and assessment remains insufficient.¹⁷² As noted by several stakeholders, no special unit or department for monitoring and evaluation exists within the Ministry of Education and Science. Some MOES staff across departments monitor progress by sub-sector, but it is the Strategic Planning Unit, which currently has limited capacity, that is tasked with compiling data to report quarterly to the central government and Parliament. MOES stakeholders noted that reporting to Parliament is the main way in which MOES is held accountable for sector progress. However, one donor stakeholder asserted that "MOES is just reporting, but not really monitoring," which the Ministry's own November 2019 draft of EDS 2030 affirms, stating that existing systems for monitoring indicators are only "applicable to the execution of strategic documents" (e.g. data collected through monitoring is primarily used by the MOES for the purpose of reporting to Parliament).¹⁷³ Donor and MOES stakeholders noted the lack of MOES capacity to use and analyze data as an obstacle to better sector monitoring, especially in light of an SPU down to one person. Another obstacle is intense domestic political scrutiny of MOES's activities, which discourages the Ministry from openly sharing data that could be construed as reflecting poorly on its performance.
- System soundness:** The breadth of the sector's data coverage is limited. The National Statistical Committee (NSC) provides administrative statistical data for the education sector, but the flow of data between the MOES, and the National Statistical Committee, and local institutions is unclear. One source suggests NSC education data is collected from the MOES, Ministry of Social Affairs, and Ministry of Health, while another mentions that school administrators of kindergartens, schools, and universities share administrative data directly with the National Statistical Committee.¹⁷⁴ Yet another source notes discrepancies between MOES and NSC data.

¹⁷¹ The four policy areas are: Enabling environment, System soundness, Quality data, and Utilization for decision making. While the evaluators present available data on these dimensions, a comprehensive assessment of EMIS using the SABER framework was outside the scope of this evaluation.

¹⁷² European Union, "Review of Education Quality Assessment System in the Kyrgyz Republic (EQAS): From Conceptual Framework to Quality Assurance Tools," 2016, 9.

¹⁷³ November 2019 Draft EDS 2030, 45.

¹⁷⁴ DPCC Meeting Minutes, 27 April 2018

The Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods (CEATM) and the National Testing Center (NTC) are responsible for the administration of learning assessments and therefore hold learning data, while financial data are collected by the treasury of the Ministry of Finance. As explained in detail in Section 3.4, the MOES lacks access to financial data.

- **Quality data:** A majority of donor stakeholders expressed concerns about the methodological soundness, accuracy and reliability, and integrity of MOES indicators and data used to track EDS and action plan progress. As elaborated above (see paragraph 74), they noted that Ministry-defined indicators and criteria were not well-developed, citing a lack of strong baseline data and inconsistencies in indicators used across planning documents. The fact that some learning outcome data was omitted from the draft EDS 2030 does not reflect well on the integrity of MOES's data use.
- **Utilization for decision making:** Available data is not well-utilized for decision-making in the education sector. The Ministry's November 2019 Draft EDS 2030 notes that, "monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education are non-systematic and often carried out in different, incomparable formats."¹⁷⁵ In particular, data openness and accessibility issues abound. For example, NSC data cannot be used for operational management of the education system due to the lag between collection and publication.¹⁷⁶ In addition, while the EDS and action plans include MOES-developed indicators against which progress is tracked, sector stakeholders do not use these indicators as a joint sector monitoring framework (e.g. donors default to their own results frameworks and data formats, and as one stakeholder noted, while project implementation units are embedded within the MOES, their main accountability in reporting data is to funders, rather than to the MOES). Lastly, donor monitoring in the sector is project- or program-based, with analysis often conducted by external consultants, as some donors do not have sufficient internal capacity to analyze existing data. This further fragments available sector data because: (i) data may not be accessible after projects end; (ii) tacit knowledge resides with external consultants; and (iii) specific thematic or geographic issues are not as closely monitored once projects end. As one stakeholder put it, "when a program or project ends, so does the data." MOES stakeholders also noted that donors do not always share data as often as needed for MOES's reporting to the government, and that when it is shared, donor data uses a variety of formats, which MOES staff must then cross-walk against MOES-defined EDS and action plan indicators.

76. **Joint Sector Reviews.** The Kyrgyz education sector lacks a centralized mechanism for conducting joint sector monitoring and evaluation. While MOES stakeholders cited a joint sector review that took place in 2017 and another scheduled for 2020, 10 interviewed stakeholders were not aware of any annual joint sector reviews for the sector. One stakeholder corroborated the occurrence of a review in 2017, but noted that the lack of strong baseline data and measurement issues posed challenges to assessing progress the sector had made.¹⁷⁷ A second stakeholder was not aware of annual joint sector reviews, but noted that by government requirement, a joint project implementation unit was established in 2017 to coordinate and implement major donor projects and programs in the education sector, with joint quarterly review meetings take place between ADB, EU and World Bank representatives, their respective project implementation units

¹⁷⁵ November 2019 Draft EDS 2030, 45.

¹⁷⁶ EDS 2012-2020, p. 30, and July 2019 draft EDS 2021-2030, p. 59.

¹⁷⁷ However, on a positive note, the same stakeholder noted that the MOES attempted to adjust APED 2018-2020 based on the 2017 review.

(PIUs), the MOES, and several other donors.¹⁷⁸ The fact that there is no common framework for sector monitoring makes holding JSRs at once more difficult, in terms of gathering and integrating data to get a clear understanding of sector progress, as well as even more important. As one stakeholder put it, the education sector “lacks a forum where evidence can be challenged and triangulated across sources.” Since joint sector reviews have not been conducted annually, no GPE results framework ratings are available to assess improvements in JSR quality as a mechanism for sector monitoring. On the whole, inadequate cooperation between government and donors, underdeveloped measurement frameworks, and irregular joint sector reviews amount to weak sector monitoring.

GPE contributions to sector dialogue and monitoring

Finding 8: During the review period, GPE has made some noteworthy contributions to strengthening elements of sector dialogue and monitoring through the coordinating agency and the implementation of assessment tools under the 2014-2017 ESPIG. However, to date, these have had limited effect, with mutual accountability for sector progress remaining weak on the whole.

77. GPE has employed several financial and non-financial mechanisms to support sector dialogue and monitoring. Table 3.7 provides an overview of these mechanisms, grouped by whether they have made a significant, moderately significant, or insignificant contribution to mutual accountability in the Kyrgyz Republic. This grouping is indicative and does not constitute a formal score.

Table 3.7 GPE contributions to mutual accountability during the 2012-2019 review period

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating agency: Multiple stakeholders cited strong leadership from specific individuals within UNICEF, especially in the latter years of the review period, and the CA’s resulting positive influence on sector dialogue in their role as both CA and DPCC co-chair. They noted that the CA proactively and transparently shares information with DPCC stakeholders, and also pushed for DPCC to become more inclusive of NGOs, developing a TOR to support this. Based on existing evidence, the strength of coordinating agency contributions comes from the initiative and leadership of specific individuals within UNICEF based on their understanding of GPE as a partnership, rather than as a result of specific actions taken by the GPE Secretariat or others in the GPE partnership to support the CA. • GPE ESPIG: The 2014-2017 ESPIG supported the use of two assessment tools: the Early Development Instrument (EDI), which uses teacher ratings of children’s readiness for primary school, and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), which measures teacher-student interaction in the classroom. The results of both tools were used to inform MOES decision-making on preschool curriculum and teacher training, and have been approved for nation-wide use.¹⁷⁹
MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE guidelines for ESP development: These guidelines have contributed to improved donor coordination by moving donors away from individual priorities toward uniting around the EDS. One stakeholder stated, “increasingly donors base their programs on the strategy and not just on their own agendas.” One donor indicated that GPE requirements have given donors additional leverage to lobby on behalf of priority policy

¹⁷⁸ The stakeholder noted that other participating donors are USAID and UNICEF and that the meetings are led by the Vice Prime Minister in charge of social affairs and are co-chaired by the Minister of Education. They focus mainly on sharing technical updates on donor activities to determine overlaps and gaps. EU SBS Evaluation, 37-38.

¹⁷⁹ World Bank ICRR Dec 2018, 21

issues. GPE funding requirements specify attention to issues such as inclusion and gender equity, which align with and give greater weight to priorities emphasized by donors. However, a number of government and donor stakeholders had little awareness of GPE's model and requirements, which limits the potential impact of ESP guidelines on mutual accountability in the sector.

- **GPE country lead guidance on GPE as a partnership and mutual accountability:** In interviews, stakeholders emphasized the helpfulness of the GPE country lead's March 2019 visit in clarifying the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the MOES and development partners in GPE as a partnership. However, the fact that this clarification was not provided earlier in the review period by previous GPE Secretariat country leads likely contributed to a relatively weak understanding among country-level stakeholders of mutual accountability and GPE as a partnership in which they are encouraged to play a role (instead of GPE as funds or Secretariat).

LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION TO MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- **ESPIG variable tranche:** No variable tranche was included in the 2014-2017 ESPIG.
- **BELDS:** The BELDS programme supported an inception workshop that highlighted priorities for the ECCE sub-sector, and has supported a consultant to lead the Thematic Working Group for ECCE to strengthen ECCE within EDS 2030. However, it is too early to determine what impact this support has had.
- **GPE guidance on conducting JSRs:** While the current GPE Secretariat country lead has encouraged sector stakeholders to hold JSRs, there is no evidence to suggest that previous GPE Secretariat country leads encouraged the country to organize regular JSRs.
- **GPE Secretariat country lead attendance of JSRs:** As no JSRs have taken place, the country lead has not attended them.
- **CSEF funding:** While CSEF funding has supported AED's work on an education budget analysis and tracking implementation of SDG4, the organization does not participate in any of the sector's main dialogue bodies. As a result, CSEF funding has had no discernible impact on sector dialogue or monitoring.
- **Global GPE events:** GPE supported the Kyrgyz Republic's participation in several global events, including board meetings and a global focal point meeting. However, these events have had limited impact due to language barriers that have curbed the participation of the representative from the Kyrgyz Republic in group discussions. Stakeholders cited a desire either for full translation into Russian, or for an allowance for a non-MOES, English-speaking representative to accompany the MOES to participate in the meetings.

78. On the whole, aside from the CA's efforts to improve transparency and inclusion, GPE's contributions to sector dialogue have been limited. Pre-existing dialogue mechanisms for the sector, whose mandates differ from LEG composition and requirements, have curbed the leverage GPE has through its relatively limited financial and non-financial mechanisms to influence mutual accountability.

79. There is a consensus among donors and MOES representatives that the preschool assessment tools introduced through the 2014-2017 ESPIG have made an important contribution in providing high-quality data on pre-primary outputs and outcomes which has been used in the sector. However, aside from these contributions through the 2014-2017 ESPIG, stakeholders noted that GPE has had limited impact in encouraging stronger sector-wide monitoring via a shared monitoring framework or joint sector reviews. It appears that stakeholders primarily conceive of joint sector reviews as a GPE-required process, rather than a shared responsibility and beneficial exercise to understand progress in the sector. In addition to the obstacle to JSRs posed by the lack of a sector-wide, shared monitoring framework, the CA cited an inability to lead this meaty exercise in the absence of dedicated funding to do so.¹⁸⁰ While the 2019 pilot of the core OpenEMIS demonstrates some political will on the part of MOES to develop more solid monitoring structures, the recent leadership transition to a new Minister makes unclear whether this momentum will be sustained. While it may yet be further developed in subsequent revisions, the draft EDS 2030 gives

¹⁸⁰ DPCC Meeting Minutes, 23 May 2019.

inadequate priority and attention to EMIS relative to its importance for the sector. However, in an encouraging development, the November 2019 draft EDS 2030 does include a results framework, with indicators for each sub-sector plan and target results for 2020, 2023, and 2030.¹⁸¹ Whether this results framework is seen as credible by development partners, and whether and how it is used by all sector stakeholders, remains to be seen.

Additional factors beyond GPE support

80. Additional **positive** factors beyond GPE support that likely contributed to strengthening processes and mechanisms for mutual accountability include:

- a. the creation of a donor matrix for the sector via DPCC, which maps donor expertise, resources, and key areas of support to the sector¹⁸²;
- b. other donor-led assessments which provide high-quality data on specific sector issues, including USAID's EGRA;
- c. and EU support of EUR 635,000 to create the Public Advisory Councils, under its 2013-2018 NGO Grants Scheme Project, which provided capacity building on dialogue, reform monitoring, and data analysis to members of the education public advisory council.¹⁸³

81. Additional **negative** factors which limited the basis for *mutual accountability* between key sector stakeholders include: (a) strong negative public accountability, and the resulting lack of a culture of transparency in data-sharing within MOES and across Government, which diminishes transparency in the sector; (b) insufficient data collection and assessment capacity within key MOES departments, especially the Strategic Planning Unit; and (c) fragmentation of incentives, roles, and responsibilities across government agencies, with multiple bodies in charge of assessments and limited MOES access to sector financial data.

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

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

Finding 9: The Kyrgyz Republic's sector dialogue and monitoring mechanisms have historically been fragmented, with different groups of stakeholders participating in distinct dialogue bodies and using disparate measurement frameworks to track progress. This limits GPE's ability to influence sector dialogue and monitoring inclusiveness and effectiveness, as well as stakeholder opportunities for collaboration on sector problem-solving. The absence of a shared monitoring framework and annual joint sector reviews hamper sector monitoring, but also present an area of potential impact for future GPE support.

83. Available evidence suggests that one out of the four assumptions about sector dialogue and sector monitoring underlying the GPE country-level theory of change (Appendix II) partially held in the Kyrgyz

¹⁸¹ MOES, November 2019 Education Development Strategy 2030, 47 – 52.

¹⁸² DPCC, "Mapping of the available expertise and resources to support development of the Action Plan 2012-2020 of the EDS 2012-2020 among donor agencies," Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 2017. JSRs are also meant to be government-led, so this may represent a lack of full understanding of JSR requirements on the part of the CA, or an alternative solution in the current absence of MOES capacity to take on the task.

¹⁸³ EU SBS Evaluation, 33

Republic during the 2012-2019 review period. The assumption that (ii) country-level stakeholders have the capabilities to work together to solve sector issues is partially true. Although some stakeholders do possess the training and skills required to improve sector monitoring, both government and donor organizations have inadequate M&E capacity, which hampers the sector's mutual accountability.

84. The evaluation found that the assumptions that (i) GPE has sufficient leverage at global and country levels to influence LEG existence and functioning, and that country-level stakeholders have the (iii) opportunities (resources, time, conducive environment) and (iv) motivation (incentives) to work together to solve sector issues do not hold true for the education sector in the Kyrgyz Republic.

85. The DPCC pre-dates the Kyrgyz Republic's GPE/FTI membership, with a mandate that differs from the typical Local Education Group in its donor, rather than Ministry, leadership, and its emphasis on donor coordination and harmonization. Although GPE initially supported the establishment of a separate LEG, the LEG has ultimately integrated into the DPCC as an existing mechanism for sector dialogue. However, without stronger incentives to include NGOs and CSOs, the sector has made limited progress in aligning to GPE's standards around LEG composition.¹⁸⁴

86. Although sector stakeholders may have some of the capabilities necessary to work together to solve sector issues, the evaluation found that they had neither the opportunities nor the motivation to do so. Fora for sector dialogue exist for specific stakeholder groups (DPCC as primarily donor-donor and donor-MOES interaction; PACs for MOES-NGO interaction), however the sector lacks a single forum where all sector stakeholders can participate together in meaningful exchanges informed by evidence. Although many stakeholders are individually motivated to work together, limited incentives and a lack of common monitoring frameworks pose significant obstacles to broader and deeper collaboration. A perception among stakeholders that joint sector reviews are a "GPE idea" rather than a co-owned mechanism also limits motivation and initiative to collaborate on gathering and analyzing evidence to use in adjusting course in sector implementation. Finally, the existence of numerous, yet fragmented dialogue fora also undermines incentives to increase the inclusiveness of any one specific existing dialogue mechanism (e.g. the DPCC).

87. While the possibility of Multiplier Funds may help motivate sector stakeholders to work together to meet GPE application requirements, several noted that MF-ESPIG funding is minimal relative to other donor funding in the sector, and wondered whether the effort of adhering to GPE requirements was worth the time and coordination needed to mobilize such limited resources. The country's ineligibility for traditional ESPIG grants, which are typically of larger amounts than Multiplier Funds, removes some financial incentives that could promote an adherence to GPE requirements, including those related to mutual accountability. In addition, the structure of GPE's ESPIG and Multiplier Fund requirements limits GPE's leverage to influence joint sector reviews: although grant guidelines encourage the submission of JSR reports as supplemental documentation for grant application packages, countries are not technically required to conduct joint sector reviews in order to be eligible for ESPIG or MF-ESPIG funding.¹⁸⁵

88. In light of weak sector monitoring mechanisms, GPE should consider prioritizing support for a shared sector monitoring framework and annual joint sector reviews as key mechanisms through which its model has potential for impact in the Kyrgyz education sector. Most importantly, regardless of whether it occurs in the form of a JSR or through some other process, GPE could support the establishment of a country-owned, regularly used monitoring mechanism that credibly reports on plan implementation progress. The

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2016-06-bod-doc-08-leg-minimum-standards.pdf>

¹⁸⁵ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2019-01-gpe-espig-guidelines.pdf>;
<https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2019-01-gpe-multiplier-espig-guidelines.pdf>

GPE Secretariat could consider a multi-pronged approach focused less on JSRs as an annual event, and more on supporting the establishment of regular, “on-plan” monitoring in country. Such an approach could include dedicating a portion of future GPE grants to the country to support a shared monitoring framework and process, awareness-raising among in-country stakeholders on JSR guidelines, and cross-country exchanges for the Kyrgyz Republic to learn from other countries’ monitoring frameworks and JSRs.

89. Finally, country stakeholders’ views of GPE primarily as a fund or as the Secretariat, as well as JSRs as a “GPE idea,” reveal the lack of a deeper understanding of GPE as a partnership. This experience illustrates the importance of awareness of the GPE Secretariat of power dynamics and incentives among stakeholders to act (or not) as true partners. Rather than assuming that the GA, CA, and others will always act in the best interest of the partnership, instead of their own institutional interests, GPE Secretariat country leads might consider using mapping to understand partners’ institutional mandates, their alignment (or not) with GPE’s aims, and how and why they may or may not live out the partnership in-country. Armed with this information, GPE Secretariat country leads could then differentiate their support for mutual accountability as they engage with country-level stakeholders.

3.4 GPE contributions to sector financing¹⁸⁶

Overview

90. 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 Kyrgyz Republic (Key Question IV)

91. A high-level overview of evaluation findings on sector financing is provided in Table 3.8. These observations are elaborated on through the findings and supporting evidence presented below.

¹⁸⁶ This section addresses evaluation questions CEQ 1.5 and 1.6, as well as to (cross-cutting) CEQs 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 3.8 Overview: CLE findings on sector financing and related likelihood of GPE contributions

PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS MORE/BETTER EDUCATION SECTOR FINANCING					LIKELIHOOD ¹⁸⁷ OF GPE CONTRIBUTIONS TO ¹⁸⁸ :			UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS APPLIED? ¹⁸⁹	
Total domestic education expenditure	Education share of domestic budget	Met 20% Goal? ¹⁹⁰	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 improvement
Steady increase in nominal sums expenditure since 2010	Fluctuation. Increase from 2010-2013, decrease in 2014 followed by increase	Stable, consistently between 18 – 20% since 2011	Fluctuation decline in 2013, increasing since	Stable between 2012 - 2019	Modest. Education share of total government expenditure stayed consistently at 19 percent..	Significant. GPE provided 90 percent of all international financing to pre-primary	Modest. Limited progress on harmonizing donor modalities.	1	2

Characteristics of sector financing during the review period

DOMESTIC FINANCING

Finding 10: Absolute domestic education financing has been steadily rising since 2010 but remains vulnerable to external shocks and the effects of increasing public debt. The per annum increase in domestic expenditure may not be sufficient to meet the needs of a growing school age population even as education spending as a share of total domestic expenditure has stayed consistently at 19 percent.

92. Education spending as a share of total domestic expenditure, GDP, and per capita: Although there are considerable differences in the amount of education spending reported by various sources, all consistently indicate that the Kyrgyz Republic has remained committed to financing education over the course of the evaluation period. Since 2010 the Kyrgyz Republic's education expenditure has been steadily rising in both

¹⁸⁷ 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.

¹⁸⁸ 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.

¹⁸⁹ 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.

¹⁹⁰ One of GPE's ESPIG funding requirements is that 20 percent of government expenditure be invested in education, or that government expenditure on education show an increase toward the 20 percent threshold.

absolute and relative terms.¹⁹¹ Government education expenditure increased 16 percent per year, rising from 12 billion som in 2010 to 32 billion som in 2017, or US\$ 254m and US\$ 452m when converted to constant 2016 US dollars.¹⁹² Since 2010, government expenditure in education as a share of GDP has stayed above 6 percent, dropping only to 5.6 percent in 2014. Between 2011 and 2017, the share of government expenditure dedicated to education has averaged 19.4 percent¹⁹³ – high relative to other Central Asian countries.¹⁹⁴ The nominal per annum growth in education expenditure can be attributed to several factors including the passing of a new bill in 2010 that raised the salaries of teachers and the prioritization of pre-primary education that led to an increase in infrastructure spending, particularly in the development of kindergartens.¹⁹⁵ According to the World Bank’s rapid public expenditure review, the increase in education expenditure can also be attributed to budget increases to general secondary and pre-school education to finance new capital investments and wage increases and increased hiring in the respective sub-sectors.¹⁹⁶

93. Several stakeholders (donors, CSOs, and government) questioned whether the annual nominal increase in education expenditure, while acknowledged as a positive, is at pace to address to the growing needs of the sector.¹⁹⁷ The increase in the birth rate since 2000 has contributed to a growth in the number of school-aged children.¹⁹⁸ In 2016, total fertility rate (average number of children born to one woman in her reproductive age) reached 3.1 children per woman.¹⁹⁹ As a result, the annual population growth rate in the Kyrgyz Republic has increased steadily from 1.2 percent in 2010 to 2.1 percent in 2016.²⁰⁰ The average annual growth rate of school-aged children (aged 7-17) has been 8.5 percent between 2007 and 2016.²⁰¹

¹⁹¹ The evaluation team noted considerable variation in education expenditure data reported in sources such as the Education Situational Analysis (ESA), GPE documents, the Public Expenditure Review, UNESCO UIS data, and national data from the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Reasons for differences include the use of nominal versus constant figures and the selected base year used for currency deflation. Additional reasons not listed here may also factor in differences in figures.

¹⁹² Authors calculations based on education spending data from the 2018 National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. Data that was originally available in Soms (either nominal or unspecified) was converted to constant US dollars. When data is presented in 2016 US\$, original data in current Soms was deflated using the Kyrgyz Republic’s annual average CPI (IMF World Economic Outlook Database) and converted to U.S. dollars using the December 2016 exchange rate (U.S. Treasury).

¹⁹³ Authors calculations.

¹⁹⁴ To provide a comparison with neighboring countries, the ESA states that in 2017, Kazakhstan devoted 14 percent of its budget to education, Tajikistan allocated 16 percent and Mongolia committed 17 percent respectively. Over the same period, per capita spending on education in the Kyrgyz Republic grew from US\$158 to US\$268. Sourced from the ESA (2019).

¹⁹⁵ World Bank, “Public Expenditure Review”, 2014.

¹⁹⁶ World Bank, “Kyrgyz Education: Rapid Sector Assessment – Unpacking Sector’s Expenditure Envelope for Efficiency Gains,” PPT, 2017.

¹⁹⁷ The World Bank 2019, Kyrgyz Education Rapid Sector Assessment states that “between 2011 and 2016, persistently increasing student numbers continue to impose pressure on the sector budget.”

¹⁹⁸ UNICEF, “Kyrgyz Republic: Education Sector Analysis. Strategic Choices for the Government to Improve Education. DRAFT”, June 2018, pg 20.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

Table 3.9 Domestic sector financing, absolute and relative indicators, 2010 to 2017²⁰²

CATEGORY	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	TREND
Total government education expenditure, nominal Soms (billions)	11.99	18.23	21.68	21.7	22.4	25.45	30.36	32.28	Rising
Total government education expenditure, US\$ (millions, 2010-2017 average)	304.9	397.6	460	431.8	414.9	442.2	525.4	541.4	Fluctuation
Education expenditure as percentage of GDP, %	5.4	6.4	7.0	6.1	5.6	5.9	6.4	6.1	Fluctuation
Education Share of Total Government Expenditure (TGE), %	17.4	19.9	20.2	20.8	18.5	18.9	20.0	19.4	Fluctuation
Per capita education expenditure, US\$²⁰³	158	195	208	213	210	232	272	268	Rising

94. **Changes in rates of economic growth.** Despite vulnerability to external shocks, Kyrgyzstan has enjoyed a relatively consistent period of economic growth since independence. The annual GDP growth rate in Kyrgyzstan averaged 3.95 percent from 1994 until 2017.²⁰⁴ Following the global economic crisis in 2009/2010, the Kyrgyz economy rebounded in 2013 as the GDP growth rate increased to 10.9 percent. This period was followed by a slower growth rate of nearly 4 percent in 2014 and 2015, and 3.5 per cent in 2016.²⁰⁵ The reduction in GDP growth was attributed to falling oil prices in Russia and Kazakhstan. Despite the slow down in economic growth, in 2014 the Kyrgyz Republic was re-classified by the World Bank from a low-income country to a lower-middle income country as its GNI per capita increased from US\$ 1,040 in 2012 to US\$ 1,200 in 2013.²⁰⁶ Economic growth over the last decade has resulted in increased levels of government revenue that has allowed for an increase in social sector spending, including education.

95. **Levels of public debt:** Increases in education spending over the evaluation period are partly a product of an increase in overall tax revenue and high levels of deficit spending. According to the 2018 Education Sector Analysis, the total revenues of the state budget in 2016 amounted to 130 billion KGS, which is 3.6 times higher than in 2007. The main source of the increase in state budget resources is tax revenue, which was 93 billion KGS in 2016, 4 times higher than in 2007. In 2016, as in previous years, the bulk of tax revenue (about 72 percent of all taxes) was generated by value added tax, income and profit taxes, and international trade and operations.²⁰⁷ The 2018 Education Sector Analysis and the 2014 Public Expenditure Review noted the risks of the Kyrgyz Republic's significant dependency in using deficit spending as a method to increase government spending. The Kyrgyz Republic used nearly 10 percent of 2010 deficit spending to cover

²⁰² This table draws on data from the 2018 National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Benchmark Analysis of Education, and the World Bank's BOOST Data. UIS data were available only but are consistent with the 2018 Public Expenditure Review and the National Statistical Committee data.

²⁰³ World Bank, BOOST Data Lab, World Bank, <http://boost.worldbank.org/boost-data-lab>, data extracted July, 2019.

²⁰⁴ UNICEF, "Kyrgyz Republic: Education Sector Analysis. Strategic Choices for the Government to Improve Education. DRAFT", June 2018.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

planned budget expenditure in education. According to the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the state foreign debt at the end of 2016 amounted to US\$ 3.7 billion.²⁰⁸ The share of the state external debt to GDP for ten years fluctuated within between 44 to 64.4 percent of which 39.6 percent was owed to China and 16.5 percent to the International Development Association.²⁰⁹

96. **Sector plan funding:** Although the 2012-2020 EDS was not costed, expected budgets for implementing the EDS are articulated within three-year action plans. The total cost of implementing the 2012-2014 Action Plan, coupled with additional projections for 2015-2016, was estimated at US\$ 2.29 billion²¹⁰. Financing projections assumed that domestic education funding would increase steadily from US\$ 351m in 2012 to US\$ 472m in 2016 and external funding would also increase from US\$ 22.9m in 2012 to US\$ 35m in 2016. As shown in Table 3.10, domestic funding fell short of the projected increase. Despite projected increases in domestic and international funds, the 2012-2014 Action Plan identified an overall funding gap of US\$ 61 million for the sector between 2014 and 2016, which represents a 12 percent gap per year.²¹¹ The yearly gap for pre-school education, the government's priority sub-sector, was estimated at about US\$ 4.7 million for the same period. Government efforts to raise the efficiency of education spending and to introduce alternative mechanisms to increase access to pre-school education are aimed to narrow the funding gap.²¹²

97. **Allocations by sub-sector.** During the evaluation period, spending on pre-primary education as a share of total education spending increased, as the share of primary and secondary spending decreased. Pre-primary education's share of total education spending grew from 11 percent in 2013 to 13 percent in 2017. Although general education, which consists of primary and secondary education, has consistently occupied a significant share of the Kyrgyz Republic's total education budget, general education spending as a share of total education spending declined from 62 percent in 2013 to 56 percent in 2017. Higher education expenditure as a share of total education spending remained at 13 percent on average between 2013 and 2017.²¹³

98. **Decentralization of government education spending.** Education financing had been highly decentralized in the Kyrgyz Republic with the MoES managing only 16 percent of the overall financial resources for the sector in 2012.²¹⁴ Although half of the education budget was funded through central government grants, local authorities executed about 70 percent of spending on schools.²¹⁵ According to the World Bank, this allowed local authorities to hold up disbursement or divert funds, and split accountability

²⁰⁸ World Bank, "Public Expenditure Review", 2014.

²⁰⁹ Other creditors include Russia (7.2 percent of public debt), Japan (6.3 percent), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (5 percent), and other countries (10.2 percent).

²¹⁰ The evaluation team was only able to obtain the budget for the 2012-14 Action Plan, along with projections for 2015-16, thereby preventing analysis of the full costs of the the sector plan

²¹¹ GPE, "Education Program Implementation Grant Application," 2013.

²¹² GPE, "Education Program Implementation Grant Application," 2013.

²¹³ Spending on "other expenditure" increased from 14.8 percent to 17.6 percent over the same period.

²¹⁴ Sources include: UNICEF, "Kyrgyz Republic: Education Sector Analysis. Strategic Choices for the Government to Improve Education. DRAFT", June 2018; World Bank, "Public Expenditure Review", 2014; EU, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung & BIOM, "Education Financing in the Kyrgyz Republic", Fostering and Monitoring of the Education Reforms in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2016.

²¹⁵ Ibid

for the success of schools.²¹⁶ However, since 2012, the education financing system has become more centralized with MoES consolidating more budget and planning controls at the expense of local government authorities.²¹⁷ In 2016, the MoES managed nearly 70 percent of the overall financial resource for the sector. Grants from the central level cover salaries and salary increases, as well as food costs. While the MoES is responsible for leading the sector and for providing general oversight, the MoF controls the budgets of the MoES and its affiliated agencies, as well as much of the spending in the education sector.²¹⁸ Through participation in sub-sector specific working groups, the MoES provides cost estimates to the MoF for the entire sector. Ultimately, it is the MoF that decides where to allocate spending which limits the MoES' ability to effectively connect planning with budgeting.²¹⁹ Despite these changes, local authorities still have substantial autonomy in deciding how to finance schools within their jurisdiction, with little accountability for results.²²⁰

99. **Budget versus execution rates.** The decentralized nature of the education sector in Kyrgyzstan had contributed to significant challenges in public expenditure tracking. As a result, there are no accurate data on budget execution rates for the period of evaluation. According to the 2014 public expenditure review, the disconnect between funding and execution had led to inefficiencies and the inadequate provision of school inputs because a) central funding is regulated by norms that are not consistent or enforced at the local levels and b) the availability and sharing of feedback and information is scarce.²²¹ Moreover, a large share of funds released by the central treasury has not been accounted for at the school level. According to the public expenditure tracking survey (PETS) conducted in 2012, about 27.2 percent of the central funds flowing from the treasury to rural schools could not be located. About 9 percent of the funds leaving the treasury could not be traced in the local government and nearly 90 percent of accounting statements at the municipal level did not match statements at the local government treasury. Discrepancies can be positive or negative with 1.8 percent of total funds initially allocated by the central treasury missing at the municipal level. Moreover, only 20 percent of the surveyed municipalities had disaggregated budget records by school.²²²

100. **Recurrent versus capital expenditures.** Although still high, recurrent expenditure as a percentage of total education spending has declined in recent years. Recurrent education expenditure declined from 90 percent in 2013 to 82 percent in 2016.²²³ It should be noted that absolute recurrent spending (wages, salaries, goods and services) increased during this time period, with salary expenditures increasing from 8.7 billion som in 2011 to 15.7 billion som in 2016. Expenditure in goods and services (food and energy) increased from 2 billion som in 2011 to 2.2 billion som in 2016. The main driver of the increase in the general education budget is capital investments. Capital expenditure as a percentage of total education expenditure increased from 5 percent in 2012 to 17 percent in 2016. While the absolute amount of recurrent

²¹⁶ World Bank, "Project Appraisal Document (PAD) for the Sector Support for Education Reform Project," February, 2013, page 5.

²¹⁷ World Bank, "Kyrgyz Education: Rapid Sector Assessment – Unpacking Sector's Expenditure Envelope for Efficiency Gains," PPT, 2017.

²¹⁸ UNICEF, "Kyrgyz Republic: Education Sector Analysis. Strategic Choices for the Government to Improve Education. DRAFT", June 2018 and World Bank, "Public Expenditure Review", 2014.

²¹⁹ World Bank, "Public Expenditure Review", 2014.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics Open Data. "Kyrgyzstan." <http://uis.unesco.org/country/KG>

expenditure has increased, the share of recurrent spending as a percent of total education spending decreased as a result of the increase in capital investments.

101. **Household education spending.** Private spending in Kyrgyzstan is mainly represented by household expenditures. According to the ESA, households pay for the education services provided by private institutions and hidden fees in public schools. Obtaining reliable information on household education spending, however, is extremely difficult given the lack of availability in both household income and expenditure data.²²⁴ According to a study on household spending strategies in the Kyrgyz Republic, education expenses account for nearly 11 percent of total household consumption budget.²²⁵

INTERNATIONAL FINANCING

Finding 11: After donor support between 2011 and 2015 fluctuated, aid to education has increased since 2016, a signal that the reclassification of the Kyrgyz Republic from low-income to lower middle-income has not affected the volume of ODA received. Efforts to establish a sector wide approach to education (SWAp) have not fully materialized.

102. **International education financing as a share of total education spending has fluctuated during the 2011 to 2017 period.** International education financing as a share of total education expenditure declined from 7.2 percent in 2011 to 4.7 percent in 2015 only to increase in 2017, when it accounted for 6.1 percent of all education spending.²²⁶ The decline in international education financing as a share of total education spending was driven partly by the increase in public expenditure in education during the review period.

103. **The change in country classification from low-income to lower middle-income has not negatively affected the volume of ODA or education specific aid received by Kyrgyzstan in the short term.**²²⁷ Between 2011 and 2017, Kyrgyzstan received fluctuating levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA) disbursements to all sectors. Since reaching its lowest level in 2014, an increasing proportion of ODA has been allocated to education, rising from 9.1 percent in 2014 to 16.9 percent in 2017. Similarly, gross ODA disbursements to education rose from US\$ 16.4m to 27.7m between 2013 and 2017 as seen in table 3.12.

²²⁴ UNICEF, "Kyrgyz Republic: Education Sector Analysis. Strategic Choices for the Government to Improve Education. DRAFT", June 2018

²²⁵ Hagerdorn et al. "Remittances and Changing Household Spending Strategies: Evidence from the Life in Kyrgyzstan Study, 2011-2013. The Pennsylvania State University, 2016.

²²⁶ Sources include UNICEF, "Kyrgyz Republic: Education Sector Analysis. Strategic Choices for the Government to Improve Education. DRAFT", June 2018; Kyrgyz Republic, "National Statistical Committee" Data, and OECD-CRS data.

²²⁷ In 2014, the Kyrgyz Republic was re-classified from a low-income country to a lower-middle income country by the World Bank with increase of GNI per capita from USD 1,040 in 2012 to USD 1,200 in 2013.

Table 3.10 Overseas Development Assistance Disbursements, all sectors vs. education, US\$ millions²²⁸

FLOW	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	TREND
Total ODA, all sectors	195	152.5	167.0	190.5	180.4	145.8	163.5	Fluctuating
Total education ODA, 2016 constant USD	23.9	25.5	16.4	17.4	17.2	23.4	27.7	Fluctuating
GPE Disbursements, 2016 constant USD	4.3	2.1	-	1.9	2.7	3.7	3.0	Fluctuating
Education ODA as % of total ODA	12.2%	16.7%	9.8%	9.1%	9.5%	16.1%	16.9%	Fluctuating

Figures in million US\$, constant 2016 values (Source: OECD-CRS, 2019. All figures adjusted to include GPE ESPIG contributions).

QUALITY OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCING

104. **Sector Wide Approach.** In 2011, under the EU and UNICEF's leadership, donor partners (DP) began consultations with the Kyrgyz Republic to establish a sector wide approach to education (SWAp). Inspired by the success of the health sector, a SWAp was seen as a way to coordinate aid to the education sector in preparation for the implementation of the 2012-2014 Action Plan for Education Development (APED).²²⁹ In addition to coordinating donor funds to the sector, a SWAp also introduced the notion of pooled sector funding as a way to improve the efficiency and quality of donor funds as promoted by the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action.²³⁰

105. In April 2013, donor partners signed a SWAp agreement outlining each donor's respective areas of focus. The European Union would support all levels except pre-school education, including small grants to improve access to TVET for vulnerable groups—special-needs children, imprisoned adults, rural women. The World Bank would focus on pre-school, general education (grades 1–11), and teacher training in higher education. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) would support pre-school, general education, and cross-cutting issues, such as development of an education management information system. The German bilateral development agency Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) would focus on TVET, and higher and adult education. ADB would serve as the lead agency for vocational education reform.²³¹

²²⁸ Note that financing figures from OECD-CRS do not align with international education financing figures reported in domestic sources (e.g. the National Statistical Committee or ESA). While OECD-CRS does track the same trends as domestic sources (e.g. fluctuation in funding before 2014 and a decline since 2015) sources frequently differ by at least 17 percent.)

²²⁹ European Commission, “Multi-Annual Indicative Programme (MIP) for the Kyrgyz Republic 2014-2020”, 2014

²³⁰ The Paris Declaration (2005) is a practical, action-oriented roadmap to improve the quality of aid and its impact on development. It gives a series of specific implementation measures and establishes a monitoring system to assess progress and ensure that donors and recipients hold each other accountable for their commitments. The Paris Declaration outlines the following five fundamental principles for making aid more effective: ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results, and mutual accountability (source OECD.org). Designed to strengthen and deepen implementation of the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA, 2008) takes stock of progress and sets the agenda for accelerated advancement towards the Paris targets (source OECD.org).

²³¹ ADB, Document on “Development Coordination,” [Second Vocational Education and Skills Project](#), No Date. Last accessed September 5, 2019.

106. However, by March 2013, it was clear that any agreement on a SWAp would not include agreement on a new pooled fund for the sector. The joint statement endorsed by donor partners does not imply the use of a single financing modality for all donors. Instead, it is articulated that a mix of options would be used according to individual development partners, including budget support, pooled financing, or parallel financing (project approach).²³² As shown Table 3.14, donors have differing preferences in the modality of funding for their respective projects and some reservations about a pooled fund for the sector.

107. There also appears to be little momentum/commitment from donor partners to institutionalize the SWAp agreement. Many government, donor, and CSO organizations were unable to provide a clear description of SWAp and there was a lack of awareness of its current status. Moreover, there does not seem to be significant new commitment from donors, including GPE, to partake in the SWAp. The program appraisal document (PAD) for the World Bank's 2013 Sector Support for Education Report Project cited several challenges of adopting a SWAp in Kyrgyz Republic, including the lack of a satisfactory fiduciary system and reliable monitoring mechanisms, which are prerequisites for a fully functioning SWAp approach.²³³ As a result, the SWAp agreement was never implemented and, at the time of this review, there was little collective interest from donors to establish a SWAp in the immediate future.

108. **Funding modalities.** Indeed, the evaluation found that three different funding modalities were used in the education sector during the period of review, namely project support, sector budget support, and general budget support. In addition, donors used a variety of financing mechanisms, such as grants and concessional loans, to channel their funds. Table 3.14 below describes the variety of modalities and mechanisms used by donors.²³⁴

Table 3.11 Donor modalities and commitments²³⁵

DONOR	MODALITY	MECHANISM	COMMITMENT
ADB	General budget	Grant/Loan	US\$22m (2015-2021) US\$ 30m (2018-2023)
GPE	Project	Grant	US\$12m (2014-2017)
EU	Sector budget	Grant	US\$37.2m (2012-2017, OECD-CRS)
ILO	General budget	Grant	US\$25.3m (2012-2017, OECD-CRS)
UNICEF	Project	Grant	US\$4.97m (2012-2017, OECD-CRS)
USAID	Project	Grant	US\$19m (2019-2024)
World Bank	Project	Grant/Loan	US\$9.1m highly concessional credit US\$ 7.4m grant ²³⁶

²³² Ibid.

²³³ World Bank, "Project Appraisal Document (PAD) for the Sector Support for Education Reform Project," February, 2013

²³⁴ Interview respondents did not proactively mention that the variety in funding modalities created difficulties in monitoring the different donor-funded initiatives.

²³⁵ Table adapted from various sources including the OECD-DAC CRS database; ECORYS Consortium, "Evaluation of the Education Sector Reform Contracts (SPSP and SRC), Kyrgyz Republic, Final Evaluation Report," July 2019, Rotterdam, the Netherlands; and World Bank Project Appraisal Documents, and Annual Reports of donor agencies.

²³⁶ World Bank, "[New WB project in Kyrgyz Republic will help improve basic education](#)," March 2013. Last accessed on September 5, 2019.

109. **Finance officials from the MoES described a clear preference for direct project funding over general or sector budget support.** Government officials noted the drawbacks of using general and sector budget support in the Kyrgyz Republic, explaining that the MoES would not have full ownership of funds if channeled through such mechanisms. In a budget support modality, the MoF would oversee funds, per current budget and financing arrangement in the Kyrgyz Republic (see paragraphs 96 and 97), leaving the MoES with little ownership in determining where and how funding would be spent. The prevailing preference from MoES officials is for direct project support as it ensures that most of the allocated funding will be directed at education programs rather than other non-education government expenditures.

GPE CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR FINANCING

Finding 12: GPE’s primary contribution to international education financing has come through its ESPIG grant. Despite concerns about the process-heavy application, the Multiplier Fund is viewed as an important potential source of contributions to sector financing.

110. GPE offers a series of financial and non-financial mechanisms to support the quantity and quality of domestic and international sector financing. Table 3.12 provides an overview of these mechanisms, grouped by whether they are likely to have made a significant, moderately significant, or no/limited contribution in the Kyrgyz Republic. This grouping does not constitute a formal score.

Table 3.12 GPE contributions to sector financing during the 2011 - 2019 review period

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO DOMESTIC FINANCING	SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPIG modality:²³⁷ The project support used by GPE and the World Bank to implement the 2014-2017 ESPIG was the preferred financing modality by the MoES. Through updates given in the DPCC, donors were kept informed of project funding and execution rates. The decision to use a grant mechanism was also viewed positively by the government given the country’s high debt burden. The strong tradition of collaborative work in the early childhood area, initially cultivated by UNICEF and Aga Khan Foundation, has continued within the framework of the APED, where funding allocations are described and agreed to by stakeholders.²³⁸ The MoES has committed to funding teacher salaries and infrastructure costs of building new kindergartens and pre-schools established through the ESPIG. Part of the construction and renovations costs of pre-primary institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPIG funds: The Kyrgyz Republic received two ESPIG grants during the evaluation period. Between 2011 and 2012, an ESPIG of US\$5.9m was disbursed, followed by a US\$12.7m ESPIG between 2014 and 2017. Over the 2014-2017 period, ESPIG funds accounted for 13 percent of all international financing disbursements to education. Although multiple stakeholders noted that available GPE funding amounts are small in comparison to funding from other donors to the sector, most stakeholders view GPE funding as an important source of funds for the pre-primary sector. ESPIG funds represented nearly 90 percent of all international financing to the sub-sector between 2014 and 2017.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ The 2014-2017 ESPIG meet 3 of the 7 dimensions of alignment as defined under Indicator 29 of the GPE Results Framework. The dimensions that the 2014-2017 ESPIG met were Plan, Budget/Parliament, and Report. The dimensions the 2014-2017 ESPIG did not meet were Treasury, Procurement, Accounting, and Audit.

²³⁸ McLean, H “Education Sector Group’s Appraisal Report: Education Development Strategy 2012 – 2020. Action Plan for Education Development 2012 – 2014. The Kyrgyz Republic”, January 2013.

²⁴⁰ Based on authors calculations. UIS data on pre-primary spend per year is around US 37 million. Data on donor disbursements to early childhood education during the 2014-2017 are from the OECD-DAC CRS database. GPE disbursements have been added to the sum of donor disbursements during this period as GPE is not included in the

<p>were covered by local and community budgets. This arrangement was agreed to as part of the ESPIG application, where the government guaranteed continued financing of teacher salaries for the new CBKs.²³⁹</p>	
MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO DOMESTIC FINANCING	MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCING
• N/A	• N/A
LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION TO DOMESTIC FINANCING OR INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OF CONTRIBUTION	LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCING OR INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OF CONTRIBUTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPIG funding requirement (on domestic financing): GPE requires countries to meet or move towards meeting the 20 percent target and to commit to funding their ESP. During the 2010-2019 review period, the share of government expenditure dedicated to education was sustained at 19.4 percent on average. However, interviewed stakeholders did not connect the ESPIG funding requirement to changes in levels of domestic financing. • GPE Secretariat advocacy: There is little evidence to suggest that GPE Secretariat advocacy has mobilized additional domestic financing or influenced the annual nominal increase in education expenditure. • CSEF Grants: CSEF funding to AED (formerly the Education Coalition in Kyrgyzstan) supported coalition members participation in ASPBAE-facilitated trainings on SDG 4 and budget analysis. Although AED has official channels to engage MOES, it is unclear to what extent subsequent advocacy efforts have contributed to changes in domestic budgets. Because AED is not part of the DPCC, interviewed stakeholders had little awareness of AED's activities and what impact they have had in influencing domestic budgets.²⁴¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE multiplier:²⁴² GPE's multiplier mechanism was not in effect in Kyrgyz Republic during the 2012-2019 review period. An application for the Multiplier is currently under development with the World Bank proposing co-financing of US\$ 50 million as part of the application. The Multiplier is viewed by government officials as an important potential source of contribution to international financing, especially as the the country is no longer eligible for ESPIG funding. • GPE additionality: Neither donors nor MoES representatives asserted that GPE activities (as a Partnership or Fund) attracted additional donors or additional international financing to the education sector. Several donor stakeholders expressed the belief that GPE activities at global and national levels had not catalyzed additional donor financing, citing national strategy documents and donors' own strategies as the most important factors in determining external financing to the sector. While there has been interest from donors, particularly the World Bank, to apply as the GA for the Multiplier ESPIG, at the time of the evaluation there was insufficient evidence to suggest that the proposed US\$25 million in IDA co-financing was catalyzed by the requirements to access GPE Multiplier funds.

DAC database. It is important to note that GPE funding as a share of all donor funding to pre-primary subsector is an estimate.

²³⁹ World Bank, Project Appraisal Document, Kyrgyz Early Education Project (KEEP), June 30, 2013, pg 20.

²⁴¹ Global Campaign for Education, "CSEF 2013-2015 Progress Report to UNESCO for the period 01 July to 31 December 2013." March 2015.

²⁴² The main difference from a regular ESPIG2 is that accessing the Multiplier ESPIG requires countries to show that at least US\$3 in new and additional external funding for education has been mobilized for each US\$1 from the Multiplier ESPIG. The objective is to create an incentive to mobilize new and additional external finance for education (Source: GPE Multiplier guidelines)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector Plan Development Grant: The Kyrgyz Republic received a US\$ 498k ESPDG between 2016 and 2018 which contributed to the development of the EDS. A credible, endorsed EDS is a prerequisite for the next round of MF-ESPIG funding, for which an application is under development. However, there is limited evidence to suggest ESPDG has contributed to the quality or amount of international financing.
NOT APPLICABLE IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC CONTEXT	NOT APPLICABLE IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC CONTEXT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variable tranche / DLI influence on domestic spending: ESPIG grants did not have variable tranches or disbursement-linked indicators during the period of evaluation. 	

111. **There is no evidence that GPE support directly displaced domestic or international financing.** Government representatives noted that GPE funding came at a time where national prioritization of ECD had already occurred. Because GPE financial support helped fill in the funding gap in pre-primary education, rather than displace domestic financing to this sub-sector. Donor representatives also expressed that funding decisions to the pre-primary sub-sector were not influenced by GPE funding. For example, the government's receipt of GPE funding during 2012-2017 and the decision to apply to the upcoming multiplier grant did not lead to changes in financing decisions from donors, both in terms of the amount committed or the type of modality to be used.

112. **The Multiplier Fund is viewed by government officials as an important potential source of finance but the process for accessing Multiplier funding has been challenging.** Several donor stakeholders questioned whether the lengthy and process-heavy application for the Multiplier funds was worth undertaking to access the important but relatively minor US\$ 5 million in eligible funding.²⁴³ Several donor stakeholders also noted a lack of understanding and insight into the process for applying for the Multiplier fund. There also appeared to be initial confusion among donors about the process for selecting the grant agent for the Multiplier fund. According to one donor, stakeholders were surprised when the World Bank was announced as the co-financer for GPE multiplier funding, citing their lack of clarity on eligibility criteria and the selection process for the role of co-financer and PDG grant agent. On a positive note, the March 2019 country lead visit helped to clarify this confusion. However, conflicting organizational deadlines between the Multiplier co-funder (World Bank) and GPE has led to challenges in the Multiplier Fund application process. Because a credible, endorsed education sector plan is a prerequisite for accessing MF-ESPIG funding, the Multiplier ESPIG application cannot be submitted until after EDS 2030 is finalized and endorsed, likely in 2020. But securing the intended IDA co-financing from the World Bank required submission of an application to the World Bank Board in October 2019. Thus, these conflicting timelines have led to the preparation of separate programmatic documents for the World Bank's internal purposes

²⁴³ Securing a maximum country allocation from the GPE Multiplier (MCAM) is not automatic, and depends on meeting several criteria, including sourcing new and additional external support for the education sector plan (ESP). Each US\$1 from the Multiplier, up to a country's allocation ceiling, is expected to unlock at least US\$3 in new, external funding. Countries eligible to access the Multiplier can secure an MCAM by submitting an Expression of Interest.

and for the Multiplier Fund application, which the World Bank has noted will be designed to align as much as possible.

Additional factors beyond GPE support

113. Additional **positive** factors affecting international financing beyond GPE support include a number of donor initiatives contributing to the level of financing available in the Kyrgyz Republic over the course of the review period, which are presented in Table 3.14.

114. Additional **negative** factors affecting domestic financing include a) lack of MoES access to the financial data collected by the treasury of the Ministry of Finance. Currently, the MoES does not have data on real-time line-item spending by educational institutions which hinders the department's ability to adapt allocation of teacher positions and training among other significant expenditures. And b) capacity constraints within the MoES have limited its ability to collect and analyze information about the sector and formulate policy decisions on the basis of evidence.

Observations on GPE's ToC and country-level operational model

Finding 13: GPE's influence on sector financing where it exists, is linked to its role as a Fund (rather than partnership), specifically its ESPIG financial contribution. Otherwise, GPE seems to have limited leverage over the quality and quantity of domestic and international financing.

The first assumption of the GPE theory of change with regards to sector financing, that “GPE has sufficient leverage to influence the amount and quality of domestic education sector financing,” was found to **hold partially true** in the context of the Kyrgyz Republic. Although there is little evidence of substantial GPE influence on the amount of total government spending dedicated to education (which has remained at 18-19% over the review period), GPE's contribution through ESPIG funding has led to new commitments to funding teacher salaries in the pre-primary subsector. Although sustained advocacy to prioritize pre-primary education by GPE in-country partners such as UNICEF and the Aga Khan Foundation may have contributed to the steady levels of education spending, the nominal annual increases in the education budget are generally attributed to events such as the introduction of new legal bills that increased salaries of education personnel and the use of deficit spending to fund education expenditure – events likely to have occurred absent GPE involvement in the country. While the government has shown commitment to maintaining education spending, such spending remains vulnerable to external shocks and an increasingly high debt burden. Macro political and economic considerations are likely to ultimately determine whether education spending is sustainable over the longer term.²⁴⁴

The second assumption, that “external (contextual) factors permit national and international stakeholders to increase/improve the quantity and quality of sector financing,” was also found to **hold partially true**. The impact of the GPE funding on the quality of donor financing is mixed. While the selected ESPIG modality represented alignment to the MoES preference for project-based funding and provided greater predictability, it also weakened donor initiative to move towards a SWAp and an associated pooled fund, which are pinned to global agreements on improving the quality of aid. Over the evaluation period, little progress has been made in establishing the prerequisites for a SWAp, as GPE's model does not appear to provide clear guidance on what role, if any, it should have in the promotion of donor harmonization or moving towards a pooled fund or sector budget support.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ McLean, EDS 2012-2020 Appraisal.

²⁴⁵ It is important to note that the modality of the ESPIG is chose by the government in collaboration with country partners. It is not chosen by the GPE Secretariat.

3.5 GPE contributions to sector plan implementation²⁴⁶

Overview

115. 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 implications of findings for the GPE ToC/operational model? (CEQ 7)

116. Table 3.13 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.

Table 3.13 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 ²⁴⁷					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Strong – Available evidence suggests that activities were fully or partially implemented for 97 percent of the 290 indicators established in the 2012-2020 EDS. ²⁴⁸	Strong – The 2013-2016/17 ESPIG provided 9 percent of all funding to the pre-primary sector ²⁴⁹ between 2013 and 2016 and contributed to expanding coverage to preschool programs and community-based kindergartens.						

²⁴⁶ This section addresses evaluation questions 1.3 and 1.4, as well as (cross-cutting) CEQs 3.1 and 3.2.

²⁴⁷ 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.

²⁴⁸ EU, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kyrgyz-republic/50040/support-reform-education-sector-kyrgyz-republic_en

²⁴⁹ Data is not available to calculate GPE's contribution as a percent of the actual costs of implementing the EDS, nor is it currently available to calculate the 2013 – 2016/17 ESPIG funding as a percent of overall sector funding.

Strengths and weaknesses of sector plan implementation

Finding 14: Overall, the 2012-2020 EDS was implemented as intended, with most activity-level targets fully achieved despite challenges including misalignment of APED and EDS indicators, capacity constraints at subnational levels, and lower-than-expected levels of domestic financing.

117. The 2012-2020 EDS was generally implemented as planned. Stakeholders strongly agreed that the 2012-2020 EDS drove sectoral activities delivered during the review period through the execution of three-year implementation plans: the 2012-2014 Action Plan for the Education Development Strategy (APED), the 2016-2017 APED, and the 2018-2020 APED.

118. However, as discussed in Section 3.3, the indicators used to establish sector progress lacked robustness and credibility, and thus may not give a reliable picture of plan implementation progress. Annual joint sector reviews, which evaluate sector progress over the previous year, or any systemic review of the sector are absent in the Kyrgyz Republic. Although progress against activity-level indicators set out in the APEDs is independently monitored and reported by the MoES, the monitoring process does not systematically track outcome-level indicators described in the 2012-2020 EDS. The introduction of a new monitoring and evaluation framework in 2016²⁵⁰ by the MoES still needs to be fully institutionalized across MoES sub-departments and institutions, including those at the local and school levels.²⁵¹

119. Triangulation of sources such as World Bank PAD, the 2019 ESA, the 2019 EU SBS Final Evaluation Report, and the draft 2021-2030 EDS suggests that the majority of actions outlined in the 2012-2020 EDS were delivered or partially delivered during the review period. According to the EU, the MoES achieved 97 percent of the 290 indicators established in the 2012-2020 EDS.²⁵²

120. The overarching goal of the 2012-2020 EDS is to provide equal access to quality education for all children. To achieve this goal, the EDS lists twelve objectives by 2020.²⁵³ Please see Table 1.2 in Chapter 3.2 for more information.

²⁵⁰ The monitoring and evaluation framework is reflected in the corresponding Regulations and Guidelines, which were officially approved by the MOES in 2016. The Guidelines determine mechanisms of interaction between MOES and other stakeholders within the framework, tools for collecting various types of information, methodology for data analysis, reporting instruments for development of conceptual and strategic documents in the field of education (ECORYS Consortium, 2019, pg 93).

²⁵¹ ECORYS Consortium, "Evaluation of the Education Sector Reform Contracts (SPSP and SRC), Kyrgyz Republic, Final Evaluation Report," July 2019, pg 24

²⁵² EU, "[Support to the Reform of the Education Sector in the Kyrgyz Republic](#)", 2018. Accessed on September 5, 2019. Although achievement figures have been cited in key documents such as the ECORYS Consortium, "Evaluation of the Education Sector Reform Contracts (SPSP and SRC), Kyrgyz Republic, Final Evaluation Report," pg 31, the evaluators do not have access to the actual data on achievement.

²⁵³ Increase preschool access; Equitable access to primary and secondary education; Specialized upper secondary school (Gr 10 & 11) opportunities; Develop skills relevant to the labor market; Create conditions for continuous lifelong learning; Develop partnerships to engage employers at all levels of the education system; Introduce competence-based learning including metacognition, decision-making, analysis, communication, and critical thinking skills; Use a credit system to provide flexibility and mobility to students to combine work and higher education; Preserve cultural and linguistic diversity and tolerance in a multilingual educational environment; Support education financing and fair distribution of financial resources; Develop a strategic planning and management system based on data collection and analysis, including gender disaggregated statistical data; Efficiently manage human resources and launch an M&E system.

121. Given GPE's prioritization of basic education, the scope of this evaluation focuses on the programmatic areas of pre-primary education, primary and secondary education, and administrative and institutional development. Table 3.14 provides examples of major initiatives linked to 2012-2020 EDS and subsequent APED priorities that were achieved, partially achieved, or were not achieved in the 2012-2019 review period. Many of the listed activities (e.g. teacher training, direct support to schools, etc.) were implemented by the government in cooperation with international or domestic development partners.

Table 3.14 Review of period achievements against 2012-2020 EDS activity-level targets

ACCESS (Strategic Goal 1)	QUALITY (Strategic Goal 2)	INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (Strategic Goal 3)
PLANNED EDS ACTIVITIES WHICH WERE LARGELY ACHIEVED 2012-2019		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-primary expansion: The number of kindergartens increased from 713 in 2012 to 1,497 in 2018.²⁵⁴ Pre-school enrollment increased from 132k in 2012 to 197k in 2018, which represents 26% of children aged 3-5 years, exceeding the EDS goal of achieving 20% coverage (EDS 2021-2030). • Electronic registration: The roll-out of electronic registration in kindergartens was completed and introduced in the cities of Bishkek, Osh and in the Issyk-Ata district of the Chui oblast. In 2018, the electronic registration system recorded more than 35k applications and allocated more than 22k children to kindergartens (EU SBS Final Report).²⁵⁵ • School readiness program - The pre-school program “Nariste” expanded from a 240 hour-course in 2012 to 480- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New curriculum: A new primary education curriculum, which uses a competence-based approach and focuses on results-oriented learning, was introduced in 2014 (EDS 2021-2030). A new curriculum for Pre-school Education and Childcare has also been introduced.²⁵⁹ • Open Access / Electronic textbooks: With support from the Soros Foundation, an online platform (lib.kg) was launched to procure and provide open access electronic versions of school textbooks for students, teachers and parents. The platform includes e-textbooks for grades 1-4 (iBilim) and grades 5-9 (Bilim Bulagy) (EDS 2021-2030). • A National qualification system has been developed to ensure quality and recognition of different levels of teacher credentials, both domestic and international (EDS 2021-2030). • School modernization: During the 2016-2017 academic year, 91 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financing and management reforms have resulted in the introduction of standardized budget financing at pre-school, school, primary vocational, and higher education levels (2021-2030 EDS). • Textbook publishing regulation: During the period of review, the regulatory legal framework of the textbook publishing system was revised, including the requirements for conducting various types of examinations.²⁶⁰ The MoES has also worked with publishing houses to review educational publishing policies.²⁶¹ • Per capita school funding mechanisms: In 2017, the government adopted a normative funding mechanism based on per-capita analysis (without utility costs). The new funding mechanism was implemented in Osh City and Osh Oblast and then replicated to other regions in the country. By

²⁵⁴ Number of Kindergartens in 2012 sourced from the ESA 2019 and number of kindergartens in 2018 from the 2021-2030 EDS.

²⁵⁵ An electronic registration system was introduced to increase the transparency of pre-school enrollment (Source: EDS 2021-2030)

²⁵⁹ Under the new curriculum, graduate requirements are formed through a package of basic subjects. Changes include the increase in the number of hours in foreign languages, the introduction of the subject "Informatics" from Grade 5, changes in the teaching methods of the state language, and increased attention to the subjects of the natural science cycle. In addition, standards were developed for the profile level in Grades 10 and Grade 11 in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. The new curriculum specifies the knowledge, skills, values and attitude towards life (competence) that have to be developed by a child as a result of studying the program material (EDS 2021-2030).

²⁶⁰ The MoES works in conjunction with textbook publishing houses to review educational publishing policies.

²⁶¹ ECORYS Consortium, “Evaluation of the Education Sector Reform Contracts (SPSP and SRC), Kyrgyz Republic, Final Evaluation Report,” pg 48

hour course covering 106k children in 2014/15, nearly 100% of all children at the age of 5.5 to 7 years, exceeding well beyond the EDS goal of 60% coverage (EDS 2021-2030).²⁵⁶

- **Primary school construction:** The number of schools at primary and secondary level increased from 2,207 in 2012 to 2,265 in 2018 (EDS 2021-2030).²⁵⁷
- **School feeding program:** More than 1,300 schools in grades 1-4 participated in a hot meals system in the 2018-2019 academic year. The school feeding program which was launched in 2013 in partnership with WFP and support from Russia, aims to support health and wellness of the younger generation (EDS 2021-2030, pg 24).²⁵⁸

schools were given the status of an innovative school, out of which 30 schools were equipped with laboratory, multimedia, office and educational equipment as well as furniture for classrooms. In addition, 540 schools have been equipped with laptops, routers and projectors for Internet use (EU ESBS evaluation report, pg 97).

- **Bilingual education:** In 2018 UNICEF and the MoES continued to implement multilingual and multicultural education in 18 schools in Batken Oblast (region). This enabled 1,750 children (947 girls, 843 boys) to learn in multilingual classes in 18 target schools (UNICEF 2018 Annual Report).

end of 2018, a total of 1,977 schools were funded on the basis of the normative funding formula (EU SBS Final Evaluation, pg 25).

- **National student assessments:** The National Sample-Based Assessment (NSBA) of student achievement was conducted by the MoES for Grade 4 in 2014 and 2017 and for Grade 8 in 2017 (EU SBS report, pg 48).²⁶²

PLANNED EDS ACTIVITIES WHICH WERE PARTIALLY ACHIEVED 2012-2019

- **Introduction of school board of trustees:** The legal base for the Board of Trustees/Management was established following amendments to the Law on Education in 2012. As of 2019, 831 schools in Kyrgyzstan (37.8%)

- **EMIS:** Although the establishment of an EMIS was prioritized in the 2012-2020 EDS, at the time of this review there still was not a fully operational EMIS that integrated data collection efforts in the Krygyz

²⁵⁶ At the pre-primary level, significant efforts have been made to increase access to pre-school education services through various initiatives including the Nariste 480 hours programme, and the “zero grade” class where children (age 6-7) receive preparatory education before “entering” grade 1 at secondary school. Since 2010, the total number of ECD institutions has more than doubled (1296 institutions, covering 173,633 children; 2016 figures). Many secondary schools, especially in rural areas, now include Kindergarten and grade zero on their premises. (Source: ECORYS Consortium, “Evaluation of the Education Sector Reform Contracts (SPSP and SRC), Kyrgyz Republic, Final Evaluation Report,” pg 47).

²⁵⁷ In the 2016-2017 school year, there were 122 primary schools, 208 basic education schools, and 1,906 secondary schools (2019 ESA, pg 44).

²⁵⁸ WFP, “WFP Expands Schools Meals Program in Kyrgyzstan,” 2018. <https://www.wfp.org/news/wfp-expands-school-meals-programme-kyrgyzstan>

²⁶² The NSBA was also conducted for Grade 4 and Grade 8 in 2007 and 2009 (EU SBS report 2019, pg 48).

have established Boards. (EU SBS Final Report, 2019, pg 85).²⁶³

Republic.²⁶⁴ As described in section 3.3, data collection system are split between the EDS and APED indicators developed by MOES, financial data collected by the MoF, learning outcome data through the National Statistical Committee. Through support from UNICEF, the World Bank, and Community Systems Foundation, a core OpenEMIS system was piloted in 19 schools in early 2019. However, the pilot EMIS does not yet integrate indicators on learning outcomes, inclusive education, or education financing.²⁶⁵ According to the EU SBS final report (2019), additional work is required to develop EMIS into a real policy and planning support tool, including strengthening of the EMIS staff working on sector statistics and analysis.²⁶⁶

PLANNED EDS ACTIVITIES WHICH WERE NOT ACHIEVED 2012-2019

- **Sector Wide Approach to Education (SWAp):** Despite EU support, efforts to establish a SWAp in the Kyrgyz Republic did not materialize for numerous reasons including the lack of appropriate governance and systems required for a SWAp (World Bank, PAD).

²⁶³ Despite the establishment of school board of trustees in 37 percent of schools, the Ministry has reservations about the quality / legality of many of them. In the Ministry's opinion, there are only 400 of the 831 schools where the Boards are in full compliance with the Law (EU SBS Report, 2019).

²⁶⁴ Stakeholder interviews, EDS planning documents, and the ESA suggest that the main reasons for the lack of a functioning EMIS are: (a) inadequate financial resources; (b) inadequate human capacity; and (c) the lack of a legislative framework to implement such a system at nation-wide scale.

²⁶⁵ See section 3.3 on sector monitoring and dialogue for more detail.

²⁶⁶ The MoES did not as reported start the work on the Concept and EMIS in September 2014. Work on the Concept began in December 2014 and it was supposed to be presented in May 2015. The concept was finally presented in August 2015 and approved by the Collegium on the 16th September. It would not be possible to implement the concept and have EMIS fully operational by September 2015, particularly as the MoES does not have the necessary funds to procure software and any additional hardware (EU SBS Final Report, 2019, pg 92).

123. The success of 2012-2020 EDS implementation is partly attributed to the high level of cooperation between the MoES and donors during the period of review. Several donor stakeholders commended the government's willingness to embrace proposed education reforms. Given 2012-2020 EDS implementation was highly dependent on aid, increasing levels of trust between the MoES and donors has contributed to achievement of results. One donor described the MoES as “welcoming, open, and supportive.”

124. **Although most of the priority actions outlined in the 2012-2020 EDS were achieved, MoES and donor partners had to overcome three key challenges during implementation:** i) shortage of domestic finance, ii) lack of a common framework to measure implementation progress, and iii) government capacity constraints.

- **Financing shortage.** Availability of appropriate domestic financing represented the highest risk to the successful implementation of the EDS 2020.²⁶⁷ The 2012 budget allocated for textbooks had to be reduced from 100 million Soms to 63 million as a result of the 2013 state budget deficit.²⁶⁸ Donor partners noted that reductions in funding allocated for textbooks was a perennial problem resulting from a shortage of domestic funds. Funding provided by key donors filled much needed gaps for EDS implementation.
- **Lack of a common reliable framework to measure implementation progress.** Several donor stakeholders lamented the lack of an annual review of progress to be able to periodically assess plan implementation and adjust activities as needed.²⁶⁹ Stakeholders noted that the lack of an inclusive annual review process with a credible shared framework presented challenges in ensuring activities related to EDS objectives were being implemented. While the available data suggests that the Kyrgyz government did make progress against plan goals, it is possible that even more progress would have been achieved if a reliable framework to measure progress was in place and was regularly used to inform implementation course corrections. As described in Section 3.3, the Strategic Planning Unit is tasked with compiling data to report quarterly to the central government and Parliament. Donors provide data to MoES who report sector progress to the central government and parliament. However, the quality of available data is not well-utilized for decision-making and course correction in the education sector. This is a function of the fact that i) the lag between data collection and publication often hinders timely use of data, and ii) data collection is non-systematic and often carried out in different incomparable formats.²⁷⁰
- **Capacity constraints.** While stakeholders cited increasing levels of trust between MoES and donors as a key factor supporting implementation, stakeholders also identified several capacity constraints that limited sector plan implementation, including a lack of proficiency in management and administration, and gaps in crucial technical skills, which were reinforced in 2012 GPE Secretariat comments on the 2012-2020 EDS, and more recently, the EU SBS Final Report (2019).²⁷¹ The available evidence noted three specific gaps. First, while stakeholders felt that current staff within the MoES are largely qualified and capable, the MoES staff, which was small to begin with, experienced key departures during the review period. Second, stakeholders cited inadequate data

²⁶⁷ GPE appraisal report, pg 45

²⁶⁸ MoES, “Summary of the implementation of education and science policy measures in 2018” Internal word doc shared with DPCC, exact date unknown. Translated from Krygyz.

²⁶⁹ For more information on this issue and sector monitoring please see chapter 3.3

²⁷⁰ Please see Section 3.3 more more information.

²⁷¹ GPE Secretariat comments on 2012-2020 EDS

analysis expertise within the MoES as a factor contributing to the stalled roll-out of EMIS as challenges related to integrating data from discrete sources were not able to be resolved. Third, technical and managerial capacity constraints are present at subnational levels. Document review and interviews with donor stakeholders suggest that the legacy of the Soviet system, in which central authorities authorized all actions, held back several government staff (who were educated and socialized in that system) from taking initiative and attempting experimentation to resolve challenging situations.²⁷² Interviewed donor stakeholders commented that these barriers often impeded smooth implementation of programs. Without providing constant and clear instructions, donor programs supporting EDS implementation suffered delays, with national staff unwilling to address challenges and problems independently without instruction from the central government.

GPE contributions to sector plan implementation

Finding 15: GPE contributed to financing the pre-primary subsector, expanding coverage of the national school readiness program, and increasing enrollment in community-based kindergartens – outcomes that are well-aligned with 2012-2020 EDS priorities.

125. GPE uses a series of financial and non-financial mechanisms to support sector plan implementation. Table 3.15 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 the Kyrgyz Republic. This classification does not constitute a formal score.

Table 3.15 GPE contributed to plan implementation through financial support and incentives

SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- **ESPIG funding support to EDS implementation:** The US\$12.7 million ESPIG represented nearly 90 percent of all international financing to the pre-primary subsector over the 2014-2017 period²⁷³, and constituted 9 percent of all financing to the pre-primary subsector.²⁷⁴ Despite the relatively small absolute grant amount, all stakeholders noted the value of GPE contribution in filling gaps related to expanding early education services. The ESPIG provided needed non-personnel investment to the pre-primary sector, a crucial contribution given that capital investments in education account for only 6 percent of public spending.
- **ESPIG Grant Agent:** The World Bank as the ESPIG Grant Agent played a valuable role through its management of the Kyrgyz Early Childhood Education Project (KEEP) as well as provision of technical assistance and engagement in dialogue with the government. Most donors described the Grant Agent as having successfully implemented the project, with a few stakeholders noting that regular project updates were not consistently, proactively shared in DPCC meetings, the main forum for sharing ESPIG progress. It is worth noting that this did not disrupt coordination or limit other donors' ability to align with the project (and when requested, the Grant Agent provided such updates).

²⁷² UNICEF, "Kyrgyz Republic: Education Sector Analysis. Strategic Choices for the Government to Improve Education. DRAFT", June 2018 and interviews and donor stakeholders

²⁷³ Authors calculations. Data on donor disbursements to early childhood education during the 2014-2017 are from the OECD-DAC CRS database. GPE disbursements have been added to the sum of donor disbursements during this period as GPE is not included in the DAC database. It is important to note that GPE funding as a share of all donor funding to pre-primary subsector is an estimate.

²⁷⁴ Based on authors calculation.

- **Program Development Grant 2013 and 2017:** The 2013 PDG of \$200,000 supported the development of a program proposal for the Kyrgyz Early Education Project (KEEP). The program proposal was a key input into the Kyrgyz Republic's ESPIG 2014 – 2017 application package.

MODERATE CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- **ESPIG modality:** The GPE ESPIG used a direct project support modality, which was the preferred modality of government stakeholders. MoES stakeholders remarked that using direct project support ensured funds were being directly spent on program activities.²⁷⁵ However, as described in Section 3.3, the decision not to use a sector budget support mechanism may have contributed to the lack of progress in establishing SWAP in the education sector.
- **GPE support to strengthening plan implementation capacities:** There is some evidence to suggest that other modalities of GPE support such as technical assistance through the GA and Secretariat have strengthened the implementation capacity of the World Bank Project Implementation Unit (PIU).
- **Secretariat visits:** MoES and donor stakeholders alike expressed appreciation for the Secretariat's role in creating consensus and bringing actors together in an often-difficult political environment. GPE support via monitoring visits from the Secretariat also provided the KEEP PIU with technical assistance during the implementation period. However, apart from the PIU, stakeholders did not provide specific examples of how Secretariat visits or guidance supported EDS implementation. Frequent turnover of the country Secretariat leads may have contributed to this lack of visibility during implementation. Over the period of review there have been five Secretariat country lead changes.²⁷⁶
- **ESPIG support for improving sector data:** The 2014-2017 ESPIG supported the Early Development Instrument (EDI), which measures school readiness, and its Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), which measures teacher-student interaction in the classroom. The results of both tools were used to inform MOES decision-making on preschool curriculum and teacher training and have been approved for nation-wide use.

LIMITED/NO CONTRIBUTION TO SECTOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION OR NOT APPLICABLE

- **Coordinating Agency:** While the CA has played a valuable role in their support to sector dialogue and sector planning, it is unclear whether support to sector plan implementation would be substantially different in the absence of the CA.
- **CSEF/GRA funds:** There is no evidence that CSEF or GRA-funded activities supported plan implementation.
- **ESPIG variable part:** Not applicable. The GPE funded grant did not include variable tranche funding.

126. **Government stakeholders commended the use of GPE funds entirely to support a specific sub-sector.** Government representatives cited appreciation for the clearly defined objectives of GPE funding, noting that it closely aligned with and supported government priorities, since GPE funding came at a time when the government began prioritizing pre-primary education. Stakeholders agreed that the ESPIG's pre-primary focus was relevant and well-aligned with MoES objectives. The pre-primary focus of the ESPIG was determined with MOES and DPCC input, which ensured alignment with the priorities of the 2020 EDS and the 2014 APED. Improving access and quality of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and improving learning outcomes in basic education have been at the forefront of government priorities since the mid 2000s. The pre-primary-related strategic objectives of the 2012-2020 EDS 2020 and 2012-2014 APED were to expand the school-readiness program for 6-year olds, increase the hours of operation of the pre-primary education preparation classes from the existing 240 hours to 480 hours, and to enable more flexible arrangements for comprehensive care and education, especially in community-based approaches. These priorities are aligned

²⁷⁵ In contrast to sector budget support, which has at times been diverted from the MoES's intended purpose for it (Source: GPE Final Readiness Review Report, 2013, pg 3).

²⁷⁶ Secretariat country lead changes occurred in February 2012, July 2013, January 2014, July 2015, and November 2018.

with the project development objective (PDOs) of KEEP, to (a) increase equitable access to preschool education and (b) to establish conditions for improving its quality, which GPE's 2014-2017 ESPIG supported.

127. **The ESPIG provided a significant financial contribution to implementing pre-primary sector activities between 2013 and 2016.** The 2012-2014 APED and additional projections for 2015-2016 identified an overall funding gap of US\$ 61 million for the sector between 2014 and 2016, and estimated the yearly gap for pre-school education at US\$ 4.7 million for the same period. ESPIG funding is estimated as accounting for 9 percent of all spending on pre-school in the period of 2014-2017.²⁷⁷

128. **KEEP was viewed by all stakeholders as successful**, in that it achieved all program objectives and contributed to the growth of the pre-primary subsector. Major accomplishments of the KEEP project include:

- a. **Increased equitable access to preschool education.** This objective was achieved through (i) the countrywide rollout of the school preparation program²⁷⁸, (ii) establishment of community-based kindergartens (CbKs) in remote areas, and (iii) a new model of an inclusive education program. The enrollment rates significantly exceeded or achieved their targets: by the third year of implementation, 116,985 children were enrolled (46 percent above the target of 80,000). The number of children covered by the preparation program in three years totaled 369,322 (64 percent above the target value). According to the National Statistical Committee, the total number of 6-year-old children in Years 1-3 was 395,842 nationwide, which means the project achieved nearly universal enrollment for the preparation year (93 percent).²⁷⁹

Evidence showed that the school preparation program was most beneficial to children from poor households with no exposure to ECE. The established community-based kindergartens (CbKs) served the lowest-income communities in the remote and hard-to-reach areas, and an improved inclusive education program was made available for children with special education needs (SEN).²⁸⁰

- b. **Established conditions for improving preschool education quality.** This objective was achieved through improved teacher practice under the full-year preparation and CbKs programs, enhanced measurements of children development and teacher practice, and improved

²⁷⁷ Based on authors calculations.

²⁷⁸ The school readiness program ("Nariste") enrolled three cohorts of children within the three-year period. The enrollment numbers exceeded the value targets due to the shift-based model offered by the schools, as well as the communication strategy aimed at raising awareness on ECE benefits. The data shows that the projects reached out to the poorest households in all three regions, especially starting from 2016, thus addressing the equity issues in access to preschool.

²⁷⁹ World Bank, "Implementation Completion Report Review". IEG, 2019. The NER for children aged 3-6 has increased from 15.5 percent in 2010 to 25.2 percent in 2016 (2019 ESA, page 32).

²⁸⁰ By project completion, 10,000 students were enrolled in the CbKs. The CbKs served communities in the poorest, hard-to-reach, and mountainous areas offering the program to the most disadvantaged children in their mother tongue. The increased enrollment in targeted communities demonstrated an alternative for a more efficient use of the education budget. The intermediate indicators to support PDO Indicator 2 have met or exceeded their end values—the share of groups operating in Kyrgyz (62 percent planned versus 87.7 percent actual) and Uzbek (9 percent planned versus 10.5 percent actual). All CbKs received a high-quality essential package of learning materials. Due to efficient project procurement, the project incurred savings, which supported establishment of 20 additional CbKs, and thus exceeded one of the intermediate indicators—number of newly established kindergartens (100 planned versus 120 actual). (Source: World Bank, Implementation Completion Report)

programs for teaching and learning and strengthened legal framework. The total number of teachers trained to deliver the preparation program was 5,210, which is 57 percent over the planned target of 3,300. The number of deputy directors who had undergone training accounted for 2,930 or 33 percent above the target. The number of teachers trained for CbKs' mixed age groups program exceeded its target of 250 by 32 percent (330 total). An independent assessment of the project showed that improved conditions resulted in improved outcomes of child development and quality of learning.²⁸¹

Additional factors beyond GPE support

129. Additional factors beyond GPE support that positively supported the implementation of the 2012-2020 EDS included initiatives from other development partners. The education sector is characterized by a complimentary set of sectoral priorities among partners. In general, UNICEF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), and USAID work on basic education; GIZ and ADB on secondary education and vocational training; and UNICEF, Aga Khan Foundation and GPE on pre-school education. This donor division of labor is included in the government's three-year APEDs. Box 3.1 below describes major donor initiatives that are aligned with the objectives of the 2012-2020 EDS.

Box 3.1. Major donor initiatives aligned with the 2012-2020 EDS

Asian Development Bank – Strengthening the Education System Sector Development Program (US\$ 22 million, 2012 – 2021). The program includes a US\$ 10 million policy-based grant and a US\$12 million project grant. Program objectives include supporting several 2012-2020 EDS activities, including curriculum review and development, reform of textbook development, publishing, and distribution procedures, and updating regulation and practices of in-service teacher training.²⁸²

European Union- Sector Policy Support Programme (SPSP) (EUR 17 million, 2013-2018) and Education Sector Reform Contract (SRC) (EUR 30 million, 2016-2018). EU budget support operations used a sector budget support modality to facilitate the implementation of the 2012-2020 EDS, through setting specific policy targets to address shortcomings at systems level (policy development, strategic planning, M&E, institutional capacity, as well as policy dialogue with civil society and development partners).²⁸³

UNICEF Country Program (2012 – present). UNICEF's country program activities for the education sector align closely to the 2012-2020 EDS. Over the period of review, UNICEF and the MoES implemented multilingual and multi-cultural education in 18 schools in Batken Oblast (region). This enabled 1,750 children (947 girls, 843 boys) to learn in multi-lingual classes in 18 target schools.²⁸⁴ Of the children reached, 43 per cent were from ethnic minorities (31 per cent Uzbek, 11 per cent Tajik, 1 per cent

²⁸¹ According to the KEEP project independent completion and results (ICR) report, “the evidence generated by these measurements showed that the full-year school preparation program produced an increase in learning attainment among the children enrolled in the program. The results of the study using the EDI, undertaken with the support from the Offord Centre for Child Studies of McMaster University in Canada, revealed a remarkable improvement in children's language and cognitive development skills, which are known to play a crucial role in overall academic attainment at a later stage.”

²⁸² ADB, Kyrgyz Republic, Strengthening Education System Sector Development Program Progress Report on Trache Release, 2018. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-documents/46537/46537-002-prtr-en.pdf>

²⁸³ ECORYS Consortium, “Evaluation of the Education Sector Reform Contracts (SPSP and SRC), Kyrgyz Republic, Final Evaluation Report,” July 2019

²⁸⁴ UNICEF, “2018 Annual Report,” 2018

other ethnicities). In 2018, UNICEF provided technical support to the Government of Kyrgyzstan to introduce child development centres (CDCs).²⁸⁵

USAID – Reading Together (2013-2017). USAID’s Reading Together project was designed to improve the reading skills of early grades (1-4) students through introducing new teaching methods and raising awareness in communities about the importance of reading. In addition to supporting 10,000 primary school teachers complete a 72-hour training course and distributing 264,000 books in Kyrgyz language in public secondary schools across the country, the project also conducted three rounds of EGRA in partnership with the National Testing Center.²⁸⁶

USAID – Time to Read Project (US\$9.9 million, 2016-2019). Implemented by Chemonics International, the USAID Time to Read Program builds on the Reading Together program to improve the foundational reading skills of grade 1-4 students. The program works with the MoES to increase education outcomes in 900 Kyrgyz and Russian language schools, and works nationwide with more than 200,000 primary grade students, and approximately 9,000 teachers and school administrators to improve classroom instruction, strengthen methodological support, provide high-quality early grade reading materials, and engage the community around reading.²⁸⁷

World Bank Sector Support for Education Reform (SSER) Project (US \$16.5 million, 2014 – 2019). The SSER’s project development objective was to create conditions for improved learning outcomes in basic education. Specifically, SSER i) completed three rounds of training covering primary teachers, deputy directors, and heads of methodological units on the new curriculum, ii) financed the design, printing, and distribution of three million textbooks and TLMs, supported curriculum revision of grades 5-9, and supported two learning assessment activities.²⁸⁸

130. Donor support – both financial and non-financial - has been a strong contributing factor to EDS implementation. However, questions remain about whether project implementation units (PIU) - a common operating structure used by donors (including GPE) to support the implementation of EDS activities - is the optimal structure to build country capacity. According to the 2018 ESA, “actions taken by donor agencies to strengthen Government capacity – such as the creation of project implementation units (PIUs) within the MoES - defeat the purpose and become de-facto extended arms of the donor agencies within the Ministry that further undermine the latter’s authority and ownership.” Hired by donors, stakeholders mentioned that PIU teams tend to be more accountable to aid agencies than to the MoES, who they are required to serve. The same ESA report suggests that the imbalance of salaries, benefits and working conditions between the donor-paid PIU staff and Ministry personnel on the Government’s payroll also makes harmonization between the two a difficult proposition.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ USAID, “Quality Reading Project Reading Together” Last accessed September 6, 2019. <https://www.usaid.gov/kyrgyz-republic/fact-sheets/quality-reading-project-reading-together>

²⁸⁷ USAID, “Time to Read Project,” Last accessed September 5, 2019. <https://www.usaid.gov/kyrgyz-republic/fact-sheets/time-read-project>

²⁸⁸ World Bank, “Restructuring Paper of SSER,” 2013.

²⁸⁹ UNICEF, “Kyrgyz Republic: Education Sector Analysis. Strategic Choices for the Government to Improve Education. DRAFT”, June 2018, pg 145.

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

Finding 16: GPE's contributions to implementation of pre-primary activities reflects smooth integration into EDS-aligned implementation efforts among central-level actors and thoughtful prioritization. GPE's sub-sector specific support, while necessary, did not contribute towards cross-cutting sector goals of developing a robust EMIS and introducing much-needed joint-sector reviews.

131. The evaluation found that GPE primarily contributed to sector plan implementation by financing the pre-primary subsector, which helped expand coverage of the school readiness program and increase enrollment in community-based kindergartens. At the same time, in cases where the government and country partners prioritize GPE ESPIG funding towards a specific sub-sector or activity, as in the case in the Kyrgyz Republic, GPE's contribution towards supporting sector wide initiatives such as establishing a well-functioning EMIS or introducing joint-sector reviews will be more limited.

132. The assumptions that relevant government actors have the (i) *motivation* to implement the sector plan **holds true**. Donors stakeholders described the government's firm commitment towards introducing sector reforms and fostering strong partnerships with donors as an important factor in successfully implementing the 2012-2020 EDS. However, the assumption that relevant government actors have the (ii) *opportunity* and (iii) *capabilities* to implement the sector plan **hold partially true**. Although opportunity and capacity at the central levels are fairly high, the MoES has been constrained by a shortage of staff at central level and technical capacity at subnational levels. MoES staff have struggled to actively engage in the implementation of donor-supported programs in addition to their regular day-to-day responsibilities. Stakeholders at the provincial and district levels have had limited exposure to plan priorities and are generally hesitant to take initiative or resolve implementation challenges independently. However, it is also important to recognize that relative to other GPE member countries, the Kyrgyz Republic likely has a higher baseline level of implementation capacity, which likely contributed to the implementation of the 2012-2020 EDS as intended.

133. In addition, the World Bank, in the role of Grant Agent, agreed with the government to implement the ESPIG via a PIU physically co-located with the MoES, which was established after the joint government/GA agreement was signed. GPE support to implementation was thus in effect also channeled through this PIU. The use of the PIU as an implementing structure means that the benefits of GPE Secretariat support specifically for implementation (e.g. joint monitoring visits to track GPE KEEP implementation) were experienced mainly by PIU staff, rather than the broader MoES staff. While a PIU may be appropriate where there is limited implementation capacity within the Ministry, as was the case here, directing the GPE Secretariat's implementation-related support to PIU staff, even if residing within the government, may limit opportunities for GPE to strengthen the implementation capacity of core ministry staff. The GPE Secretariat has requested MoE and the GA to consider alternate mechanisms for MoE capacity development for a long-term sustainability.

134. The evaluation found that the assumptions that country-level stakeholders (iv) have the *motivation* and *opportunity* to align their own activities with the priorities of the EDS **hold true**. Three-year APEDs are costed operational plans that include donor programs and financial commitments. In spite of several weaknesses in the EDS and APEDs, including alignment issues and the lack of strong central monitoring mechanisms, stakeholders still align to the sector's key planning documents (opportunity) and are motivated to work together towards shared goals.

135. The evaluation found that the assumption that (v) country level stakeholders take part in regular, evidence-based joint sector reviews and apply resulting recommendations to enhance ESP implementation

does not hold true. Joint sector reviews have not taken place **on an annual or regular basis** in the Kyrgyz Republic during the period of review.

136. The evaluation found that the last assumption that (vi) the sector plan includes provisions for strengthening EMIS and LAS to produce timely, relevant and reliable data, **holds true** for the 2012-2020 EDS since the EDS had an objective of “introducing an information network and data management system where the long-term concept of EMIS is developed” as one of its priority actions. However, it is important to consider whether the simple inclusion of EMIS and LAS provisions in the plan is adequate since a well-functioning EMIS had not been established in the Kyrgyz Republic at the time of this review.

4 Progress towards a stronger education system

Introduction

137. 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 the Kyrgyz Republic 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)

138. Progress towards a stronger education system is measured by drawing on evidence of achievements in the 12 priority areas outlined in the 2012-2020 EDS. Two of these 12 priorities relate to system-level changes in **access**, two focus on **equity**, two relate to **quality**, two relate to **relevance**, and four pertain to **system management**.²⁹⁰ The analysis focuses 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.²⁹¹

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

²⁹⁰ Access: EDS Priority Objective 1 & 3. Quality: EDS5 & 7. System Management: EDS8, 10, 11, & 12. Equity: EDS 2 & 9. Relevance: EDS 4 & 5.

²⁹¹ 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).

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

IMPROVEMENTS MADE DURING REVIEW PERIOD? ²⁹²	HAD ISSUE BEEN ADDRESSED IN THE 2012-2020 EDS? ²⁹³	LIKELIHOOD THAT EDS IMPLEMENTATION CONTRIBUTED TO NOTED IMPROVEMENTS ²⁹⁴	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS LIKELY HELD TRUE ²⁹⁵			
			1	2	3	4
Access: Moderate. Increase in the number of pre-primary institutions but limited new secondary school construction, which is not keeping pace with student population growth.	Yes, two access-related priority actions for pre-primary and upper secondary - EDS strategic priorities 1 & 3.	High – Expanded coverage of pre-primary institutions but limited effect on new school construction despite signals of new capital investments by government.	1	2	3	4
Quality: High. Improvements in textbook procurement and quality, curriculum revision, and teacher training.	Yes, two priority actions for curriculum development and creating conditions for lifelong learning - EDS strategic priorities 5 and 7	High – Textbook procurement reform, curriculum review, and teacher training were planned for and implemented under EDS.				
Equity: Moderate. Improvements in inclusive education policies for children with special education needs. However, little progress noted for socio-economic equity.	Yes, two priority actions - EDS strategic priorities 2 & 9.	High – A new policy and provision of specific TLM for special needs students planned in line with EDS				
Relevance to learning/employment needs: Moderate. New competence-based curriculum.	Yes, EDS priorities include the development of working skills relevant to the labor market. EDS strategic priority 4 and 5	High – Planned for and introduced a new curriculum.				

²⁹² 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.

²⁹³ 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).

²⁹⁴ Green = High. Amber = Moderate; Red = Low. Gray = Insufficient data.

²⁹⁵ 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.

IMPROVEMENTS MADE DURING REVIEW PERIOD? ²⁹²	HAD ISSUE BEEN ADDRESSED IN THE 2012-2020 EDS? ²⁹³	LIKELIHOOD THAT EDS IMPLEMENTATION CONTRIBUTED TO NOTED IMPROVEMENTS ²⁹⁴	DEGREE TO WHICH UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS LIKELY HELD TRUE ²⁹⁵			
System management: Moderate. Ongoing efforts to reform Public Finance Management, institutionalize the M&E framework and operationalize EMIS.	Yes, four priority actions included under EDS: strategic priorities 8, 10, 11 & 12.	High – PFM reform, establishment of M&E framework, and EMIS pilot were all planned and implemented under EDS.				

Progress towards a stronger education system during 2012-2019 period

Finding 17: During the review period, the education system was strengthened in terms of curricula, teaching and learning materials, teacher training, and access to pre-primary education. Although positive steps were taken to enhance public financial management, inclusive education, and monitoring and evaluation, these have not yet been institutionalized at a wide enough scale to constitute system-level changes.

140. This section reviews system-level changes in the review period, based on the 12 strategic priorities in the 2012-2020 EDS. We organize these priorities under the areas of access, quality, and system management, with cross-cutting issues of equity and relevance.²⁹⁶ Overall, data reviewed and Table 4.1 above suggest that, although the EDS was effectively implemented, it only led to modest system-level changes, owing to the presence of numerous obstacles impeding achievement of equitable access to quality education, relevance to learning, and system management. In terms of sectoral outcomes, the Ministry of Education and Science during the past six years has given more attention to a number of thematic sub-sector policies, including pre-school education, and reform of curriculum and textbook content for general education.²⁹⁷

Access and Equity

141. Over the review period, the Kyrgyz Republic has made **significant progress in expanding access to education at pre-primary level**. The number of preschool institutions (for children aged six months to 7) increased from 819 in 2012 to 1,296 in 2016.²⁹⁸

142. Several government-led initiatives have contributed to the increase in preschool institutions. In addition to two types of government-funded ECD institutions— traditional nurseries for children aged six months to three years and kindergartens for three to seven-year olds -- another important program in provision of early care has been instrumental in expanding access to pre-school: the **Nariste 480-hour school-readiness program**.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ See Section 3.2, Table 3.2 for the full list of EDS goals and focus areas.

²⁹⁷ EU SBS Final Report, pg 44

²⁹⁸ ESA 2019

²⁹⁹ ESA 2019

- a. The first full year of the **Nariste** 480-hour program began in 2016 and was designed to provide preschool-aged children (typically aged 5-7) with equal opportunities for learning in first grade.³⁰⁰ With support from GPE (2014-2017 ESPIG), the programme was expanded from a 240-hour program in 2011 to 480-hour program in 2016 and is currently delivered throughout the academic year. The expansion of the program's operating hours met a key national objective of providing a minimum level of pre-school enrichment to most school-going children of the country.³⁰¹

143. Despite increases in preschool enrolment, **nearly 75 percent of children aged 3-6 do not attend preschool institutions.**³⁰² **Significant geographic, wealth, and disability related disparities in access to preschool institutions persist.** However, several efforts during the review period have helped reduce disparities:

- a. With support from international donors, **CbKs** were introduced. These types of kindergartens were less expensive because they operated on a half-day basis, did not offer sleeping and full kitchen facilities as in traditional state kindergartens, and had few or no non-teaching support staff. Demand for such facilities continued to increase, particularly in light of scarce public resources to cover full-day kindergarten services.³⁰³ By passing responsibility for feeding the children to families, CbKs provided a cost-effective option to the Kyrgyz government for expanding developmental enrichment to children aged three to seven years. 236 CbKs were established between 2012 and 2017³⁰⁴, 120 of which were located in rural areas and established with the support of the GPE KEEP project.³⁰⁵ The project also supported i) the development and implementation of an in-service teacher training program for the new CbKs, ii) the design and delivery of TLMs, furniture, and equipment, and (iii) refurbishing or building new sanitary facilities.³⁰⁶
- b. The GPE-supported KEEP project provided support for **inclusive education** through a pilot aimed to integrate children with special education needs (SEN) into mainstream kindergartens and preparatory classrooms. The project supported the capacities of the commission responsible for screening children with SEN and increasing the abilities of teachers and social workers to develop and implement individual learning programs. Based on the results of the pilot, the project developed a model which was approved by the MoES and became part of the Concept on Inclusive Education to be rolled out nationwide.³⁰⁷

144. In line with the Law of Education, which stipulates that all children in the Kyrgyz Republic attend and complete a basic education of nine years, **access to primary education improved** during the review period. However, modest increases in the number of general education schools, from 2,168 schools in 2007 to 2,236 in 2016³⁰⁸, have not kept pace with high growth in the school age population.

³⁰⁰ UNICEF Annual Report, 2016

³⁰¹ ESA 2019, pg 31

³⁰² ESA 2019 pg 32

³⁰³ World Bank ICRR Report, Dec 2018, 7.

³⁰⁴ ESA, 31

³⁰⁵ World Bank ICR

³⁰⁶ World Bank ICR, pg 10

³⁰⁷ World Bank ICR, pg 10

³⁰⁸ ESA, 2019, pg 30

145. There are signs of **an increase in government capital investment in school infrastructure** for preschool and general education. Driven by a number of performance-related components of the EU Support to the Reform of the Education Sector in the Kyrgyz Republic project (SPSP), government investments of KG 300 million som and Republican Budget provisions for KG 2 billion som were committed in 2017 for building new schools and facilities.³⁰⁹

146. Over the review period, several initiatives have been introduced to address the low enrolment of children with **special education needs (SEN)** in schools.³¹⁰ These include:

- a. **Infrastructure adjustment and provision of specialized TLMs.** Through sector budget support from the EU, the government adjusted infrastructure and procured SEN-friendly equipment and educational materials provided to a select number of schools.³¹¹
- b. **Introduction of a normative / per capita funding formula that includes a provision for children with learning disabilities.** As part of the new school funding formula, schools are eligible for additional funding per student enrolled with a learning disability. School funds applications for each child with a learning disability are eligible for up to three times more per capita funding.
- c. **Establishment of three teacher training resource centers.** With support from donors, three resource centres on inclusive education have been established. All teachers undergoing in-service teacher training have completed a compulsory 2-hour module on inclusive education. In addition, schools have established “correctional classes” where children receive additional education enabling them to be integrated in the regular education programme upon completion.³¹²
- d. **Development of an Inclusive Education Policy.** A concept version of an Inclusive Education Policy is under development and is currently being reviewed by the Kyrgyz Government and development partners. The concept was discussed in 2018 and focused on inclusive education in pre-school and secondary schools. Edits to the policy are being made to further elaborate program objectives, required resources to implement the program, and mechanisms to allow monitoring of program implementation. The program will also be linked with in-service training of teaching staff (training modules on inclusive teaching). In order to implement these measures, an interdepartmental working group was established (with representatives from MoES, MoF, MoH, and the National Training and Skill Enhancement Institute).³¹³

³⁰⁹ EU SBS Evaluation, 19-20.

³¹⁰ According to the ESA (2019) the inclusion of SEN children into education is the weakest point of the current system. The total population of children with disabilities may not be known in the country and government estimate (based on the number children registered with disabilities) of 26,700 is likely an underestimate.

³¹¹ EU SBS Evaluation, 32.

³¹² EU SBS Evaluation, pg 49

³¹³ EU SBS Evaluation, 49. A number of documents were developed in support of the Inclusive Education Policy, including a manual on pedagogical support, school accessibility standards for children with disabilities, state education standards for children with intellectual disabilities, and more.

Quality and Relevance

147. During the review period, several systems-level initiatives have targeted education quality and relevance. First, major government initiatives to address shortages³¹⁴ and inefficiencies in **textbook design, procurement, and delivery** have occurred during the period of review.

- a. With support from the World Bank Sector Support for Education Reform Project, the Kyrgyz government financed the development, printing and distribution of approximately three million textbooks, teacher guides for primary and lower secondary schools and a package of essential TLMs for primary schools.³¹⁵ E-libraries and e-learning and teaching materials were designed and are also available online through the MOES website and offline in 60 schools which are serving as centers for dissemination of e-materials to neighboring schools.³¹⁶ While successful, a few stakeholders mentioned disruptions caused by errors in textbooks translated into Russian by publishers.³¹⁷
- b. The regulatory legal framework of textbooks publishing system has also been revised, and a number of regulations governing this process have been approved, including requirements for conducting various types of examinations. Despite reforms, only 30 percent of needed textbooks are covered, according to the Textbook Publication Unit in the MoES.³¹⁸ To address this shortage, the MoES initiated reforms (through support from ADB and the EU) to launch a textbook renting scheme through the NGO “Jany Kitep” (New Book), which has collected KGS 15 million in a five-month time window, demonstrating active support from parents for this reform.³¹⁹

148. While gender parity has been achieved in general education enrollment, an EU-funded gender study conducted in 2017 revealed that gender stereotyping is present within the education system (i.e. in curriculum and textbooks).³²⁰ In addition, the teaching staff, educators, and management staff are mostly

³¹⁴ The number of schools provided with books is too low to support quality in education. 13 per cent of schools with instruction in Kyrgyz (i.e. 80 per cent of all schools) had less than half the books they need at the start of the 2011/12 school year, whereas 32 per cent of schools with instruction in Russian have less than half the books they need. For the same academic year, only 10 per cent of schools regard the provision of study guides and learning material needed to support the curriculum as good, for the majority (74 per cent) it is satisfactory and it is unsatisfactory for the remaining 16 per cent of schools. The content of the available material was regarded as unsatisfactory by one-third of all schools.” (McLean 2013)

³¹⁵ In addition, three more titles of textbooks and teacher guides (Computer Science, Human and Society and Technology) were developed during the period of review due to the introduction of these subjects into the new curriculum for lower secondary grades. According to project status reports, the overall print run of textbooks, covering 33 subjects for Grades 5-6 in Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek and Tajik languages, increased by 15 percent for schools with the Kyrgyz language of instruction and by 20 percent for schools with Russian language of instruction due to the increased number of students. (Source: World Bank, “Restructuring Paper of Sector Support for Education Reform Project”)

³¹⁶ World Bank, “Restructuring Paper of Sector Support for Education Reform Project,

³¹⁷ According to the World Bank ISR, the execution of three contracts with Pitambra Books Ltd (India) amounting to 1,639,245.80 Euro for printing of textbooks was suspended by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) due to errors found in the textbooks being translated into Russian. The MoES has taken steps to correct the errors by issuing revised manuscripts.

³¹⁸ EU SBS Final Report, pg 48

³¹⁹ EU SBS Final Report, pg 48

³²⁰ ESA 2019

women, as education is viewed to be a female profession.³²¹ At present, there is some disparity in quantitative representation of people of different sex in school textbooks; female names and representations are almost two times fewer than male ones.³²²

149. To address gender stereotyping in textbooks, the **MoES undertook a gender assessment of textbooks** (under the support of the EU grant scheme), and recommendations of this assessment have been introduced in textbooks on new education standards for grades 5-6 at secondary schools.³²³

150. Significant progress has been made in improving the system for **teacher training and management** under the following efforts:

- a. In 2017, the MoES (with support of the ADB) developed **an improved policy framework on teacher development and management** (e.g. The New Teacher), covering the whole teacher education and development cycle. This includes recruitment, preservice education, induction, mentoring, probation, certification, continuous professional development, and teacher appraisal and career development. The new teacher development framework aims to improve the attractiveness of teacher profession by improving the policies around teacher qualification, attestation, incentives and wages. At present, the MoES is also initiating the development of a qualification framework and professional standards for teachers.³²⁴
- b. The new development framework is currently being implemented by the Republican Institute for In-service Teacher Training (RIITT). The RIITT managed to increase the number of provided trainings and the number of trained teachers on an annual basis.³²⁵ The RIITT is involved in the updating of subject standards, and has rolled out a national in-service teacher training scheme where every teacher is obliged to upgrade their knowledge periodically at least every 5 years.³²⁶
- c. Donor supported initiatives have also contributed to teacher training efforts. The World Bank Sector Support for Education Reform Project completed three rounds of training, covering primary teachers, Deputy Directors, Heads of Methodological Units on competency-based curriculum and pedagogy.³²⁷ Education officials trained and certified under this component total 11,789 (103.4%), with 11,400 planned.³²⁸ The USAID Time to Read program trained more than 400 national trainers and 9,000 primary grade teachers and school administrators on classroom best practices and basic reading skills instruction.³²⁹

151. There are still serious challenges with the **capacity of the teaching workforce**.³³⁰ The 2019 ESA identifies three main issues facing the teacher workforce: recruitment, training, and retention. The current system is plagued by lack of qualified students entering teacher education programmes at University. Most students score around the minimum 110 score in the state entry exam and often choose a teaching

³²¹ ESA 2019

³²² ESA 2019

³²³ EU SBS Evaluation, 26.

³²⁴ EU SBSB Final Report

³²⁵ EU SBS Final Report

³²⁶ EU SBSB Final Report, 47

³²⁷ EU SBSB Final Report

³²⁸ World Bank, “Restructuring Paper of Sector Support for Education Reform Project”

³²⁹ USAID, “[Time to Read Project](#),” February 2019. Last accessed on September 6, 2019.

³³⁰ UNICEF ESA June 2018, 12.

profession out of “necessity.”³³¹ As a result, only 63 percent of students who enter pedagogical programmes complete their studies. Issues related to poor quality of pedagogical education, low prestige and social status of the teacher, and the general low educational level of students entering pedagogical specialties contribute to problems related to entering the teacher profession.

152. **Progress has also been made to improve the general curriculum during the period of review.** New education standards have been developed and are based on i) a competence-based approach and ii) result-oriented learning that is geared towards the application of knowledge and skills in life. Changes include the increase in the number of hours in foreign languages, the introduction of the subject "Informatics" from Grade 5, and increased attention to the subjects of the natural science cycle. In addition, standards were developed for the profile level in Grades 10 and Grade 11 in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology.³³²

153. Support from the World Bank Sector Support for Education Reform Project assisted the government in revising the curriculum for Grades 5-9. The project supported the design and approval of the new curriculum for Grade 5-9, focusing on the piloting and finalization of subject standards and program content. The new curriculum for Grades 5-9 has been developed and piloted in 56 schools across the country along with the new curriculum textbooks. 4,580 teachers in lower secondary grades and deputy directors were trained on delivery of the new curriculum countrywide.³³³

154. Several **ICT-related initiatives** were introduced during the period of review to improve the quality of education.

- a. At national level, the percentage of schools connected to the Internet has increased to 86 percent in 2019, compared with 67 percent at the beginning of 2018.³³⁴
- b. The development of eLearning is planned in for all levels of education. The Kyrgyz Republic has a goal of connecting 100 percent of general education organizations to the Internet and providing and furnishing them with computer equipment by 2020. In addition, the creation of 30 SMART schools is planned, which will become “growth hubs” for the spread of digital technologies. An electronic platform for distance learning of teachers will be developed.³³⁵

Management

155. With four of the 12 EDS priorities pertaining to systems change, the government led several initiatives that targeted reforms in **public finance management** and **monitoring and evaluation** during the evaluation period.

156. In relation to **Public Finance Management (PFM) practice**, the Ministry of Finance implemented several measures to improve resource allocation and budgeting that aimed at increasing transparency and accountability, and to address the mismatch between the allocation of resources and required needs of the sector. Improvements have been observed in the development of the Medium-Term Budget Framework (MTBF), a Public Finance Management Reform Strategy (PFMRS), and Programme-Based Budgeting.

157. An important achievement during the period of evaluation was the establishment of the sector budget process, and its linkage with strategic development planning for education. The **Medium-Term**

³³¹ EU SBS Final Report pg 59

³³² EU SBS Final Report, pg 47

³³³ World Bank, “Restructuring Paper of Sector Support for Education Reform Project,

³³⁴ EU SBS Final Report

³³⁵ EU SBS Final Report

Budget Framework, including the medium-term expenditure planning for 2014-2016, 2015-2017, and 2016-2018 were developed according to MoF programme budget guidelines. This has allowed the Kyrgyz government to insert a more forward-looking perspective on education sector management and planning, moving from “a static incremental budget process, to a more strategically oriented budget planning process.”³³⁶

158. A comprehensive **PFM Reform Strategy** (PFMRS) for 2017-2025 was developed and subsequently adopted by Parliament in 2016. The new PFM Reform Strategy 2017-2025 and mid-term PFM Action Plan 2017-2019 are based on findings of the Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) assessment conducted in 2014.³³⁷ The PFM policy framework also includes a Public Debt Management Strategy 2018-2020, which was approved by Parliament in February 2018. To facilitate the implementation of the PFM Reform Strategy, the MoF receives substantive support from the Development Partners, including European Commission, World Bank, SIDA, and DFID, among others.³³⁸

159. PFM reforms are ongoing and although many issues still need to be addressed under the new strategy, a number of noticeable reforms have been implemented at the level of the MoES, including:

- a. Operationalisation of a new electronic expenditure management system at the district and school level. This has enhanced transparency, reduced overall transaction costs (fewer delays in payments, salaries), and decreased fraud/corruption in the system.³³⁹
- b. Establishment of an Internal Audit Department, which has increased the number of audits taking place within MoES, including at district and school level.

160. As part of the PFM reform strategy, the Kyrgyz government introduced **Programme-Based Budgeting** (PBB) with the aim to strengthen the link between program activities and the republican budget. It is expected that PBB will be rolled out to the central and decentralized level in the next few years. Implementing PBB will require extensive guidance and training of all government units, particularly staff involved in strategic planning and budgeting functions.³⁴⁰

161. The Kyrgyz Republic has made progress in establishing a **framework for monitoring and evaluating** policy implementation. In 2016, the MoES, with TA support from donors, developed and developed comprehensive mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of educational policies. The M&E framework is coordinated by the MoES and includes tools for information collection, as well as a

³³⁶ EU SBS Final Evaluation Report, pg 20

³³⁷ The PFM Reform Strategy aims to address the shortcomings as identified in the 2014 PEFA Assessment and includes the following components: i) Budget credibility related to fiscal forecasts, accurate costing, commitment reporting, ii) Budget comprehensiveness and transparency related to budgetary classifications and more accessible and comprehensive budget information, strengthened MTBF and programme budgeting and, iii) Budget oversight with payroll control, internal audit, comprehensive and timely accounting and reporting.

³³⁸ The primary objective of the established MDTF (first operational period 2009-2015, second operational period 2018-now) was to improve public service delivery by strengthening the effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of Public Finance Management (PFM) through strengthening the budget process, the internal audit and control functions, as well as the institutional and staff capacity of the Ministry of Finance and line ministries. Under the SPSP and the SRC, the EU has contributed EUR 1 million to the MDTF, which is managed under the auspices of the World Bank. However, during the past couple of years, progress in PFM reforms has been relatively slow, mainly due to delays in the continuation of the MDTF during 2015-2017. During 2018, a new “Capacity Building in Public Financial Management II” programme has been elaborated, which is currently in its start-up phase under the MDTF.

³³⁹ EU SBS Final Report

³⁴⁰ EU SBS Final Report

methodology for data analysis. However, the capacity of the MoES to carry out monitoring and evaluation is limited, and the framework needs further institutionalization across MoES and subordinate departments and institutions.

162. As discussed in previous sections, an **Education Management Information System** was piloted but is not yet fully operational due to factors such as lack of data analysts to support the system and the lack of data on learning outcomes, finance, or inclusive education (Please see Section 3.5 on Sector Implementation for more information).

163. In terms of **learning assessment systems**, the primary source on student learning outcomes is the National Sample-Based Assessment³⁴¹, which is used to monitor educational achievement and was introduced in 2007. The NSBA has been administered to a sample of grade 4 students four times, including twice during the review period, in 2014 and 2017.³⁴² In 2007, 2009, and 2017, it was also administered to grade 8 students.³⁴³ The assessment covers reading comprehension, mathematics, and natural sciences (chemistry, physics, biology, and geography).³⁴⁴ However, challenges such as the persistent lack of coordination and inadequate funding, human resources, and leadership present ongoing obstacles to establishing a comprehensive learning assessment system.³⁴⁵

164. Within the framework of the Government Programme on Digitalisation, the roll-out of electronic registration in kindergartens³⁴⁶ was completed and introduced in the cities of Bishkek, Osh and in the Issyk-Ata district of the Chui oblast.³⁴⁷ In 2018, the electronic registration system recorded more than 35,000 applications and allocated more than 22,000 thousand children to Kindergartens. Furthermore, a pilot project was launched to install Child Accounting and Control Systems (ACSs) for 20 schools in the City of Bishkek, covering registration of 34,000 schoolchildren. To use the ACSs, the 20 schools were equipped with the appropriate equipment - high-speed turnstiles, monitors, card readers, network equipment, software and computers.³⁴⁸

Did ESP implementation contribute to system-level changes?

Finding 18: In the review period, the 2012-2020 EDS guided the achievement of most identified system-level changes. Development partners supported key areas of improvement, which were implemented in partnership with MOES.

165. Table 4.2 provides an overview of the 10 most significant system-level changes identified in the previous finding, whether they were planned under the 2012-2020 EDS, and whether their achievement was likely linked to EDS implementation.

³⁴¹ It is also known by two other names: the National Assessment of Student Education Achievement (NASEA), and the National Assessment of Student Learning Achievement (NASLA).

³⁴² ESA, 52.

³⁴³ European Union, “Review of Education Quality Assessment System in the Kyrgyz Republic (EQAS): From Conceptual Framework to Quality Assurance Tools,” 2016, 49. One major limitation of NSBA is it is not based on updated curriculum standards. The 2014 NSBA results still used 2004 curriculum standards. MOES lacks the funding to revise the tool.

³⁴⁴ ESA, 55.

³⁴⁵ Please see section 3.3 paragraph 64 for more detail on LAS.

³⁴⁶ On the platform balabakcha.edu.gov.kg

³⁴⁷ EU SBS Final Report

³⁴⁸ EU SBS Final Report

Table 4.2 List of system-level improvements in the review period, against 2012-2019 EDS

SYSTEM-LEVEL IMPROVEMENT	LIKELY DUE TO EDS IMPLEMENTATION?	IMPROVEMENT SUPPORTED BY DONORS?
ALREADY SIGNIFICANT AND LIKELY SUSTAINABLE		
More pre-school institutions: Increased from 816 in 2012 to 1,296 in 2017	Yes: Included under EDS priority action to provide coverage to the majority of preschool children by improving ECD institutions.	Yes: GPE supported the Kyrgyz Early Education Project (KEEP) which supported expansion of school readiness program. UNICEF, Aga Khan Foundation, and the World Bank supported program activities related to ECD.
Primary textbook provision and quality: improved textbook design, procurement, and delivery.	Partially: While there was no major EDS priority related to textbook provision, supplying textbooks to schools is listed as a sub-section priority.	Yes: supported by donors, particularly the World Bank and USAID
National Sample-Based Assessment: conducted in 2014 and 2017 in Grade 4.	Partially: Not included under EDS as a priority objective, but is mentioned in the plan. ³⁴⁹	No.
Revised general curriculum: Established new education standards based on a competence-based approach.	Yes: EDS priority objectives included the introduction of a competence-based learning approach	Yes: supported by World Bank, EU, ADB, UNICEF.
POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT IF IMPLEMENTED AND/OR STRENGTHENED FURTHER		
Teacher training reforms: new policy framework on teacher development and management.	Partially: Not included as one of the 12 EDS priorities but mentioned as an important objective for the sector.	Yes: funded by several donors
Inclusive Education Policy: creation of minimum standards for students with learning disability	Yes: Included under EDS priority action of providing access to high quality basic education for all	Yes: World Bank, ADB, and EU
ICT: Electronic registration systems, improved internet connectivity, and creation of SMART schools.	Partially: Not specified as an EDS priority but is part of national digitalization efforts including “Taza Koom”	No.
Public Finance Management: Introduced PFM Reform Strategy and a Programme-based budget process	Yes: included as a priority action under EDS of “Support for multichannel education financing and fair distribution of financial resources”	Yes: World Bank and EU provided considerable TA and support on PFM.

³⁴⁹ The fact that implementing a National Sample-Based Assessment was not included in the EDS as its own explicit priority is somewhat puzzling, in light of the country’s poor PISA results in 2006 and 2009.

SYSTEM-LEVEL IMPROVEMENT	LIKELY DUE TO EDS IMPLEMENTATION?	IMPROVEMENT SUPPORTED BY DONORS?
Monitoring and Evaluation: Established a framework for M&E	Yes: EDS priorities include: “Launching the monitoring and evaluation system to systematically improve the education system.”	Yes: TA provided by donors, particularly the EU
Education Management Information System: piloted, but does not yet include indicators on learning, inclusion, or sector finance.	Yes: EDS priority includes the development of strategic planning and management system in the education sector based on techniques of data collection and analysis, including gender disaggregated statistical data.	Yes: TA provided by EU

166. The above table suggests that EDS implementation brought about most identified system-level changes, with all ten changes either likely or partially likely to have been principally driven by plan implementation. Development partners have provided significant level of support (technical or financial) to at least seven out of ten interventions. Available evidence suggests that most system-level improvements were implemented under the leadership of the the government of the Kyrgyz Republic, although stakeholders noted support from donors in many areas.

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

Finding 19: Linkages between EDS implementation and observed system-level changes in the Kyrgyz Republic support key elements of the GPE TOC. In addition, this suggests that a sector plan which does not meet GPE quality standards can nevertheless lead to some important system-level improvements.

167. The case of the Kyrgyz Republic suggests that overall, the 2012-2020 EDS was implemented mostly as intended, with many priority targets achieved or partially achieved (see Section 3.4). Relatively strong sector plan implementation was likely the dominant factor in bringing about most of the identified system-level changes. However, while some progress has been made on EDS 2012-2020 priorities of developing a monitoring and evaluation framework, establishing an EMIS, and introducing ICT in schools, these have not yet amounted to sustainable system-level changes given their recency and the limited scale of progress.

168. The evaluation found that of four underlying assumptions guiding the link between sector plan implementation and strengthened education systems, the likelihood of these assumptions holding true was **moderate** for three and **limited** for one. Assumptions that are **moderately** likely to hold true are that sector plan implementation leads to improvements in (1) previous shortcomings in relation to sector management (3) previous shortcomings in relation to learning, and (4) equity. However, the likelihood that the assumption that there is sufficient national capacity (technical capabilities, political will, resources) to analyze, report on and use available data and maintain EMIS and LAS holds true was **limited**.

169. This rating takes into account evidence of minimal governmental capacity for data processing and the absence of an operational EMIS. As noted above, a number of efforts to improve equitable access, learning quality, and system management do not yet constitute system-level improvements either because there is a lack of data on their effectiveness or they have not (yet) been fully implemented.

170. In sum, available evidence supports links between EDS implementation and observed system-level changes, in spite of the fact that the Kyrgyz Republic’s EDS 2020 did not meet GPE quality standards. While

the plan was found to lack strength across several dimensions, including evidence use, it was operationalized and implemented mostly as intended, raising the possibility that in this instance, implementation quality may have mattered more than plan quality. The findings of this section thus reinforce the suggestion raised in Section 3.2 that GPE consider broadening its definition of plan quality to include political and practical dimensions in addition to technical strength.

5 Progress towards stronger learning outcomes and equity

Introduction

171. 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?”³⁵⁰ 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 implications of findings for the GPE ToC/operational model? (CEQ 7)

172. 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 the Kyrgyz Republic 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 these 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.

³⁵⁰ 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?

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 ³⁵¹	
Equity, Gender Equality and Inclusion: Strong. Access to pre-primary and secondary school increased, with primary enrollment and completion remaining consistently high.	Moderate: While the system-level change of expanded preschool facilities and programming likely contributed to increased access to pre-primary education, system-level contributions to increased secondary school access and primary enrollment and completion are not clear.	1	2
Learning: Strong. Learning outcomes improved over the review period, as demonstrated by 2009 and 2017 National Sample-Based Assessment and EGRA results. There is some evidence to suggest that learning disparities by geography have reduced, but have persisted for gender to the disadvantage of boys.	Moderate: Evidence suggests that system-level changes including greater availability of textbooks and teacher pedagogical training likely supported learning gains in reading comprehension. However, some system reforms targeted to quality are too recent or insufficiently advanced to have influenced learning outcomes.	1	2

Trends in learning outcomes, equity, gender equality and inclusion in the education sector in the Kyrgyz Republic from 2012 to 2019

Finding 20: During the review period, the Kyrgyz Republic saw modest improvements in access to basic education. Despite some deterioration at the lower secondary level, overall system-level efficiency remains high.

Equity, Gender Equality and Inclusion in Basic Education

173. Prior to and during the review period, the education system in the Kyrgyz Republic made improvements in terms of basic education access and equity, supported by stable GDP growth during the review period. The number of students enrolled in primary education grew by nearly 100,000 from 2012 to 2017, from 405,000 to 501,000 students. Enrollment growth was largely driven by growth in the school-age population, at an average annual rate of 8.5 percent from 2007 to 2017.³⁵² Table 5.2 provides an overview of trends in the key impact-level indicators listed in the evaluation matrix, grouped by whether they showed improvement, stability, or deterioration, during the review period, or whether available data is inconclusive. The main takeaways from Table 5.2 include:

- a. Overall, the Kyrgyz Republic saw improvements in access to education, with increases in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary enrollment rates.

³⁵¹ 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.

³⁵² National Statistical Committee, 2017

- b. *On the whole, primary education remains relatively efficient.* Primary to lower secondary transition rates and the primary completion rate remained high during the review period.
- c. *Education efficiency decreased slightly at the secondary level.* While the primary repetition rate decreased slightly, the lower secondary dropout rate increased and lower secondary completion decreased.
- d. *Major regional and wealth disparities in pre-primary access narrowed, but persisted.* Gaps in access to pre-primary education have decreased between urban and rural areas and the poorest and richest income quintiles.
- e. *Data on equitable access for children with special needs is inconclusive* but suggests that a large number of children with disabilities remain out of school.
- f. Trends on most indicators *were similar for girls as boys*, with no substantive deterioration or improvements in gender equality.

174. Data is available for most access, enrollment, and equity indicators from the UNESCO UIS database, as well as the 2014 and 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, which were implemented by the National Statistical Committee with technical support from UNICEF. Access and enrollment data are disaggregated by gender. However, information on marginalized groups is limited, as is data disaggregated by socioeconomic status.

175. In the absence of a comprehensive framework to monitor progress in the sector, data presented in Table 5.2. below were drawn from UIS, the 2018 ESA, the National Statistical Committee, and UNICEF's 2014 and 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys.

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

INDICATORS THAT IMPROVED DURING THE REVIEW PERIOD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-primary enrollment: Between 2012 and 2017, pre-primary enrollment increased from 106k children to 221k children, a significant jump. Both UIS data and data cited by the 2018 ESA point to an increase in the pre-primary GER over the same period, though the estimates differ.³⁵³ UIS data note an increase from 24.1 percent in 2012 to 39.2 percent in 2017, while the 2018 ESA 2018 cites an increase from 21 percent in 2012 to 26 percent in 2016.³⁵⁴ • Primary enrollment: Between 2012 and 2017, the number of students enrolled in primary education grew from 405,318 to 501,011. Over this period, the primary GER increased from 104.17 to 107.86, with the gender parity index improving marginally, from 0.98 to 0.99. The primary NER decreased slightly from 90.55 to 89.90 between 2012 and 2017, with the gender parity index remaining constant at 0.98 (UIS data). • Primary repetition rate: Between 2012 and 2017 the repetition rate for all primary grades decreased from 0.055 to 0.028 percent (UIS data).

³⁵³ The difference in UIS versus National Statistical Committee estimates for the pre-primary GER may be due to different definitions for the age range used in pre-primary / ECD level indicators. The 2018 ESA data uses an age range of 3 to 6, while the UIS pre-primary GER counts all children enrolled in pre-primary education, regardless of age.

³⁵⁴ National Statistical Committee estimates are calculated differently and significantly higher, citing an increase from 55.6 percent in 2015/16 to 78.9 percent in 2017/18 in total coverage of any preschool or ECD programme among children entering Grade 1. (ESA, 34). Despite significant increases in enrollment, according to the ESA, nearly 75 percent of children ages 3 to 6 do not attend ECD institutions.

- **School life expectancy:** The primary and lower secondary school life expectancies for both girls and boys improved over the review period, increasing from 8.75 years in 2012 to 9.37 years in 2017 for girls, and from 8.84 years to 9.45 years for boys (UIS data).
- **Lower secondary enrollment:** The number of children enrolled in lower secondary education increased from 481k in 2012 to 497k in 2017. **Lower secondary GER** grew from 92.65 in 2012 to 104.78 in 2017, with a constant **gender parity index** of 0.99. The **lower secondary NER** improved from 84.6 to 93.3 in 2017, with the **gender parity index** for secondary remaining nearly the same, at 1.00 in 2014 and at 0.99 in 2017 (UIS data).
- **Lower secondary out of school rate:** Between 2014 and 2017, the number of out of school children in the lower secondary school age range decreased from 34k to under 988 total, a dramatic drop, and the rate of out of school children of lower secondary age decreased from 6.94 percent in 2014 to 0.21 percent in 2017 (UIS data).³⁵⁵
- **Lower secondary repetition rate:** Between 2012 and 2016, the repetition rate for Grade 5 of lower secondary education (grade 10 equivalent) decreased from 0.030 to 0.008 percent (UIS data).
- **Regional and wealth differences:** Data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) indicates that drastic regional and wealth disparities in enrollment in ECD programmes for children ages 3 to 5 persist, but have improved during the review period. In 2014, 40.5 percent of children in urban areas and only 16 percent of children in rural areas were enrolled in ECD programmes, compared to 47 percent in urban areas and 35 percent in rural areas as of 2018. In 2014, only 11.7 percent of children of the poorest wealth quintile, compared to 55 percent in the richest quintile, were enrolled in ECD programmes. In 2018, this increased to 25 percent enrollment among the poorest and 57 percent among the richest wealth quintile (MICS 2014, 2018; ESA 2018).³⁵⁶

INDICATORS THAT STAGNATED DURING THE REVIEW PERIOD

- **Primary completion rate:** The primary completion rate remained approximately the same, at 99.58 percent in 2012 and 99.27 percent in 2014, with no substantial differences between rates for girls and boys.³⁵⁷
- **Primary out of school rate:** Between 2012 and 2017, the number of out of school children of primary school age increased from 6,137 to 6,773, reaching a peak for the review period of 8,009 in 2015. However, over this period the share of out of school children of primary school age fell from 1.57 to 1.46 percent (UIS data).³⁵⁸
- **Primary to lower secondary transition rates:** The effective transition rate from primary to lower secondary was already high, but remained constant, at 99 percent from 2012 to 2016 (UIS data).
- **Upper secondary enrollment:** The **upper secondary GER** increased from 79.3 percent in 2012 to 83.0 percent in 2017. Over the same time period it increased for girls from 80.2 to 83.9 percent and from 78.5 to 82.2 percent for boys (UIS data). However, the **upper secondary NER** shows substantially lower enrollment levels, though UIS and ESA estimates differ. UIS data shows a decrease in the upper secondary NER, from 57.9 percent in 2013 to 54.2 percent in 2017, while 2018 ESA data for Grades 10-11 NER stayed nearly the same, at 42.2

³⁵⁵ Data on the share of out of school children of lower secondary age by sex were not available for the year 2017. However, the share for girls in 2016 was 1.33, while for boys it was 0.91 (UIS data).

³⁵⁶ ESA, 12.; National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF. 2018 Kyrgyzstan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Snapshots of Key Findings. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF. 2019, Kyrgyzstan, 29.

³⁵⁷ More recent primary completion rate data is not available from UIS.

³⁵⁸ MOES data cites lower estimates of the total out-of-school population, of 3,185 children in 2012 and 2,576 children in 2016 (ESA, 46). However, data on number and rates of out of school children should be viewed with some caution. Many out of school children also have special needs and are often not included in population data if they are not registered at birth and do not enter school.

percent in 2012/13 and 42.9 percent in 2016/17.³⁵⁹ The 2018 ESA does, however, cite a substantially lower NER for boys, at 39.4 percent, than for girls at 46.6 percent.³⁶⁰

- **Gender equality in upper secondary net attendance:** Gender differences in upper secondary net attendance rates show mixed changes from 2014 to 2018, improving for boys but slightly decreasing for girls. The 2014 net attendance rate was 78.9 percent for boys and 86.4 percent for girls, compared to 88.1 percent for boys and 85.3 percent for girls in 2018.³⁶¹ Historically, fewer boys have enrolled in upper secondary education, which is not compulsory.

INDICATORS THAT DETERIORATED DURING THE REVIEW PERIOD

- **Lower secondary dropout rate:** Dropout rates from the first year of lower secondary education increased from 0.70 percent in 2012 to 1.11 percent in 2016. For girls, it increased from 0.05 percent in 2012 to 1.00 percent in 2016, while for boys it decreased slightly from 1.31 percent in 2012 to 1.21 percent in 2016 (UIS data).
- **Secondary completion rate:** Overall, the lower secondary completion rate remains high, but experienced a slight decrease from 96.65 percent in 2012 to 95.65 percent in 2014. Upper secondary completion rates dropped substantially, from 85.29 percent in 2012 to 80.58 percent in 2014.³⁶²

INDICATORS FOR WHICH NO CONCLUSIVE DATA IS AVAILABLE

- **Access for the poorest children:** No data on enrollment or out of school rates is available by income quintile for the review period. Disaggregation of MOES data on the number of out-of-school children by region reveals that the largest number of out-of-school children were registered in rural areas of Osh province, while the smallest numbers were in the cities of Bishkek and Osh (ESA 2018). The largest group of out-of-school children are those with disabilities, who make up 50 percent of the total out-of-school population (ESA 2018). Data on how these figures have changed over the evaluation period is not available.
- **Access for children with special needs:** Government estimates indicate a total population of 26,700 children with disabilities in the country, which is likely an underestimate.³⁶³ According to MOES data, 10,925 children with disabilities, or approximately 40 percent of the total estimated population of children with disabilities, were enrolled in preschool and school education for the 2016-17 school year (2018 ESA).³⁶⁴ Data on how these figures have changed over the evaluation period is not available. Specifically at the preschool level, MOES data noted that 14 special kindergartens, two-thirds of which were located in Bishkek, the capital, enrolled a total of 1,556 children with special needs in 2014. However, regular pre-primary educational programs have little capacity to cater to children with SEN.³⁶⁵ Data was not available to determine how pre-primary enrollment rates for children with SEN have changed during the review period.
- **Primary dropout rate:** Data on dropout rates or early school leavers is not available for the review period (ESA 2018).
- **Gender equality in primary and secondary enrollment:** There are no differences between levels of primary and secondary enrollment for girls versus boys, with gender parity achieved for primary and lower secondary school. However, disparities are to the disadvantage of boys in upper secondary (78.9 percent net attendance rate for boys vs. 86.4 percent for girls), particularly in rural areas (with 77.7 percent attendance rates for boys compared to 87.3 percent for girls). Data on how these rates have changed over time is not available.

³⁵⁹ ESA, 39. The steep drop from high lower secondary enrollment rates to much lower upper secondary enrollment rates is explained by the fact that upper secondary education is not compulsory in the Kyrgyz Republic.

³⁶⁰ ESA, 40.

³⁶¹ 2014 data from ESA, pg. 13, and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2014. 2018 data from 2018 MICS survey, 207.

³⁶² No UIS data more recent than 2014 was available for either lower or upper secondary completion rates.

³⁶³ Children with disabilities are often not registered at birth and may not enter school, or are given home-schooling of lesser quality than regular schooling.

³⁶⁴ ESA, 13.

³⁶⁵ World Bank ICRR Report, Dec 2018, 7.

Learning Outcomes in Basic Education

Finding 21: While data is insufficient to compare changes in learning outcomes year-on-year during the review period, 2009, 2014, and 2017 National Sample-Based Assessment results suggest that during the review period, learning outcomes improved and learning disparities based on geography and language of instruction saw modest decreases.

176. Available data on learning outcomes from the National Sample-Based Assessment within the review period of this evaluation only covers 2014 and 2017, which constitutes a three-year period within the 7-year review period of this evaluation. Although it does not align neatly with the start of the review period, where available, 2009 data is referenced as a baseline to understand changes during the review period. Results from additional assessments³⁶⁶, including Early Grade Reading Assessments conducted between 2012 and 2017 under the framework of USAID projects, are also presented below. There are no regular national assessments that measure learning outcomes for secondary school in school, except for NSBA tests for Grade 8.³⁶⁷ These studies show that, despite progress over the review period, the Kyrgyz Republic's educational system faces serious challenges in teaching reading comprehension.³⁶⁸

177. The NSBA classifies student performance in reading comprehension into four levels: below basic, basic level, above basic level, and advanced level.³⁶⁹ The share of fourth grade students possessing these competencies in 2009, 2014 and 2017 is presented in Table 5.3.³⁷⁰ Learning outcomes improved substantially between 2009 and 2017, with a decrease of nearly 10 percentage points in children performing at the “below basic” level and increases in other categories. In 2017, as compared to 2014, more students performed at the “above basic” and “advanced” levels. However, it is still striking that by 2017 nearly 60 percent of grade 4 children still had not achieved minimum acceptable reading levels.³⁷¹

³⁶⁶ The Kyrgyz Republic also took part in the OECD's PISA international study of functional literacy of 15-year old students, but last participated in 2006 and 2009, with no more recent data available. In those two years, the Kyrgyz Republic was the lowest-performing country. The results of PISA 2009 reveal that the vast majority of students in Kyrgyzstan (83%) did not reach the baseline level of achievement in reading. The majority did not even reach an even lower level, Level 1a (59%), and 30% of students did not manage even to reach the lowest level of measured performance (Level 1b).

³⁶⁷ ESA, 55.

³⁶⁸ ESA, pg 52

³⁶⁹ The ESA (p. 55-56) offers general descriptions of NSBA levels, and notes that levels were defined in 2007 for each subject and grade. “Below basic” means that the student has fragmented knowledge of the topic, but makes errors and lacks the ability to apply knowledge and skills in the topic. “Basic” indicates that the student has acquired and can apply basic concepts for the topic. “Above basic” means the student has all necessary conceptual knowledge for the topic and consistently applies it to solve tasks or problems. “Advanced” means the student has acquired all knowledge and skills for successful study, and can apply knowledge and skills to solve complex tasks.

³⁷⁰ ESA, 53.

³⁷¹ ESA, 52.

Table 5.3 Percent of grade 4 students scoring at each of four reading levels in Russian³⁷²

	2009	2014	2017	CHANGE 2009 - 2017
Below basic	68.6	65.3	59.8	-8.8 ³⁷³
Basic level	24.1	26.2	24.5	+0.4
Above basic level	5.0	5.7	8.8	+3.8
Advanced level	2.3	2.8	7.0	+4.7

178. NSBA results also demonstrate progress in reading comprehension for grade 8, as seen in **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

Table 5.4 Percent of grade 8 students scoring at each of four reading levels in Russian³⁷⁴

	2009	2017	CHANGE 2009 - 2017
Below basic	66.8	51.5	-15.3
Basic level	13.1	16.6	+3.5
Above basic level	12.5	18.4	+5.9
Advanced level	7.6	13.5	+5.9

179. Results of USAID’s Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), which evaluates students’ oral reading fluency using nine subtasks, also reveal improvements in reading comprehension from 2014 baseline to 2017 endline. Table 5.8 below presents the share of grade 2 and grade 4 students who met the oral reading fluency standard of 40 words or above with full reading comprehension for grade 2, and 80 words or above with full reading comprehension for grade 4.

Table 5.5 Share of grades 2 and 4 students attaining reading fluency in Russian and Kyrgyz³⁷⁵

	2014	2017	CHANGE 2014 -2017
Russian			
Grade 2	25.6	31.5	+5.9
Grade 4	20.6	34.3	+13.7
Kyrgyz			
Grade 2	20.4	33.5	+13.1
Grade 4	25.7	25.7	0

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Although this is a negative value, the change is coded **green** because a reduction in the percentage of students at “below basic” level is a positive development.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ ESA, 54.

180. The NSBA also measured students' competencies in mathematics on four levels, namely below basic, basic level, above basic, and advanced. The share of grade 4 students demonstrating competencies at each level in the 2014 and 2017 assessments is presented in **Error! Reference source not found.**³⁷⁶ Results for grade 8 from 2009 and 2017 are presented in the subsequent table.

Table 5.6 *Share of grade 4 students with competencies in Mathematics*³⁷⁷

	2014	2017	CHANGE 2014 - 2017
Below basic	63.8	60.3	-3.5
Basic level	28.2	31.0	+2.8
Above basic	8.0	8.7	+0.7

Table 5.7 *Share of grade 8 students with competencies in Mathematics*³⁷⁸

	2009	2017	CHANGE 2009 - 2017
Below basic	70.9	64.9	-6.0
Basic level	17.4	18.4	+1.0
Above basic	9.9	13.8	+3.9
Advanced	1.8	2.9	+1.1

181. The results of the NSBA and EGRA offer insight to a number of additional factors:

- a. **Gender:** EGRA reading comprehension results for Grades 2 and 4 demonstrated that girls are performing better than boys. In Grade 2, the proportions of both boys and girls attaining grade-level proficiency (reading 40 words per minute) increased from baseline to endline, however girls' growth outpaced that of boys, at 11 percentage points, compared to 8 percentage points.³⁷⁹ Boys consistently scored lower than girls across EGRA sub-tasks.³⁸⁰ The Grade 4 gender performance gap was larger than in Grade 2, increasing from girls scoring 20 percentage points higher on EGRA baseline compared to 24 percentage points at endline.³⁸¹ NSBA data also reveals a gender gap in Grade 8 reading comprehension performance, with 15 percentage points more boys performing at below basic level compared to girls.³⁸²

³⁷⁶ ESA, 53.

³⁷⁷ Ibid. Ibid. It is not clear why, but the ESA does not report results for the "advanced" mathematics level for Grade 4. Because the numbers for the other three levels add up to 100, this suggests that either: 1) zero percent of students achieved advanced levels, or 2) for some reason the ESA lumped "above basic" and "advanced" together in reporting results.

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

³⁷⁹ ESA, 54.

³⁸⁰ ESA, 54.

³⁸¹ ESA, 54.

³⁸² ESA, 57.

- b. **Geography:** While EGRA results for Grades 2 and 4 suggest that urban students perform better than their rural peers, NSBA mathematics and reading comprehension results for Grade 8 demonstrate progress in narrowing the urban-rural gap. EGRA results demonstrated statistically significant differences between urban and rural pupils on 6 out of 16 reading comprehension sub-tasks, three of which were for grade 2, and three for Grade 4. Urban pupils outperformed their rural peers on all six sub-tasks.³⁸³ However, for Grade 8 mathematics, the largest improvements in NSBA results occurred in small towns, with a 10 percentage point decrease in the number of students who had not reached the basic level, from 70 percent in 2009 to 60 percent in 2017.³⁸⁴ Additionally, NSBA data on Grade 8 reading comprehension shows that differences between higher-performing Bishkek schools and lower-performing rural schools reduced noticeably over a ten-year period. In 2007, 83 percent of students performed below basic level in rural schools, compared to only 41 percent in Bishkek schools, a difference of 42 percentage points. By 2017, the difference had fallen to 34 percentage points.³⁸⁵
- c. **Language of instruction:** Major performance differences based on language of instruction still persist in Grade 8 NSBA reading comprehension results. In Kyrgyz- and Uzbek-medium schools, more than 80 percent of students performed below basic level, while in Russian-medium schools only 55 percent did.³⁸⁶
- d. **Socioeconomic status:** No analyses of NSBA or EGRA performance differences by income quintile were available.

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 22: Strong progress in increased pre-primary enrollment and decreasing disparities in pre-primary access are likely linked to growth in the number of preschool institutions during the review period. Modest learning gains are likely linked to wider textbook availability, teacher pedagogical training, and curricular changes.

182. **Error! Reference source not found.**8 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. As the table shows, there is evidence that **expansion of pre-primary programs and facilities**, especially in rural areas, **wider availability of textbooks**, and **improvements in instructional practices and methods for teaching reading comprehension** likely supported improvements in pre-primary enrollment rates, decreased disparities in pre-primary access, and modest learning gains in reading. There is **less evidence** that these changes contributed to maintaining high levels primary school access, increasing lower secondary enrollment, or decreased geographic disparities in Grade 8 learning outcomes.

³⁸³ ESA, 54.

³⁸⁴ ESA, 56.

³⁸⁵ ESA, 56.

³⁸⁶ ESA, 57.

Table 5.8 Contributions of system-level improvements to identified impact-level improvements

IMPACT-LEVEL IMPROVEMENTS	LIKELIHOOD THAT SYSTEM-LEVEL CHANGES CONTRIBUTED TO THE IMPROVEMENT?
Increase in pre-primary enrollment	Strong: The increase in pre-primary enrollment is likely due to growth in the number of preschool institutions through the Community-based Kindergarten programme and Nariste 480-hour school readiness programme. However, growth in the number of ECD institutions has not kept pace with growth in the number of pre-primary enrollments, resulting in overcrowding of existing institutions in both urban and rural areas. ³⁸⁷
Maintaining high levels of primary enrollment	No evidence: Available evidence does not establish clear linkages between system-level changes and the high levels of primary enrollment that were maintained during the review period. The fact that primary education is compulsory in the Kyrgyz Republic likely explains this impact-level achievement.
Increase in lower secondary enrollment	No evidence: The increase in lower secondary enrollment is likely attributable to the fact that enrollment at this level is compulsory in the country, rather than to other system-level changes.
Decreased disparities in pre-primary access	Strong: An increase in the number of pre-primary facilities and programs in rural areas, likely contributed to decreasing geographic disparities in pre-primary access.
Modest learning gains in reading comprehension and mathematics for Grades 2, 4 and 8	No evidence: It is possible that a mix of system-level improvements contributed to improvements in reading comprehension outcomes, including wider availability of primary level textbooks in multiple languages and improved textbook quality, teacher training through USAID’s Reading Together and Time to Read projects aimed at improving instructional practices related to reading comprehension and fluency ³⁸⁸ , and updated methods for teaching state languages. ³⁸⁹ However, it is unclear, based on available evidence, whether this was actually the case. Teacher management and curricular reforms targeted to improving quality are likely too recent or not advanced enough to have supported learning outcome gains.
Decreased geographic disparities in Grade 8 learning outcomes	No evidence: Available evidence does not point to specific system-level changes that contributed to decreased disparities in lower secondary learning outcomes. Theoretically is possible that improved public financial management may have helped diminish geographic disparities in learning outcomes, but there is no clear evidence indicating that this was the case.

183. Three observations can be derived from this table. First, the identified system-level changes that most likely have contributed to impact-level changes (expansion of pre-primary programs, especially in rural

³⁸⁷ ESA, 33. UNICEF, *Analytical Review of Governance, Provision and Quality of Early Childhood Education Services at the Local Level in Countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS)*, 2017.

³⁸⁸ The 2018 ESA cites a rigorous study of USAID’s Quality Reading Project, which found that in 2017, 44 percent of all sampled Grade 2 pupils and 47 percent of all sampled Grade 4 pupils attained grade-level proficiency in oral reading fluency, improvements of 10 and 13 percentage points, respectively, compared to 2014 results. However, because the study found increasing reading achievement in both control and intervention groups, it is unclear whether the program, or some other factor, caused the improvement in learning outcomes. Source: ESA, 53-54.

³⁸⁹ EU SBS Final Report, 47

areas, improvements in textbook availability, and teacher training on reading comprehension pedagogy) all had strong donor support from GPE, the World Bank, and USAID, respectively.

184. Secondly, the impact-level changes with the strongest contributions from system-level changes were also EDS 2020 priorities, while those without identifiable contributions from system-level changes were not explicit EDS 2020 priorities.

185. Third, three out of four system-level improvements that were classified as significant and sustainable in Chapter 4 appear to have influenced impact-level improvements, while most system-level improvements listed as potentially significant in Chapter 4 appear to have not yet influenced impact-level improvements. This is likely due to the fact that several system-level changes have not been fully implemented or institutionalized, and that they may take a longer period of time for effects to become apparent at the outcome and impact levels (e.g. inclusive education policy, monitoring and evaluation, EMIS).

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

Finding 23: System-level improvements likely contributed to improvements in preschool access and equity. While it is possible that system-level improvements also contributed to modest primary-level learning gains, available evidence is inadequate to make this link.

186. UIS and ESA data suggests that the system-level change of an expansion of preschool facilities and programs, especially in rural areas, likely contributed to improvements in **equity**, including absolute increases in pre-primary enrollment and decreased geographic disparities in preschool access.

187. The 2009, 2014 and 2017 results of the National Sample-Based Assessment and results of USAID's EGRA suggest that it is possible that system-level changes, including greater availability of textbooks and teacher pedagogical training, contributed to modest improvements in **learning** outcomes in reading comprehension and mathematics. However, existing evidence is inadequate to clearly draw this link. In addition, some reform efforts, such as the new policy framework on teacher development and management (2017), and revisions to the general curriculum, may be too recent or insufficiently advanced to have influenced learning outcomes.

188. Available evidence therefore provides **moderate** support to the first contribution claim, that (1) changes in the education system positively affect learning outcomes and equity, but provides **limited** support to the second contribution claim, that (2) country-produced data on equity, efficiency and learning allow measuring/tracking these changes.

6 Conclusions and strategic questions/issues

189. 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 Kyrgyz Republic evaluation. These questions are of potential relevance for GPE overall and may warrant further exploration in other upcoming country-level evaluations.

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

- What, if any, aspects of GPE support to Kyrgyz Republic 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

191. 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 Kyrgyz Republic.

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	Limited
Sector Dialogue	Modest
Sector Monitoring	Limited
Sector Financing	Modest
Sector Plan Implementation	Significant

192. The evaluation highlights one area in which GPE made a significant contribution and two in which it made modest contributions. GPE financial support in the Kyrgyz Republic contributed to improved **implementation**, namely by helping to expand access to and the quality of preschool education. By providing nearly 10 percent of all government spending on preschool education between 2013-2017, GPE supported countrywide rollout of a school preparation program, establishment of community-based kindergartens in remote areas, and the development of a new model of an inclusive education program. In addition, GPE ESPIG **financing** was seen as additional to what would have otherwise been available in the sector, and the presence of GPE is credited as having helped to catalyze new governmental commitments to funding pre-primary teacher salaries, although it appeared to have little influence on the amount or quality of international aid. Finally, driven by the leadership of specific individuals, the Coordinating Agency made several notable contributions to sector **dialogue**, including through efforts to expand its inclusiveness and through its consistent and transparent communication to members of the DPCC, though there is little evidence of GPE influence in dialogue processes beyond the CA's contributions.

193. Two areas of lesser GPE contribution during the review period were sector monitoring and sector planning. Regarding support to **sector monitoring**, while the 2014-18 ESPIG supported the implementation of two assessment tools, annual joint sector reviews did not take place and monitoring in the sector remains highly fragmented and project-specific. With respect to **sector planning**, beyond a clarifying Secretariat visit in March 2019, several stakeholders note that planning would not have looked meaningfully different in the absence of GPE.

194. GPE's ToC assumes that system- and impact-level changes are driven by sector plan implementation. This assumption mostly held true in the experience of the Kyrgyz Republic as several but not all areas of system improvements were likely influenced by sector plan implementation. However, a lack of evidence prevents claims that system improvements contributed to impact. Instead, the experience of the Kyrgyz Republic raises the possibility that, where impact changes are not evident, this may be a reflection of several factors, including the time it takes for systems changes to produce results.

195. The case of the Kyrgyz Republic highlights the fact that meaningful sector progress can be made where there is a combination of political will and sufficient funding, coupled with the requisite capacity to enact reforms, as was the case with gains in access to pre-primary education. At the same time, the absence of one or more of these elements, as is the case with the development of a national EMIS, whereby national capacity to leverage data was limited, threatens the achievement of desired outcomes.

196. In the Kyrgyz Republic, three out of 23 assumptions of GPE's country-level ToC held (13 percent). Another 10 / (43 percent) partly held, and the remaining 10 (43 percent) were found to not hold. Only one assumption around EMIS and LAS held true, with the remaining not holding true, highlighting the limited progress the country has made to date in systematically tracking and using sector data.

6.2 Good practices arising from Kyrgyz Republic for other countries

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

- **Evolution of dialogue structures:** Multiple stakeholders noted that a Local Education Group, separate from the DPCC, was set up per GPE's requirements and that the two groups had similar, if not identical mandates. In order to create efficiencies, these groups eventually merged. In addition, the frequency of DPCC meetings improved during the review period and the National Project Steering Committee was created to provide cross-cutting Parliamentary oversight (replacing more decentralized, project-specific steering committees). Such changes reflect how dialogue structures can evolve in order to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose.

A targeted ESPIG investment, backed by political will and strong implementation: GPE's ESPIG was heavily oriented towards pre-primary education, representing a more targeted investment than in some other countries (and an outlier with respect to the amount of ESPIG funding allocated toward early childhood care and education). In preparing the ESPIG application, development partners chose to target the sub-sector in light of a window of political will and stakeholder agreement on its importance. While this implied a choice *not* to devote GPE resources to other major systemic gaps (e.g. the ESPIG did not support an EMIS, which the country still lacks), substantial progress on improving access to pre-primary education was made, under the leadership of a strong implementation team. This experience offers a model for developing partner countries to prioritize or cluster GPE investments to address specific gaps or issues (as opposed to distributing funds across

multiple sub-sectoral areas). Both adequate political will and implementation capacity to facilitate progress on the issue are important enabling conditions for this strategy.

- **Flexibility on the part of the GPE Secretariat in applying the GPE model in-country:** The GPE Secretariat has demonstrated flexibility in several manifestations of the GPE model in the Kyrgyz Republic. First, even though EDS 2020 did not meet the required number of GPE criteria for plan quality, it was still considered as having met the ESPIG requirement of a credible, endorsed plan, which allowed the country to access ESPIG funds that contributed to improvements in the pre-primary sub-sector. Secondly, as noted above, GPE has supported the evolution of dialogue structures to focus on strengthening one existing body, the DPCC, instead of imposing the creation of a separate LEG. Third, when the MOES made the decision to embark on a 10-year plan instead of updating EDS 2020, GPE flexibly provided PDG funds, which are not typically used to support planning, for EDS 2030 and the ESA.

6.3 Strategic questions arising from this CLE for GPE

198. The following strategic questions arise from this CLE for GPE and may be particularly relevant in thinking about the role that GPE plays in a context like the Kyrgyz Republic.

- Stakeholders widely reported that GPE has had little influence on the sector plan development processes reviewed as part of this evaluation, both when the Kyrgyz Republic was and was not eligible for an ESPIG. Notably, and in contrast with other GPE countries evaluated to date, actors did not describe the promise of GPE funding, which has occupied a small share of total funding for the sector, as an incentive for adhering to GPE planning processes. Is GPE's theory of change therefore dependent upon country stakeholders perceiving ESPIG funding to be sufficiently large as to incentivize them to closely follow GPE's standards for sector planning?
- EDS 2020 did not meet GPE standards to qualify as a credible plan yet it was well-implemented and a number of systems improvements have been made. Does the experience of Kyrgyz Republic call into question what should qualify as a high-quality, credible plan? What place is there, if any, for political and operational relevance in GPE's definition of plan quality? Especially in situations where government planning capacity is weak, how should GPE weigh the importance of a plan's technical quality versus its political and operational relevance?
- It appears that Secretariat turnover created challenges in in-country stakeholders' understanding of GPE requirements around sector planning, and of GPE as a partnership more broadly. If common in other countries, what steps might GPE take to minimize the impact of such turnover on DCPs?
- The Kyrgyz Republic also faced uncertainty and a delayed decision about the new EDS plan coverage period. When facing potential changes in planning timelines or decisions, should developing country partners initiate GPE ESPDG support, or wait to engage it? How can the GPE Secretariat support DCPs to make these decisions? How can GPE funding mechanisms be pivoted to meet country needs (as was done with PDG funding to support the planning process in the Kyrgyz Republic)?
- The experience of the Kyrgyz Republic highlights the importance of alignment, not just between the Ministry, the grant agent, and the GPE Secretariat, but among all sector stakeholders, to develop a shared understanding of how GPE support will be deployed and stakeholders' roles as partners in shaping that support. How can GPE bring an understanding of institutional incentives and in-country partner power dynamics into available mechanisms to strengthen mutual accountability?

- With the exception of 2017, in which some form of a JSR took place, annual sectoral reviews have not occurred, to the detriment of any efforts to improve monitoring and planning. How can GPE most effectively sensitize and support country stakeholders to regularly carry out annual comprehensive review and planning exercises and encourage the establishment and regular use of ongoing monitoring mechanisms?
- Several stakeholders cited the “heaviness” of the GPE application processes relative to the amount of financing that the Kyrgyz Republic receives from GPE. This is made even more stark in light of the fact that the country is only eligible for the Multiplier Fund, rather than traditional ESPIG funding. Can GPE strike an appropriate balance between rigor and ease of its processes?
- In the Kyrgyz Republic, the World Bank Project Implementation Unit helped steer the implementation of the Kyrgyz Early Education Project, in the process achieving strong results. At the same time, investments in the Project Implementation Unit did little to institutionalize technical capacity within the Ministry of Education. To what extent should GPE support mechanisms such as the PIU in order to accomplish the dual aims of improving outcomes while building national capacity?

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?³⁹⁰ If so, then how?			
CEQ 1: Has GPE contributed to education sector plan implementation in [country] during the period under review?³⁹¹ How?			
CEQ 1.1a (prospective CLE) What have been strengths and weaknesses of sector planning during the period under review? ³⁹² What are likely reasons for strong/weak sector planning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which the country's sector plan met the criteria for a credible ESP as put forward in GPE/IIEP Guidelines³⁹³ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive analysis • Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews

³⁹⁰ OECD DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency.

³⁹¹ 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.

³⁹² 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.

³⁹³ 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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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) • <u>For TEPs</u>: Extent to which the country’s sector plan met the criteria for a credible TEP as put forward in GPE/IIEP Guidelines³⁹⁴ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE RF data (Indicator 16 a-b-c-d)³⁹⁷ • Other relevant reports or reviews that comment on the quality of the sector plan • Interviews 	

³⁹⁴ 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>

³⁹⁷ 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 quality standards.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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)³⁹⁵ • 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 transparent³⁹⁶ • Stakeholder views on strengths and weaknesses of the most recent sector planning process in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Leadership for and inclusiveness of sector plan development – Relevance, coherence and achievability of the sector plan 		
<p>CEQ 1.1b (summative CLE) What characterized the education sector plan in place during the core period under review?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Guidelines³⁹⁸ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ESP is guided by an overall vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector plan(s) for the period covered by the most recent ESPIG • GPE ESP/TEP quality assurance documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive analysis

³⁹⁵ 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.

³⁹⁶ 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>

³⁹⁸ 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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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) • <u>For TEPs</u>: Extent to which the country’s sector plan met the criteria for a credible TEP as put forward in GPE/IIEP Guidelines³⁹⁹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE RF data (indicator 16 a-b-c-d)⁴⁰¹ • Other relevant reports or reviews that comment on the quality of the sector plan 	

³⁹⁹ 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>

⁴⁰¹ 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 quality standards.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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) • Extent to which the ESP/TEP meets GPE quality criteria as outlined in the GPE 2020 results framework (indicators 16a, b, c and d)⁴⁰⁰ 		
<p>CEQ 1.2a (prospective CLE) Has GPE contributed to the observed characteristics of sector planning? How? If no, why not?</p> <p>a) Through the GPE ESPDG grant- (funding, funding requirements)</p> <p>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)⁴⁰²</p>	<p>a) Contributions through GPE ESPDG grant and related funding requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>b) Contributions through other (non ESPDG-related) support to sector planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews

⁴⁰⁰ 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.

⁴⁰² 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
	facilitation; GPE standards, guidelines, CSEF and ASA grants, and knowledge exchange in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improving the quality (including relevance) of education sector plans – Strengthening in-country capacity for sector planning 		
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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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).⁴⁰³ • Government implementation capacity and management, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive analysis • Triangulation of data deriving from document review and interviews

⁴⁰³ 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.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCP’s plan implementation progress reports 	
<p>CEQ 1.4 Has GPE contributed to the observed characteristics of sector plan implementation? If so, then how? If not, why not?</p> <p>a) Through GPE EPDG, ESPIG grants-related funding requirements and the variable tranche under the New Funding Model (NFM)⁴⁰⁴</p> <p>b) Through non-financial support (advocacy, standards, quality assurance procedures, guidelines, capacity building, and facilitation,</p>	<p>a) Contributions through GPE EPDG and ESPIG grants, related funding requirements and variable tranche under the NFM (where applicable)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)

⁴⁰⁴ Where applicable.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
and cross-national sharing of evidence/good practice) ⁴⁰⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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?); b) Contributions through non-financial support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country's poverty reduction strategy paper 	

⁴⁰⁵ 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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder views on relevance and effectiveness of GPE non-financial support with focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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. 		
<p>CEQ 1.5 How has education sector financing evolved during the period under review?</p> <p>a) Amounts of domestic financing</p> <p>b) Amounts and sources of international financing</p> <p>c) Quality of domestic and international financing (e.g. short, medium and long-term predictability, alignment with government systems)?</p> <p>1. If no positive changes, then why not?</p>	<p>a) Amounts of domestic education sector financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>b) Amounts and sources of international financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>c) Quality of sector financing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) • GPE results framework indicator 29 on alignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trend analysis for period under review • Descriptive analysis

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 		
<p>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?</p> <p>a) Through ESPIG funding and related funding requirements?</p> <p>b) Through the GPE multiplier funding mechanisms (where applicable)?</p> <p>2. Through other means, including advocacy⁴⁰⁶ at</p>	<p>a) Through ESPIG funding and related requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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 channelled through and outside of GPE, and for basic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESPIG grant applications and related documents (country commitment on financing requirement) • Donor pledges and contributions to ESP implementation) • Creditor Reporting System (CRS) by OECD-DAC • UIS data by UNESCO • National data (e.g. Education Management Information Systems, National Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative analysis (GPE versus other donor contributions) • Triangulation of quantitative analysis with interview data

⁴⁰⁶ Through the Secretariat at country and global levels, and/or GPE board members (global level, influencing country-specific approaches of individual donors)

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
national and/or global levels?	<p>and total education, to account for any substitution by donors or the country government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of GPE education sector program implementation grants with national systems⁴⁰⁷ • Possible reasons for non-alignment or non-harmonization of ESPIGs (if applicable) <p>b) Through the GPE multiplier funding mechanism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount received by DCP government through the GPE multiplier fund (if applicable) • Stakeholder views on clarity and efficiency of multiplier application process <p>c) Through other means (especially advocacy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 advocacy⁴⁰⁸ (e.g. JSRs attended by senior MoF staff) • 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 	<p>Accounts, Joint Sector Reviews, public expenditure reviews)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with national actors (e.g. Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Local Education Groups/ Development partner groups) 	

⁴⁰⁷ GPE's system alignment criteria including the 10 elements of alignment and the elements of harmonization captured by RF indicators 29, 30 respectively.

⁴⁰⁸ 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
CEQ 2 Has GPE contributed to strengthening mutual accountability for the education sector during the period under review? If so, then how?			
<p>CEQ 2.1 Has sector dialogue changed during the period under review? If so, then how and why? If not, why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-post comparison • Triangulate results of document review and interviews • Stakeholder analysis and mapping
<p>CEQ 2.2 Has sector monitoring changed? If so, then how and why? If not, why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which plan implementation is being monitored (e.g. results framework with targets, 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...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEG and JSR meeting notes • Joint sector review reports/aide memoires or equivalents from before and during most recent ESPIG period • GPE sector review assessments • Grant agent reports • Back to office reports/memos from Secretariat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-post comparison • Triangulate the results of document review and interviews

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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)⁴⁰⁹ 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. • Likely causes for no/ limited (changes in) sector monitoring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews 	
CEQ 2.3 Has GPE contributed to observed changes in sector dialogue and monitoring?	a) Grants and funding requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEG meeting notes • Joint sector reviews or equivalents from before and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulate the results of document

⁴⁰⁹ 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
<p>If so, then how? If not, why not?</p> <p>a) Through GPE grants and funding requirements⁴¹⁰</p> <p>b) Through other support (capacity development, advocacy, standards, quality assurance, guidelines, facilitation, cross-national sharing of evidence/good practice)⁴¹¹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>b) Non-grant related support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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] <p>a) and b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder view on relevance and appropriateness of GPE grants and related funding process and requirements, and of other support in relation to: 	<p>during most recent ESPIG period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GPE sector review assessments • Grant agent reports • Back to office reports/memos from Secretariat • Interviews • CSEF, KIX documents etc. 	<p>review and interviews</p>

⁴¹⁰ All relevant GPE grants to country/actors in country, including CSEF and KIX, where applicable.

⁴¹¹ 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.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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?			
<p>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?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Political context (e.g. changes in government/leadership) – Economic context – Social/environmental contexts (e.g. natural disasters, conflict, health crises) – Other (context-specific) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulate the results of document review and interviews
<p>CEQ 3.2 During the period under review, have there been unintended, positive or negative, consequences of GPE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of unintended, positive and negative, effects on sector planning, financing, sector plan implementation, sector dialogue and monitoring deriving from GPE grants and funding requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All data sources outlined for CEQs 1 and 2 above • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulate the results of document review and interviews

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
financial and non-financial support?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of unintended, positive and negative, effects deriving from other GPE support. 		
Key question II: Has sector plan implementation contributed to making the overall education system in [country] more effective and efficient?			
<p>CEQ 4 During the period under review, how has the education system changed in relation to:</p> <p>a) Improving access to education and equity?</p> <p>b) Enhancing education quality and relevance (quality of teaching/instruction)?</p> <p>c) Sector Management?⁴¹²</p> <p>If there were no changes in the education system, then why not and with what implications?⁴¹³</p>	<p>a) Improving education access and equity - focus on extent to which DCP meets its own performance indicators, where available, e.g. related to:⁴¹⁴</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in pupil/trained teacher ratio during period under review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Literature on good practices in education system domains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

⁴¹² 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.

⁴¹³ 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.

⁴¹⁴ 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.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>c) Sector Management – focus on extent to which DCP meets its own performance indicators, e.g. related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p>(a-c):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely causes for no/ limited changes at system level (based on literature review and stakeholder views) 	<p>addressed in country's sector plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • ESPIG grant applications • Relevant documents/reports illustrating changes in key ministries' institutional capacity (e.g. on restructuring, internal resource allocation) 	
<p>CEQ 5 How has sector plan implementation contributed to observed changes at education system level?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specific measures put in place as part of sector plan implementation address previously identified bottlenecks at 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources as shown for CEQ 4 • Literature on good practices in education system domains addressed in country's sector plan • Education sector analyses 	

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
	current/most recent policy cycle, targeted efforts outside of the education sector plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country's poverty reduction strategy paper 	
Key question III: Have improvements at education system level contributed to progress towards impact?			
<p>CEQ 6 During the period under review, what changes have occurred in relation to:</p> <p>a) Learning outcomes (basic education)?</p> <p>b) Equity, gender equality and inclusion in education?</p>	<p>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:</p> <p>a) Learning outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes/trends in learning outcomes (basic education) during period under review (by gender, by socio-economic group, by rural/urban locations) <p>b) Equity, gender equality, and inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) Literature on key factors affecting learning outcomes, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
		equity, equality, and inclusion in comparable settings	
Key question IV: What are implications of evaluation findings for GPE support to [country]?			
<p>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?⁴¹⁵</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights deriving from answering evaluation questions above e.g. in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above as well as (for summative evaluations) sources applied for CEQs 9, 10 and 11 (part B below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulation of data collected and analysis conducted for other evaluation questions

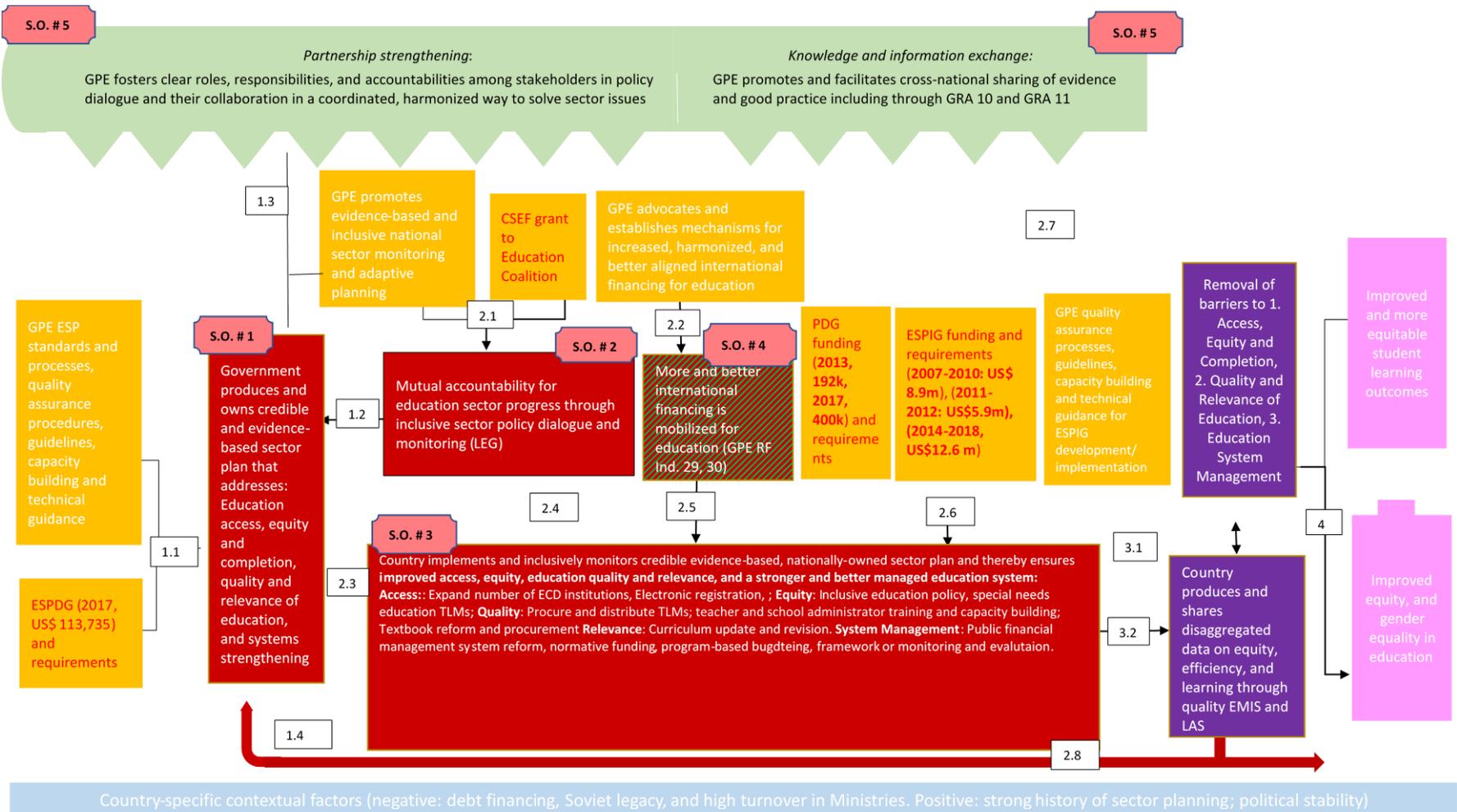
⁴¹⁵ For both questions CEQ 7 and 8 the notion of ‘good practice’ refers to acknowledging processes, mechanisms, ways of working etc. that the CLE found to work well and/or that were innovative in that specific context. The intention is not to try and identify globally relevant benchmarks or universally ‘good practice’.

MAIN EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND SUB-QUESTIONS	INDICATORS	MAIN SOURCES OF INFORMATION	ANALYSIS
<p>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?⁴¹⁶</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights deriving from answering evaluation questions above e.g. in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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 challenges⁴¹⁷ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above as well as (for summative evaluations) sources applied for CEQs 9, 10 and 11 (part B below) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triangulation of data collected, and analysis conducted for other evaluation questions

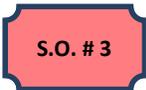
⁴¹⁶ This could mean, for example, highlighting strengths of existing mechanisms for sector planning that either reflect related GPE/IEEP guidelines and quality criteria or that introduce alternative/slightly different approaches that appear to work well in the respective context.

⁴¹⁷ 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.

Appendix II GPE country-level theory of change - Kyrgyz Republic



LEGEND

xxx	Non-financial GPE inputs/support (technical assistance, facilitation, advocacy)
xxx	GPE financial inputs/support (grants) and related funding requirements
	Country-level objectives that GPE support/influence directly contributes to. Underlined items are issues (at least partly) supported through the ESPIG-funded PDSEB sub-sector plan.
	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

1

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).

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.⁴¹⁸ The guiding frameworks for the evaluation are the **evaluation matrix** (Appendix I) and the **country-level** theory of change for Kyrgyz Republic (Appendix II).⁴¹⁹

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.⁴²⁰

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 Kyrgyz Republic, 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 cycle⁴²¹ 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.

⁴¹⁸ 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.

⁴¹⁹ This country-specific ToC was adapted from the generic country-level ToC that had been developed in the assignment Inception Report.

⁴²⁰ 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).

⁴²¹ 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.

- 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 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 the Kyrgyz Republic from July 1st to July 12th, 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 three 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 Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. 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 40 individuals (see Box iii.1), of which 31 were women.

Box iii.1: Consulted Stakeholders

Education ministry (including agencies): 9
 Grant and coordinating agents: 7
 Development partners/donors: 15
 Civil Society/Teacher Organizations/Parent organizations: 6
 GPE Secretariat: 3

- Education sector performance data analysis, drawing upon publicly accessible information on learning outcomes, equity, gender equality and inclusion, and education financing.⁴²²

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.

The main limitations for the evaluation are outlined in Table iii.1, along with mitigation strategies.

Table iii.2 *Methodological limitations of the evaluation, and corresponding mitigation strategies*

LIMITATIONS	MITIGATION STRATEGIES	SUCCESS OF MITIGATION
No final EDS 2030 available and incomplete EDS 2030 planning cycle. Given the timing of the evaluation, a finalized version of EDS 2030 did not become available before this evaluation was completed.	The evaluation team used the November 2019 draft of EDS 2030 to make preliminary judgments on GPE contributions to sector planning.	Moderate: The evaluation used the November 2019 draft plan, the best available substitute to compare to EDS 2020. A considerable portion of the EDS 2030 planning cycle had been completed and was reflected in the evaluation. However, major differences between early EDS 2030 drafts and the final version of the plan could limit the relevance of the evaluation’s findings.

⁴²² 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.

LIMITATIONS	MITIGATION STRATEGIES	SUCCESS OF MITIGATION
<p>Limited quality and availability of activity, input, and output data. The evaluation team was not able to access most existing activity, input, and output data, either because it did not exist, was not in a shareable form, or was not made available in a timely manner.</p>	<p>The evaluation team searched for activity, input, and output-level data in sources including the draft EDS 2030, the 2018 ESA, and donor project evaluations and reports.</p>	<p>Moderate: while mitigating measures obtained enough data to give a high-level picture of EDS 2012-2020 implementation, it was not possible for the evaluators to do a complete review of progress under EDS 2020.</p>

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	The Kyrgyz Republic is represented on the GPE Board through the Eastern Europe, Middle East and Central Asia constituency. These board members were <i>not</i> consulted during the course of this country evaluation.
Country-level		
Ministry of Education and Science Development (MoES) and associated departments: SPU, Budget, PIUs	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. Key MoES personnel were interviewed in person during the country visit (see Appendix V, list of stakeholders).
Ministry of Finance (MoF)	Interest: High Influence: High. Responsible for providing financing to the education sector. Importance: High.	One consultation conducted (see Appendix V, list of stakeholders).
Key Education Sector Stakeholders (national level)		
Grant Agent: World Bank	Interest: High Influence: High. Responsible for managing the ESPIG and ESPDG in the Kyrgyz Republic. Importance: High	Key informant at country level. Consulted during the visit in the Kyrgyz Republic and by phone in Washington, DC.

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 DPCC. Importance: High	Key informants at country level were interviewed in person during the country visit.
Development Partners (donor agencies, multilateral organizations): ADB, Aga Khan Foundation, EU, GIZ, ILO, Soros Foundation, USAID.	Interest: High Influence: Medium-High, through their participation in DPCC, and contributions to sector financing and implementation through 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, UNESCO	Interest: High Influence: Medium-High, through their participation in DPCC, and contributions to sector financing and implementation through 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: AED, AUCA, EDUFEIS, OSCE	Interest: High Influence: Medium. Some representatives are members of the DPCC and participated in sector planning consultations. Importance: Medium-High.	Key informants at country level were consulted during the country site visit.

Appendix V List of consulted individuals

In total, 40 individuals were interviewed in the Kyrgyz Republic, of which 31 were women. All consulted individuals, except for two, were based in Bishkek.

ORGANIZATION	LAST NAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	M/W
Ministries and Agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic			
MOES	DZHUSUPBEKOVA, Nadira	Vice Minister of Education	W
	MARCHENKO, Larisa	Public Advisor to the Minister of Education	W
	KAMALOVA, Aigul	Former ECD Specialist	W
MOES – Strategic Planning Unit (SPU)	BOIKO, Evgeniya	Head of Department, Strategic Planning	W
MOES – Budget Policy and Financial Analysis	BAIMURATOVA, Akyikat	Head of Department, Budget Policy and Financial Analysis	W
MOES – ADB Project Implementation Unit	TENTEMISHOVA, Anara	Director, ADB PIU	W
MOES – World Bank Project Implementation Unit	AINEKENOVA, Anara	Director, World Bank PIU	W
	ARAPMAMATOVNA, Isaeva Aleksandra	Coordinator, GPE Kyrgyz Early Education Project (KEEP)	W
Ministry of Finance	SYDYKOV, Bakyt	Head of Department, International Cooperation	M
Bilateral, multilateral and private donor agencies			
ADB	RAZAEV, Mamatkalil	Project Officer	M
	RYSKULUEVA, Farida	Former Education Consultant	W
Aga Khan Foundation	AITKULOVA, Burulai	Education Programme Officer	W
EU	BOTOBAEVA, Gulnara	Project Manager, Cooperation Section	W
GIZ	KUDAIBERGENOVA, Tolgonay	Programme Coordinator	W
	MAMYTOVA, Ilmira	Leading Programme Specialist	W
	TOKTOGULOVA, Nurgul	Programme Expert	W
	VOHLSLEGER, Agnes	Head of Programme	W
ILO	KACHKINBAEVA, Lilia	National Project Coordinator	W
Soros Foundation	DEYCHMAN, Valentin	Education Reform Programme Director	M
UNICEF	DZHUMAGULOVA, Chinargul	Early Childhood Development Officer	W

ORGANIZATION	LAST NAME, FIRST NAME	TITLE	M/W
	KATO, Mariko	Education Officer (ECD)	W
	KUMENOVA, Chynara	Education Officer	W
	MAMMADZADE, Munir	Deputy Representative	M
	MARITZ, Gerrit	Chief, Child Survival and Development	M
UNESCO	BENETE, Lina (Almaty-based)	Head of Education	W
	SULAIMANOVA, Aisulu	National Education Officer	W
USAID	MADRIGAL, Nora	Health and Education Office Director	W
	POWER, Valerie	Chief of Party, Time to Read Programme	W
	TOLBAEVA, Gulzhan		W
World Bank	HOU, Dingyong (DC-based)	Senior Education Specialist / Task Team Leader	M
	SULTANOVA, Gulmira	ET Consultant	W
GPE Secretariat	KHAN, Tariq	GPE Country Lead	M
	MCCONNELL, Christin	Education Specialist (BELDS lead)	W
	GUISON DOWDY, Anne	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist	W
Civil Society			
Association for Education Development (AED)	BASHIROVA, Masuma	Executive Director	W
	KURMANBEKOVA, Bermet	Financial Manager	W
	MOROZOVA, Ekaterina	Programme Manager	W
American University of Central Asia	CHATTOPADHAY, Tamo	ESA Consultant	M
EDUFEIS	IVANOV, Alexandr	Director	M
OSCE	SAIROVA, Gulnaz	Programme Manager, Central Asia Education Programme, High Commission on National Minorities	W

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Appendix VII Progress on 2012-2020 EDS implementation

Insufficient data available

As noted on page 4 of the evaluation, the absence of a monitoring framework for the sector that is shared by MOES and partners, as well as a regular, annual Joint Sector Review, means that while data from UIS, the country's National Statistical Committee, learning assessments, and other sources are used to report outcome data throughout the evaluation, data on education sector plan activities, inputs and outputs were limited. When such data existed, they were often not comparable to other sources, and in many cases, were not accessible to the evaluators. As a result, the evaluation team was not able to complete Appendix VII: Progress on 2012-2020 EDS implementation, which has been left blank. However, Section 3.5 of the evaluation narrative draws on data from the 2018 ESA, donor evaluation reports, and the November 2019 draft of the EDS 2030, which reviews progress made in the sector, to review plan implementation progress.

Appendix VIII Kyrgyz Republic sector financing data

ISSUE	DATA
Total domestic educ. expenditure	Increase from US\$ 383.6 million in 2012 to US\$ 451.5 million in 2016
Education share of total government Expenditures	Stable from 20.2% in 2012 to 19.4% in 2017
Education expenditure as percentage of GDP	Decreased from 7% in 2012 to 6.1% in 2017
Per capita education expenditure	Increase from US\$ 208 in 2012 to US\$ 268 in 2017
Total ODA (all sectors)	Increased from US\$150.4 million in 2012 to US\$163.5 million in 2017 (OECD CRS)
Education ODA as share of overall ODA	Increase from 15.5 % in 2012 to 16.9 % in 2017
ESPIG amount as % of education ODA during review period	ESPIG funding represented 13 percent of all education ODA from 2014-2017.
ESPIG amount as % of total <u>estimated</u> ESP financing	ESPIG funding represented 9 % of total estimated ESP pre-primary financing in from 2012-2017
ESPIG amount at % of <u>actual</u> ESP financing	Data not available

Appendix IX Selected system-level country data

Changes suited to remove barriers to equitable access to education

ISSUE	OBSERVATIONS
Changes in # of schools relative to # of children	<p>Between 2012 and 2016, the number of ECD institutions increased from 819 to 1,296. The number of children aged 0-7 increased from 115,812 to 173,633</p> <p>The number of schools at primary and secondary level increased from 2,207 in 2012 to 2,265 in 2018 (EDS 2021-2030). Between 2012 and 2017, the number of students enrolled in primary education grew from 405,318 to 501,011.</p> <p><i>From 2019 ESA</i></p>
Changes in average distance to school	N/A
Changes in costs of education to families	<p>The establishment of satellite kindergartens that converted community spaces into extra classrooms, and schools and teachers' homes into centres of learning for young children. These innovations reduced costs, and offered families affordable options for their children's early education (ESA, 2019)</p> <p><i>From 2018 UNESCO Policy Review; 2019 draft ESA</i></p>
Changes in availability of programs to improve children's readiness for school	<p>The first full year of the Nariste 480-hour program began in 2016 and was designed to provide preschool-aged children (typically aged 5-7) with equal opportunities for learning in first grade. With support from GPE (2014-2017 ESPIG), the program was expanded from a 240-hour program in 2011 to 480-hour program in 2016 and is currently delivered throughout the academic year. The expansion of the program's operating hours met a key national objective of providing a minimum level of pre-school enrichment to most school-going children of the country.</p> <p>The number of children entering Grade 1 after pre-school programs increased from 12,484 in 2012 to 111,337 in 2017. (ESA, 2019)</p>
New/expanded measures put in place to meet the educational needs of children with special needs and learners from disadvantaged groups	<p>Over the review period, several initiatives have been introduced to address the low enrolment of children with special education needs (SEN) in schools. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure adjustment and provision of specialized TLMs • Introduction of a normative / per capita funding formula that includes a provision for children with learning disabilities. • Establishment of three teacher training resource centers. • Development of an Inclusive Education Policy

ISSUE	OBSERVATIONS
New/expanded measures put in place to further gender equality in education	While gender parity has been achieved in general education enrollment, an EU-funded gender study conducted in 2017 revealed that gender stereotyping is present within the education system (i.e. in curriculum and textbooks. To address gender stereotyping in textbooks, the MoES undertook a gender assessment of textbooks (under the support of the EU grant scheme), and recommendations of this assessment have been introduced in textbooks on new education standards for grades 5-6 at secondary schools (ESA, 2019).

Changes suited to remove barriers to quality education

ISSUE	OBSERVATIONS
Changes in Pupil/teacher ratios	The pupil teacher ratio at the primary level has declined from 24:1 in 2012 to 28:1 in 2017. The pupil teacher ratio at the secondary level has stayed steady at 14:1 between 2012 and 2017. (ESA 2019).
Changes in pupil/trained teacher ratio	Based on available data (until 2014) the proportion of School Teachers at primary and secondary levels who have completed higher professional education is already above 90 per cent and still rising, although slowly. (ESA,2019).

ISSUE	OBSERVATIONS																																																																													
<p>Changes in equitable allocation of teachers (measured by relationship between number of teachers and number of pupils per school)</p>	<p>STR in primary grades varies greatly depending on the regions. The highest ratio is observed in the two main cities of Bishkek and Osh, as well as in Chuy province. In other regions, the STR does not exceed the national average (From ESA 2019)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2011/ 2012</th> <th>2012/ 2013</th> <th>2013/ 2014</th> <th>2014/ 2015</th> <th>2015/ 2016</th> <th>2016/ 2017</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>Kyrgyz Republic</i></td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>26</td> <td>28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Batken province</td> <td>22</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jalalabad prov.</td> <td>23</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>24</td> <td>22</td> <td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Issyk Kul prov.</td> <td>22</td> <td>24</td> <td>24</td> <td>24</td> <td>26</td> <td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Naryn province</td> <td>20</td> <td>20</td> <td>21</td> <td>20</td> <td>20</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Osh province</td> <td>23</td> <td>23</td> <td>23</td> <td>24</td> <td>23</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Talas province</td> <td>22</td> <td>22</td> <td>23</td> <td>22</td> <td>25</td> <td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chuy province</td> <td>26</td> <td>27</td> <td>28</td> <td>30</td> <td>30</td> <td>32</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bishkek city</td> <td>35</td> <td>36</td> <td>39</td> <td>40</td> <td>40</td> <td>41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Osh city</td> <td>35</td> <td>34</td> <td>40</td> <td>43</td> <td>39</td> <td>39</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>(Source, ESA 2019)</p>		2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	<i>Kyrgyz Republic</i>	24	25	26	27	26	28	Batken province	22	22	23	23	24	25	Jalalabad prov.	23	23	24	24	22	27	Issyk Kul prov.	22	24	24	24	26	26	Naryn province	20	20	21	20	20	22	Osh province	23	23	23	24	23	25	Talas province	22	22	23	22	25	25	Chuy province	26	27	28	30	30	32	Bishkek city	35	36	39	40	40	41	Osh city	35	34	40	43	39	39
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<p>Changes in relevance and clarity of (basic education) curricula</p>	<p>New education standards have been developed and are based on i) a competence-based approach and ii) result-oriented learning that is geared towards the application of knowledge and skills in life.</p> <p>Changes include the increase in the number of hours in foreign languages, the introduction of the subject "Informatics" from Grade 5, and increased attention to the subjects of the natural science cycle. In addition, standards were developed for the profile level in Grades 10 and Grade 11 in mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. (EU SBS Final Report, 2019 & ESA 2019)</p>																																																																													
<p>Changes in availability and quality of teaching and learning materials</p>	<p>The Kyrgyz government financed the development, printing and distribution of approximately three million textbooks, teacher guides for primary and lower secondary schools and a package of essential TLMs for primary schools. (World ICR, 2019).</p> <p>The regulatory legal framework of textbooks publishing system has also been revised, and a number of regulations governing this process have been approved, including requirements for conducting various types of examinations.</p>																																																																													

ISSUE	OBSERVATIONS
Changes to pre-service teacher training	<p>In 2017, the MoES (with support of the ADB) developed an improved policy framework on teacher development and management (e.g. The New Teacher), covering the whole teacher education and development cycle. The new teacher development framework aims to improve the attractiveness of teacher profession. At present, the MoES is also initiating the development of a qualification framework and professional standards for teachers.</p> <p>Donor supported initiatives have also contributed to teacher training efforts. The World Bank Sector Support for Education Reform Project completed three rounds of training, covering primary teachers, Deputy Directors, Heads of Methodological Units on competency-based curriculum and pedagogy (EU SBS Report, 2019).</p> <p>Education officials trained and certified under this component total 11,789 (103.4%), with 11,400 planned (WB, Restructuring Project).</p> <p>The USAID Time to Read program trained more than 400 national trainers and 9,000 primary grade teachers and school administrators on classroom best practices and basic reading skills instruction (USAID).</p>
Changes to in-service teacher training	<p>It should be noted that the on-going coverage of in-service teacher training is lower than what is required by law. A functional analysis of the in-service teacher education and training space revealed only 8-9% of coverage instead of 20% as required by the law (Functional Analysis of In-service Training, ADB 2017).</p>
Changes in incentives for schools/teachers	n/a
Other (may vary by country)	n/a

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)	<p>The World Bank Sector Support for Education Reform Project completed three rounds of training, covering primary teachers, Deputy Directors, Heads of Methodological Units on competency-based curriculum and pedagogy (EU SBS Report, 2019).</p>

ISSUE	OBSERVATIONS
Is a quality learning assessment system (LAS) within basic education cycle in place?	<p>A National Sample-Based Assessment (NSBA) is used to monitor educational achievement relative to national standards for Grades 4 and 8. It has been conducted for Grade 4 four times, out of which two instances fell during the review period (2014 and 2017) (ESA, 2019).</p> <p>NSBA assesses mathematics, reading and comprehension, and natural sciences using a multiple-choice test questionnaire.⁴²³ In addition to the NSBA, the OECD's PISA and USAID's Early Grade Reading Achievements (EGRA) have also assessed reading and comprehension in the primary grades (ESA, 2019)</p>
Changes in how country <u>uses</u> LAS.	n/a
Does country have functioning EMIS?	<p>Although it was included as a priority under EDS 2020, the Kyrgyz Republic remains without a functioning EMIS system, which significantly hampers evidence-based strategic planning. OpenEMIS system was piloted in 19 schools in early 2019, but the piloted system does not yet include indicators on learning outcomes or inclusive education, which are expected to be introduced during the 2019-2020 school year.</p>
Changes in how country <u>uses</u> EMIS data to inform policy dialogue, decision making and sector monitoring	n/a

⁴²³ ESA, 52.; European Union, "Review of Education Quality Assessment System in the Kyrgyz Republic (EQAS): From Conceptual Framework to Quality Assurance Tools," 2016, 47.

Appendix X Selected impact-level country data

Impact level trends

ISSUE	OBSERVED (UP TO AND INCLUDING DURING REVIEW PERIOD)	TRENDS			
Learning outcomes					
Changes/trends in learning outcomes (basic education) during period under review (<u>by gender, by socio-economic group, by rural/urban locations</u>)	Percent of grade 4 students scoring at each of 4 reading levels in Russian				
		2009	2014	2017	Change 2009 - 2017
	Below basic	68.6	65.3	59.8	-8.8
	Basic level	24.1	26.2	24.5	0.4
	Above basic level	5.0	5.7	8.8	3.8
	Advanced level	2.3	2.8	7.0	4.7
	Percent of grade 8 students scoring at each of four reading levels in Russian				
		2009	2017	Change 2009 - 2017	
	Below basic	66.8	51.5	-15.3	
	Basic level	13.1	16.6	+3.5	
	Above basic level	12.5	18.4	+5.9	
	Advanced level	7.6	13.5	+5.9	
	The share of fourth grade and eighth grade students performing at “below basic” level decreased from 2009 to 2017, and the share of performance at basic level and above increased.				
	National School-Based Assessment results in Grade 8 show progress in reducing urban-rural disparities in learning outcomes. Grade 8 reading comprehension results show that in 2007, 83 percent of students performed below basic level in rural schools, compared to only 41 percent in Bishkek schools, a difference of 42 percentage points. By 2017, this difference had fallen to 34 percentage points.				
	<i>From 2018 ESA</i>				
	No analysis of NSBA or EGRA results by income quintile were available.				

ISSUE	OBSERVED (UP TO AND INCLUDING DURING REVIEW PERIOD)	TRENDS
Equity, gender equality and inclusion		
<p>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</p>	<p>Between 2012 and 2017, pre-primary enrollment increased from 106k children to 221k children, a significant jump. Both UIS data and data cited by the 2018 ESA point to an increase in the pre-primary GER over the same period, though the estimates differ. UIS data note an increase from 24.1 percent in 2012 to 39.2 percent in 2017, while the 2018 ESA 2018 cites an increase from 21 percent in 2012 to 26 percent in 2016.</p> <p>Between 2012 and 2017, the number of students enrolled in primary education grew from 405,318 to 501,011. Over this period, the primary GER increased from 104.17 to 107.86, with the gender parity index improving marginally, from 0.98 to 0.99. The primary NER decreased slightly from 90.55 to 89.90 between 2012 and 2017, with the gender parity index remaining constant at 0.98 (UIS data).</p> <p>The number of children enrolled in lower secondary education increased from 481k in 2012 to 497k in 2017. The lower secondary GER grew from 92.65 in 2012 to 104.78 in 2017, with a constant gender parity index of 0.99. The lower secondary NER improved from 84.6 to 93.3 in 2017, with the gender parity index for secondary remaining nearly the same, at 1.00 in 2014 and at 0.99 in 2017 (UIS data).</p> <p>Data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) indicates that drastic regional and wealth disparities in enrollment in ECD programmes for children ages 3 to 5 persist, but have improved during the review period. In 2014, 40.5 percent of children in urban areas and only 16 percent of children in rural areas were enrolled in ECD programmes, compared to 47 percent in urban areas and 35 percent in rural areas as of 2018. In 2014, only 11.7 percent of children of the poorest wealth quintile, compared to 55 percent in the richest quintile, were enrolled in ECD programmes. In 2018, this increased to 25 percent enrollment among the poorest and 57 percent among the richest wealth quintile (MICS 2014, 2018; ESA 2018).</p> <p>There are no differences between levels of primary and secondary enrollment for girls versus boys, with gender parity achieved for primary and lower secondary school. However, disparities are to the disadvantage of boys in upper secondary (78.9 percent net attendance rate for boys vs. 86.4 percent for girls), particularly in rural areas (with 77.7 percent attendance rates for boys compared to 87.3 percent for girls). Data on how these rates have changed over time is not available.</p>	

ISSUE	OBSERVED (UP TO AND INCLUDING DURING REVIEW PERIOD)	TRENDS
Changes in (i) primary completion rate and (ii) lower secondary completion rate (by gender)	<p>The primary completion rate remained approximately the same, at 99.58 percent in 2012 and 99.27 percent in 2014, with no substantial differences between rates for girls and boys (UIS data).</p> <p>The gross graduation ratio from primary education increased from 94.9 percent in 2012 to 99.7 percent in 2017. Over this period, the gender parity index rose from 0.98 to 1.00. For lower secondary education, the gross graduation ratio rose from 92.5 in 2012 to 95.1 in 2017, with the gender parity index falling slightly from 1.01 to 0.98 (UIS data).</p> <p>Lower secondary completion rates decreased slightly from 96.6 percent in 2012 to 95.8 percent in 2014. The lower secondary completion rate for girls dropped slightly from 97.4 percent in 2012 to 96.7 percent in 2014, as well as for boys, from 95.8 percent in 2012 to 94.9 percent in 2014. There was no change in the adjusted gender parity index, which stayed constant at 1.01 from 2012 to 2014. More recent data is not available (UIS data).</p>	
Changes in out of school rates for (i) primary and (ii) lower secondary	<p>Between 2012 and 2017, the number of out of school children of primary school age increased from 6,137 to 6,773, reaching a peak for the review period of 8,009 in 2015. However, over this period the share of out of school children of primary school age fell from 1.57 to 1.46 percent (UIS data). MOES data cites lower estimates of the total out-of-school population, of 3,185 children in 2012 and 2,576 children in 2016 (ESA, 46). However, data on number and rates of out of school children should be viewed with some caution. Many out of school children also have special needs and are often not included in population data if they are not registered at birth and do not enter school.</p> <p>Between 2014 and 2017, the number of out of school children in the lower secondary school age range decreased from 34k to under 988 total, a dramatic drop, and the rate of out of school children of lower secondary age decreased from 6.94 percent in 2014 to 0.21 percent in 2017. Data on the share of out of school children of lower secondary age by sex were not available for the year 2017. However, the share for girls in 2016 was 1.33, while for boys it was 0.91. (UIS data).</p>	
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)	<p>The total number of out of school children of primary age increases from 6,137 in 2012 to 6,773 in 2017. Among them, the share of girls fell from 60.4 percent in 2012 to 57.8 percent in 2017.</p> <p>While the total number of out of school adolescents of lower secondary school age decreased significantly from 42,770 in 2013 to 988 in 2017, the share of girls rose from 49.0 percent in 2013 to 58.6 percent in 2016.</p> <p>MoES data cites lower numbers of out of school children ages 7 to 17, which decreases from 3,981 in 2012 to 2576 in 2016 (2018 ESA, 46). 2016/17 MoES data indicates that the largest number of out-of-school children was registered in rural areas of Osh province, with the smallest numbers in Bishkek and Osh. The biggest group of OOSC are children with disabilities (50 percent), out of whom 60 percent have a mental disability (2018 ESA, 46).</p>	

ISSUE	OBSERVED (UP TO AND INCLUDING DURING REVIEW PERIOD)	TRENDS
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 remained constant, at 99 percent from 2012 to 2016. There were no substantial differences by gender in the effective transition rate, with the gender parity index remaining constant at 1.00 from 2012 to 2016. (UIS data).	
Changes in dropout and/or repetition rates (depending on data availability) for (i) primary, (ii) lower-secondary education	Dropout rates from the first year of lower secondary education increased from 0.70 percent in 2012 to 1.11 percent in 2016. For girls, it increased from 0.05 percent in 2012 to 1.00 percent in 2016, while for boys it decreased slightly from 1.31 percent in 2012 to 1.21 percent in 2016 (UIS data).	