Review of Completion Reports for the Global Partnership for Education’s Education Sector Program Implementation Grants 2016-2018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a review of key project outcomes and lessons from Global Partnership for Education (GPE) projects across three years of closed education sector program implementation grants (ESPIGs), based on data from completion reports and independent reviews of completion reports.

Throughout this paper, the term “projects” (used interchangeably with “GPE projects”) refers to projects and programs that were either fully or partly financed through GPE ESPIGs (for example, through budget support). The discussion therefore includes outcomes and ratings of the projects or programs partly or fully supported through GPE financing.

Thirty-six GPE projects closed during the fiscal year (FY) 2016–2018 period (implemented between 2010 and 2018). Of these, 21 were administered by the World Bank (henceforth referred to as Bank projects) and 15 by other institutions, such as UNICEF or DFID (henceforth referred to as non-Bank projects). Of the 21 Bank projects, 19 have completion reports (referred to as Implementation Completion Reports, or ICRs) and 10 have completion report reviews (Implementation Completion Report Reviews, or ICRRs, conducted by the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank). These reports provide systematic, comparable information on achievement of the key project performance indicators (KPIs) in the project results framework.

Of the 15 non-Bank projects, 13 have completion reports available. These reports provide detailed accounts of implementation experience and lessons learned; however, four projects lack a formal statement of project objectives (hence, no KPIs) and only six projects have formal results frameworks.

It is important to note that, as a partnership, GPE works through several grant agents, guided by decisions made at the country level. GPE requires a completion report on grant implementation and results, but relies on grant agents’ own procedures and formats for documenting grant completion and providing an assessment of grant effectiveness and results1. A systematic summary across all grants being managed through different grant agents therefore is not feasible in this report.

It is also important to note up front that the projects in this review closed during the Strategic Plan 2016–2020 (GPE 2020) period, but they were prepared and approved prior to the strategy. Thus, although this review frames the discussion around the GPE 2020 strategic goals and objectives, the preparation of these projects was not guided by these goals and objectives or the financing requirements that were subsequently rolled out as part of the strategy. As such, this review serves as a baseline for how the goals and objectives have subsequently guided project preparation and implementation during GPE 2020. In addition, it serves as a vehicle for comprehensive learning about the performance of GPE grants.

Project design

The GPE thematic areas and the GPE 2020 strategic goals are broadly defined and thus are able to accommodate the specific objective statements for the GPE projects.2 “Improving the quality of education” is most frequently cited (22 projects—15 Bank and 7 non-Bank) in the objective statements, followed by “increased access” (17 projects—12 Bank and 5 non-Bank) and “improved equity” (14

2 For Bank projects, these are called Project Development Objectives, or PDOs.
projects—12 Bank and 2 non-Bank). Eleven projects explicitly include a focus on “disadvantaged” groups in the objective statement.

Regarding the planned project interventions, the most frequently supported subsector is primary education (26 projects—16 Bank and 10 non-Bank), followed by pre-primary (13 projects—10 Bank and 3 non-Bank), secondary (12 projects—9 Bank and 3 non-Bank) subsectors. The most frequently planned interventions are supply-side ones (teacher training, provision of improved teaching/learning materials, and classroom construction). Interventions in the GPE thematic area of “learning” most frequently aim to improve teaching and learning conditions (teacher training, provision of materials, classroom construction), less so to equip ministries and schools to assess learning outcomes. Teacher training in some projects may or may not include a focus on learning assessments, but that information is not readily available in the project preparation documents.

Regarding measurement of project achievements, almost all Bank projects provide a formal results framework that identifies high-level outcome indicators, or “Key Project Indicators” (KPIs). For non-Bank projects, KPIs are similarly identified if the project includes a results framework. “Improved quality” is being measured in a multitude of ways, depending on whether the objective is to improve learning, to improve school environments or to improve teaching quality. Also, some KPIs tend to be “output” oriented (that is, number of teachers trained, number of students enrolled in schools with improved learning conditions) rather than “outcome” oriented (that is, number of teachers receiving satisfactory rating on classroom observation, improved scores on Early Grade Reading Assessment).

Achievement of key project indicators

Nineteen projects (16 Bank and 3 non-Bank) achieved outcomes in “improved quality” (at least one KPI was fully or mostly achieved), although the aspect of educational quality improved, and the validity of the indicator selected, varied significantly. Thirteen projects (12 Bank and 1 non-Bank) achieved outcomes in “increased access.” Four projects (4 Bank and 0 non-Bank) reported outcomes for “increased equity” among marginalized groups, although these were measured almost entirely by outcomes among girls, not other disadvantaged populations. (Note: Three Bank projects were implemented exclusively in disadvantaged areas; therefore, outcomes are not reported separately for “marginalized groups”). Fourteen projects (8 Bank and 6 non-Bank) reported outcomes in “strengthened institutional capacity,” most frequently at the central level, followed by the school level, and then the decentralized level (that is, local/district ministry of education office). Most projects with KPIs and good data delivered according to expectations; however, these projects were designed prior to the implementation of the GPE 2020 strategy, which articulates additional expectations under the new funding model in areas such as financing for education management information systems (EMIS).

Project outcome ratings

The Bank-administered project completion reports (ICRs) provide overall outcome ratings, which in turn comprise the sub-elements of relevance, efficacy and efficiency. Eighteen of the 19 Bank ICRs rate overall project outcome in the satisfactory range. Similarly, all 10 of the ICRRs (World Bank Independent Evaluation Group’s review of the ICRs) rate overall outcome in the satisfactory range. With regards to the

3 This review coded KPIs only because of the volume of total indicators (intermediate outcome, output) available in results frameworks. For example, one Bank project had 4 KPIs and 16 intermediate outcome indicators, and one non-Bank project had 6 KPIs, 6 intermediate outcome indicators, and 6 output indicators.
sub-elements, ratings on efficiency, while still mostly in the satisfactory range, are slightly less favorable compared with those for relevance or efficacy. Non-Bank project reports generally do not assign ratings (only one completion report in this review assigned ratings, although for relevance and efficacy, but not for overall outcome); therefore, achievements of non-Bank projects are discussed in terms of achievement of KPIs rather than project ratings.

Other observations
Two-thirds of the completion reports acknowledge linkages between the GPE project and the country’s education sector plan (ESP), as an important element of GPE’s work is to support implementation of a country’s ESP in general (for example, strengthening the country’s capacity to monitor the ESP); however, very few reports explicitly discuss the project’s contribution to achieving the ESP outcomes. Additionally, half of the reports reference the role played by local education groups (LEGs) and joint sector reviews (JSRs) in implementation, but there is limited analysis of which functional aspects of the LEGs or JSRs are most effective. The completion reports also do not discuss whether or how GPE influences domestic public expenditures on education, aside from reporting general figures on public expenditure in the education sector. Thus, project completion documents report on the aspects of GPE’s work funded through ESPIGs (as required) but do not generally reflect on GPE’s broader processes and goals. It is important to note that there is no requirement for grant agents to report on these aspects of GPE’s country-level model under GPE 2020.

Findings and recommendations
- Project objectives and interventions are largely consistent with the broad GPE themes of learning, equity and systems. However, the more specific aspects of those themes are less frequently articulated in the PDOs and not included in project interventions. For example, as articulated in GPE 2020, these more specific aspects include more equitable student learning outcomes, increased gender equality, increased inclusion and more efficient education systems. Projects prepared under GPE 2020 should be more tightly aligned with and focused on more specific aspects of GPE goals. Note: Only a small number of projects prepared under GPE 2020 have closed to date, and a similar assessment of alignment of grants with GPE goals will be possible once a sufficient number of completion reports are available for review.
- Project interventions more frequently address supply rather than demand—for example, construction of school facilities and teacher training. In addition to reporting on outputs, projects indicators should also be carefully selected to provide information on whether there is actual “uptake” or effectiveness of the increased supply.
- Goals for improved quality and increased equity can be multifaceted. For example, improved quality could mean improved student learning—a specific GPE 2020 strategic goal—but it is frequently framed as a less ambitious goal of improved learning environments. (The level of ambition could potentially be related to project duration and size, factors this review did not analyze in relation to project objectives.) Increased equity might address one but not all aspects of equity—for example, gender, poverty or special education needs—and not all projects identify the specific disadvantaged population in the PDO statement. Project objectives and results frameworks (particularly KPIs) should have clarity on which facets of these goals are being addressed and that KPIs are outcome oriented.
Some projects do not have a robust results framework—for example, no PDO, no outcome (only output) indicators, no baseline or target figures. In addition, some do not report on achievements according to the results framework. **GPE projects should have a clear results chain and indicators pointing to attributable outcomes, and these should be used to determine whether GPE funding has been utilized effectively if the project is a stand-alone mechanism. If it is not, then the results chain should be clarified for the program/policy receiving GPE financing to enable an assessment of GPE’s contributions.**

Data on the education sector—enrollment, pupil-teacher ratio, learning outcomes and so on—are a key input to decision-making; therefore, timeliness and reliability of the data, starting from the local school level, are essential. **Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) support could include communication on and demonstration of the important role of data (in order to more effectively engage stakeholders) and capacity building for decentralized entities.**

Completion reports are largely focused on reporting on achievements of projects financed by GPE (either fully or partly) and reflecting on implementation experience. These have generated valuable lessons learned. There is less analysis on other aspects of the processes related to GPE, such as the effectiveness of the GPE operational model (LEGs, JSRs) or changes in domestic financing. This is not surprising, given that the projects reviewed were designed prior to GPE 2020 and that there is no expectation of reporting on these elements of GPE. **Future completion report requirements could include more explicit reflection on these prominent aspects of GPE to better understand how they function and the role they played in the outcomes achieved.**

**BACKGROUND ON GPE**

This report presents a review of key project outcomes and lessons from Global Partnership for Education (GPE) projects across three years of closed education sector program implementation grants (ESPIGs), based on data from completion reports and independent reviews of completion reports. The purpose of the report is learning and knowledge sharing, particularly to inform GPE on improving future project planning/design, implementation and GPE corporate strategies.

This review focuses on two main questions:

1. How well have projects, and similar interventions across projects, performed in terms of design, implementation, and effectiveness?
2. What are the lessons across projects and interventions that should be considered for ongoing and future projects?

GPE’s work, according to the Strategic Plan 2016–2020 (GPE 2020), is mainly organized around three strategic goals:

- Improved and more equitable student learning outcomes
- Increased equity, gender equality and inclusion
- Effective and efficient education systems
These goals are further elaborated into thematic activities, and project components are largely aligned with these goals.

**SCOPE OF THIS REVIEW**

Thirty-six GPE projects closed during the period FY2016–2018; implemented between 2010 and 2018, they had an average project duration of 4.4 years. Twenty-one of these projects were administered by the World Bank (henceforth referred to as Bank projects) and 15 were administered by other institutions, such as UNICEF or DFID (henceforth referred to as non-Bank projects). (See Appendix A for list of projects.) These projects were designed prior to the launch of GPE 2020.

Of the 21 Bank projects, 19 had completion reports (referred to as Implementation Completion Reports, or ICRs) available when this review was being prepared. These self-evaluation reports are prepared at the close of a Bank operation, with the purpose of providing an account of the performance and results of the operation. The ICRs provide systematic information on the achievement of key performance indicators (KPIs) in the project’s results framework. The World Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) conducts a further desk review (referred to as an Implementation Completion Report Review, or ICRR) of the evidence provided in the ICR in order to validate the findings. Of the 19 projects with available ICRs, 10 also had a completed ICRR.

Of the 15 non-Bank projects, 13 had completion reports available when this review was being prepared. The project completion reports for non-Bank projects provide detailed accounts of implementation experience and lessons learned. However, four projects do not have a formal statement of project objectives (hence, no KPIs) and only six projects have formal results frameworks. Therefore, information to validate the extent to which objectives were achieved by non-Bank projects is limited.

**PROJECT DESIGN**

In project design, the 19 Bank and 11 non-Bank projects exhibit the following:

- More than half of the projects (18 projects) were implemented in the Africa region, while 1–4 projects each were implemented in East Asia, South Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, and Middle East and North Africa.
- The projects were approved between 2010 and 2016, before the start of GPE 2020. The planned closing dates were 2013–2018; however, the actual closing dates were 2016–2019, with 20 of the 30 projects requiring closing date extensions into the following year(s).
Two-thirds of the projects (20 projects) were implemented in low-income countries, the remainder in lower-middle-income countries and one in an upper-middle-income country.

More than half of the projects (17 projects) were implemented in countries designated as “fragile” situations, according to GPE’s FY2018 classification.

It is important to emphasize that the projects included in the review were designed prior to GPE 2020 and therefore were not expected to reflect the goals, objectives and financing requirements of the strategy.

**Project objectives**
A formal project objective statement defines what the project intends to achieve, normally expressed in terms of an intermediate or final development outcome (see Box 1 for examples). This project objective statement is frequently a compound statement, encapsulating multiple objectives for one project. Consistent with the GPE 2020 strategic goals (albeit recognizing that the projects in this review were prepared prior to GPE 2020), four objectives were included in the projects (Table 1).\(^8\) (Note: Four non-Bank projects did not have formal project objective statements. These projects referenced the broader education sector plan as the guiding strategy but did not have a separate project-specific objective for the GPE project.)

**Table 1: Project objectives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective/Outcome</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
<th>of which Bank</th>
<th>of which non-Bank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPE 2020 goal: Improved and more equitable student learning outcomes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To increase quality of education</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPE 2020 goal: Increased equity, gender equality and inclusion</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve access to education</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To increase equity in education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPE 2020 goal: Effective and efficient education systems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve education sector management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Box 1: Examples of PDO statements**

**Chad:** To strengthen equitable, inclusive and quality basic education provision for children affected by the crisis in the Lac region.

**Democratic Republic of Congo:** To increase access and equity in primary education, to improve learning conditions in primary education and to strengthen sector management and promote greater accountability by introducing new management practices at the local level.

**Madagascar:** To preserve access to primary education and improve the teaching and learning environment in targeted areas.

**Vietnam:** To introduce and use new teaching and learning practices in the classroom, targeting the most disadvantaged groups of primary students.

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\(^7\) In Bank projects, this is known as the Project Development Objective (PDO).

\(^8\) Only includes revised objectives for the two Bank projects that were restructured.
**Zimbabwe**: To boost learning outcomes in basic education through continuous professional development of teachers, improved teacher supervision and management, and strengthened evidence-based policy and strategic planning.

Eleven projects explicitly referred to “disadvantaged” or marginalized populations in the project objective statement. These marginalized groups were identified/defined as follows:

- Three projects targeted “disadvantaged populations.” Haiti: poor children; Nepal: Dalits, girls, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous, poor, children with disabilities, working children, street children, conflict-affected children, calamity-affected children, children from remote regions, children with parents in prison, children rescued from trafficking, children of migrant parents; Vietnam: schools categorized according to percent of students from poor families, percent of children belonging to ethnic minority groups, distance of school from district center, percent of students who perform as average or poor in learning achievement.

- Six projects targeted “disadvantaged areas.” Afghanistan: lowest education indicators; Benin: gross enrollment rate, completion rate, girls gross enrollment rate; Cambodia: districts with low gross enrollment rates in pre-primary and primary; Ghana: districts based on poverty index, primary retention rates, share of girls enrolled, pass rates, share of trained teachers; Liberia: rural areas; Nicaragua: poverty level, low education indicators.

- Two projects targeted “affected students.” Chad: children affected by crisis in the Lac region; Mali: internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities affected by the influx of IDPs.

**Project interventions (planned)**
The 30 projects planned interventions in five subsectors (Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsector</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
<th>of which Bank</th>
<th>of which non-Bank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood/Pre-primary</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-secondary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drawing on the GPE 2020 strategy, the planned interventions can be categorized into various thematic activities (Table 3).

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9 Project interventions that strengthen the capacity of education ministries and more may have an impact on multiple subsectors, but such indirect interventions are not counted in this table.
### Table 3: Thematic activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic activity</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
<th>of which Bank</th>
<th>of which non-Bank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GPE 2020 thematic area: Learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards/curriculum/learning materials</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning assessment systems</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher management</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of ICT in learning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GPE 2020 thematic area: Equity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education facilities</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access for out-of-school children</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to children with disabilities/special needs</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being programs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash transfers/targeted incentives</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult learning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GPE 2020 Thematic Area: Systems</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems strengthening: central level</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems strengthening: decentralized/school level</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education management information systems (EMIS)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the thematic area of learning, the most common interventions are “teacher training” and upgrading of “standards/curriculum/learning materials”: “Teacher training” (both pre-service and in-service, resource center-based and school-based) was most often training in updated teaching methodologies, expanding capacity of training programs to increase number of trained teachers; less common were certification/licensing measures. “Standards/curriculum/learning materials” was upgraded standards through defining of curriculum or grade level standards; curriculum revisions to shift toward competency-based or to implement new early grade reading approaches; and provision of learning materials such as textbooks, school kits, other learning materials for classrooms. “Teacher management” most often meant financing of teacher salaries; one project is developing a Human Resources Management Information System, while others mentioned monitoring teacher absenteeism through school report cards. Half of the projects supported assessment systems and teacher management: “Assessment systems” most often meant the development and/or implementation of a learning assessment tool to assess learning outcomes of students (note: teacher training in some projects may or may not have included learning assessments, but that information was not readily available in all project preparation documents).
Box 2: Innovations in teacher training

Nearly all projects financed teacher training in the range of subsectors, addressing both subject-area content and pedagogical methods. Some projects also included more innovative elements in their activities.

In Vietnam, the project sought a systematic improvement in the teaching-learning process in the classroom, namely by placing students at the center of the learning process, promoting active learning and collaboration. To support these goals, the project financed teacher training and, in a modified form of cascade training, used the services of high-performing teachers as “master trainers”—this allowed efficiencies and thus a greater number of teachers to receive training, and also enabled continuous professional support for clusters once training was completed.

In Ghana, the project sought to improve the quality of teaching in deprived districts by financing an Untrained Teachers Diploma in Basic Education Program, which upgraded unqualified teachers’ skills in rural communities through local and/or distance learning options while they continue to teach in their schools. Teachers who participate in this program are more likely to be from the local school communities, speak the local language and be more integrated into the community, and therefore have a higher likelihood of remaining in that deprived area to continue teaching.

Within the thematic area of equity, the most common intervention is construction of “education facilities”: “Education facilities” entailed construction and/or rehabilitation of schools and/or classrooms in all subsectors, as well as ancillary facilities such as latrines, water points and administrative offices. More than half the projects also supported “well-being programs,” with school feeding being most often (Box 3 illustrates an example), followed by early childhood development support programs. Half of the projects included support to increase access for girls (see Gender section below); fewer than half provide support to children with disabilities or special needs, either in the form of physical access to classrooms or development of inclusive curriculum materials.

Box 3: School feeding

In Mali, the project delegated management of school canteens to the local school management committee. Food was purchased from the local community, and mothers of students were trained in school health activities to support the functioning of the canteens. Local purchase of food was cost-effective and helped prevent fund leakages. In some cases, communities supplemented the canteens with family contributions of food and compensation for cooks.

Within the thematic area of systems, almost all projects support “institutional strengthening at the central level” and two-thirds also provide support at the “decentralized/school level.” At the central level, this most often came in the form of capacity development in project management, fiduciary functions, financing flows (including some projects with per capita financing), M&E and communications. At the decentralized/school level, the support most often came in the form of training of school management committees (including in developing school improvement plans and using school report cards) and training for school administrators. Fewer than half of the projects supported the development or enhancement of education management information systems (EMIS) (Box 4 illustrates an example).
noted earlier, these projects were designed prior to GPE 2020; therefore, they do not reflect the financing requirements that were rolled out, including on EMIS, as part of the strategic plan.

Box 4: EMIS support

The Pakistan project aimed to strengthen governance and accountability in the education sector to improve service delivery and education outcomes. The lack of timely and accurate data on key school-level indicators was considered a major factor in the underperformance of schools. The project financed the establishment of a school monitoring system and a human resources management information system, as well as interventions to ensure the dissemination and use of the information generated by the new systems.

Project results framework (planned)

Twenty-five of the 30 projects provided a formal results framework that identified high-level outcome indicators, or “key project indicators (KPIs).”

For the 22 projects that included “improved quality” as an objective, all 22 (15 Bank and 7 non-Bank) included a KPI to measure quality. Here are the most frequently used KPIs to measure quality: % students performing satisfactorily/scores on assessments (10); number of teachers trained (3); textbook-student ratio (4); pupil-teacher ratio (3); primary completion rate (5); secondary completion rate (1); improved teacher performance (6); number of children enrolled/participating in schools with improved learning conditions (4); and % certified teachers (3).

Box 5: Measuring improved quality

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, improved quality was measured by the availability of learning materials, that is, textbooks. In addition to tracking the number of textbooks distributed, a KPI measured the textbook-pupil ratio. Hence, these KPIs aimed to capture the adequacy of the distribution of learning materials.

In Cambodia, improved quality was measured by improved teaching practices. In addition to tracking the number of teachers receiving training, one KPI measured the percentage of primary teachers applying effective reading teaching techniques, according to classroom observations. Hence, this KPI aimed to capture actual improvements in quality of teaching.

In Bangladesh, improved quality was measured by primary completion rate. However, it is unclear, given the time frame of the project, whether the project activities would directly impact this outcome.

For the 17 projects that included “increased access” as an objective, 14 (12 Bank and 2 non-Bank) included a KPI to measure access. The most frequently used KPIs were the number of students enrolled/participating in project intervention (11); enrollment rate/first-year intake rate (8); and number of classrooms constructed/rehabilitated (4).

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10 While results frameworks also identify indicators for intermediate outcomes and outputs, these are not included in this analysis owing to the sheer number of them.
Box 6: Measuring increased access

In Côte d’Ivoire, the rehabilitation or construction of additional classrooms was a key activity, given the severe degradation of facilities during the prolonged civil conflict. One KPI measured the number of additional classrooms resulting from the project, while another KPI measured the number of students who enroll in the schools with the new classrooms, which provided a measure of the number of people benefitting from the project.

In Cambodia, the establishment of an early childhood education program was a key activity, given the low school readiness of primary children that contributes to low educational outcomes in later years. One KPI measured the enrollment ratio of children age 3–5 years in districts where the new early childhood education classes were established, which provided a measure of the coverage of the activity, in addition to the absolute number of beneficiaries.

For the 14 projects that included “increased equity” as an objective, 7 (6 Bank and 1 non-Bank) included a KPI to measure equity. Here are the most frequently used KPIs to measure equity: enrollment/intake rate for girls (4); number of children participating in interventions (1); and parity index (2). The KPIs primarily measured equity outcomes for girls, with only one KPI measuring equity by income and none measuring other disadvantaged populations (although some projects are exclusively implemented in poor, remote areas or among underserved populations, and thus the outcomes reported reflect those populations and are not reported as a separate “equity” outcome).

Main messages:

- Improving the quality of education was included in PDOs most frequently, followed by increased access and improved equity.
- Almost half of the projects explicitly included a focus on disadvantaged groups in the PDO. In most cases, the definition of these groups was articulated and the implementation strategy for reaching them was by geographic targeting.
- The most frequently supported subsector was primary education, followed by pre-primary and secondary.
- The most frequently planned interventions were supply-side ones (teacher training, provision of improved teaching/learning materials, and classroom construction).
- Interventions in the thematic area of learning most frequently aimed to improve teaching and learning conditions (teacher training, provision of materials, classroom construction), less so to equip ministries and schools to assess learning outcomes.
- “Improved quality” was measured in a multitude of ways, depending on whether the objective was to improve learning, to improve school environments or to improve teaching quality. Also, some KPIs that were “output” oriented (that is, number of teachers trained, number of students enrolled in schools with improved learning conditions) rather than “outcome” oriented (that is, number of teachers receiving satisfactory rating on classroom observation, improved scores on Early Grade Reading Assessment).
ACHIEVEMENT OF KPIs

This section assesses the results for KPIs, according to the extent to which they met targets set out in the results frameworks: fully/mostly achieved, partially achieved, or not achieved. Twenty-five projects had a formal results framework with KPIs (19 Bank and 6 non-Bank). Most projects had multiple KPIs, all of which are included in this review (therefore, the number of KPIs achieved may exceed the number of projects). The review does not tabulate intermediate outcome or output indicators owing to the sheer number of them.

Outcomes – Improved quality

Nineteen projects (16 Bank and 3 non-Bank) achieved outcomes in improved quality (at least one KPI was fully or mostly achieved). These were measured along several different dimensions, including student learning outcomes, improved conditions for teaching and learning in classrooms, and improved quality of teaching:

- **Improved student learning**: Increased test/proficiency scores (primary) (4); increased completion rate (primary, lower secondary) (3); increased transition rate (pre-primary to primary) (1)
- **Improved conditions for teaching and learning in classrooms**: Improved textbook-pupil ratio (5); increased availability of schools with improved learning conditions (4); increased number of students participating in well-being programs (3)
- **Improved quality of teaching**: Improved performance of teachers (6); increased number of teachers trained (4)

One Bank project reported outcomes in improved quality that were only partially achieved:

- **Improved conditions for teaching and learning in classrooms**: Textbook-pupil ratio (2)

Three projects (2 Bank and 1 non-Bank) reported outcomes in improved quality that were not achieved:

- **Improved student learning**: Completion rate (primary) (1); test scores (1); dropout rate (1)
- **Improved conditions for teaching and learning in classrooms**: Textbook-pupil ratio (1); pupil-teacher ratio (1)
- **Improved quality of teaching**: Number of teachers trained (1)

Five projects (1 Bank and 4 non-Bank) had KPIs for which end-line data was not available; therefore, the outcomes in improved quality could not be verified.

Box 7: Measuring improved student learning outcomes at the project level

*Cambodia* reported the following results: The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) intervention was designed based on a rigorous evaluation conducted before the project (as part of the prior EFA-FTI project) and included support for administering the test and analyzing the results. The assessment was conducted to assess the reading speed of students, in about 350 randomly selected project schools during the first year and the final year of the project period. Results included the percentage of students in grade 3 reaching 45–60 words per minute on the EGRA increasing from 51.5 percent to 68 percent.

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11 Fully/mostly achieved: target was 90–100 percent met; partially achieved: target was 50–89 percent met; not achieved: target was less than 50 percent met.
**Outcomes – Increased access**

Thirteen projects (12 Bank and 1 non-Bank) achieved outcomes in increased access (at least one KPI for access was fully or mostly achieved):

- **Increased enrollment**: Increased number of students enrolled (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary) (7); increased net enrollment/first-year intake rate for students (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary) (6); improved gross enrollment rate for students (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary) (2)
- **Increased availability**: Increased number of available schools/classrooms (4)
- **Other**: Increased (or maintained) attendance rate (primary) (1); increased number of tuition waivers provided (1)

One Bank project reported an outcome in increased access that was only partially achieved.

- **Increased enrollment**: Increased net enrollment rate for students (primary) (1)

Four projects (2 Bank and 2 non-Bank) reported KPIs for which outcomes in increased access were not achieved:

- **Increased enrollment**: Net enrollment/first-year intake rate for students (primary) (3); gross enrollment rate for students (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary) (2)

One non-Bank project had KPIs for which end-line data was not available; therefore, the outcomes in increased access could not be verified.

**Box 8: High achievement in increased access**

In the Kyrgyz Republic, one of the project objectives was to increase access to preschools, to allow all children to complete a full-year of school preparation prior to entering grade 1. Project activities included the provision of shift-based and community-based preschool classes, teacher training, provision of materials and community campaigns to increase awareness of the benefits of early childhood education. Project outcomes achieved and/or surpassed targets, as the shift-based program enrolled three cohorts of children within the three-year period: in Year 1, 114,451 (target: 70,000); in Year 2, 137,886 (target: 75,000); in Year 3, 116,985 (target: 80,000). In addition, the community-based program enrolled 10,000 children. The total number of 6-year-old children nationwide during that time period was 395,842; hence, the project achieved 93 percent enrollment.

**Outcomes – Increased equity**

Four projects (4 Bank and 0 non-Bank) reported outcomes for increased equity among marginalized groups (at least one KPI was fully or mostly achieved).

- **Girls**: Increased net enrollment/first-year intake rate for girls (pre-primary, primary, lower secondary) (3); improved gender parity index (primary, lower secondary) (3); improved primary completion rate for girls (1)
- **Poor**: Decreased disparity in access to schooling as measured by ratio of net enrollment rate of poorest 20% vs. richest 20% quintile (1)

Four projects (3 Bank and 1 non-Bank) reported outcomes in increased equity that were partially achieved.

- **Girls**: Number of female teachers hired/trained (2); gender parity index (primary) (2)
Three projects (2 Bank and 1 non-Bank) reported outcomes in increased equity that were not achieved:

- **Girls**: Gross first-year intake rate for girls (primary, lower secondary) (3); primary completion rate (1); % female teachers trained (1)

Two non-Bank projects had KPIs for which end-line data was not available; therefore, the outcomes in increased equity could not be verified.

**Box 9: High achievement in equity in access**

In Cambodia, one of the project objectives was to improve access to basic education, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds; hence, a key project intervention was the provision of scholarships to poor upper primary/lower secondary students. The number of students who received scholarships was 142,655 (target: 133,000). The project outcome target was surpassed, as the lower secondary enrollment rate increased from 35.1 percent to 41.9 percent (target: 37.1 percent), corroborated by a lower dropout rate among scholarship recipients (2.0 percent) compared with the national dropout rate (9.4 percent).

**Outcomes – Strengthened institutional capacity**

Fourteen projects (8 Bank and 6 non-Bank) reported outcomes in strengthened institutional capacity (at least one KPI was fully or mostly achieved):

- **Central level**: Development of student learning assessment system (3); conducting of student learning assessment (2); completion of education sector plan (1)
- **Decentralized/school level**: Number of schools with own bank accounts (1); % of district education offices receiving project support (1); % districts disbursing at least 75% of school grants (1); % schools with updated school report cards (1); number of districts for which EMIS data is being collected and analyzed (1); % schools preparing school plans (1); % school directors implementing three management practices learned in training (2)

Two Bank projects reported outcomes on strengthened institutional capacity that were only partially achieved:

- **Central level**: Equity index tool developed but not yet implemented (1); quality assurance tool developed but not yet implemented (1)

One Bank project reported an outcome on strengthened institutional capacity that was not achieved:

- **Central level**: Enhanced versions of the student assessment tests not administered (1)

Three non-Bank projects had KPIs for which end-line data was not available; therefore, the outcomes in strengthened institutional capacity could not be verified.

**Box 10: Substantial achievement in institutional strengthening at the central level**

In Cote d’Ivoire, one of the project objectives was to restore and strengthen institutional capacity to deliver quality basic education. Project activities included technical support and training in the production of annual school statistics and the establishment of a national learning assessment system. Outcomes were achieved, as national learning assessments were conducted for grades 1 through 3 in
reading and math, and national education data is now being collected, analyzed and reported on a regular basis. The learning assessment system was deemed effective in measuring student progress toward agreed goals, identifying a sample of students that is representative of targeted grades, reporting results to policymakers, and disaggregating results by subgroups.

**Box 11: Substantial achievement in institutional strengthening at the decentralized level**

In Ghana, the project objectives included improved planning and monitoring of basic education services in deprived districts. Project activities included technical support to district education offices and schools in preparing Annual Work Programs and School Improvement Plans, preparing school report cards, and conducting annual school visits. Results included the following: One hundred percent of participating districts disbursed at least 75 percent of their grants according to their prepared Annual Work Programs; and 98 percent of participating schools had updated school report cards, with 93 percent of schools displaying their report cards on notice boards.

Main messages:

- Three-quarters of the projects (with formal results frameworks and KPIs) achieved improved quality, although the aspect of educational quality improved, and the validity of the indicator selected, varied significantly.
- Half of the projects achieved increased access in the range of subsectors (pre-primary to tertiary). This was measured most frequently by increased (absolute) number of students enrolled and by increased (net and gross) enrollment rate.
- One-quarter of the projects achieved increased equity (although some projects in the review were exclusively implemented in disadvantaged areas and therefore all outcomes achieved by the project can be considered as addressing equity issues). These were measured almost entirely by outcomes among girls, not other disadvantaged populations, such as the poor, indigenous/ethnic minority, children with special needs or out-of-school children.
- More than half of the projects achieved strengthened institutional capacity, most frequently at the central level, followed by the school level, and then the decentralized level (that is, local/district ministry of education [MOE] office). At the central level, this capacity was measured by the ability to monitor student learning outcomes (that is, learning assessments) and to produce regular EMIS data on the education sector. At the decentralized MOE level, this capacity was measured by the ability to disburse funds and report on education activities. However, at the school level, this was measured by the existence of functions (establishment of bank account, preparation of school plan, existence of school management committee) rather than evidence of the capacity to carry out the functions effectively.
OUTCOME RATINGS ON GPE PROJECTS

World Bank completion reports—ICRs—provide ratings on the following aspects of project performance, using a six-point scale for overall outcome and a four-point scale for the three sub-elements.\textsuperscript{12}

- **Relevance of objectives**: The extent to which a project’s objectives are consistent with the country’s current development priorities and with current Bank country, sector and corporate strategies.
- **Efficacy**: The extent to which a project’s objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, according to each of the key outcomes indicated in the statement of Project Development Objectives.
- **Efficiency**: The extent to which the costs involved in achieving the project objectives were reasonable in comparison with both the benefits and with recognized norms.
- **Overall outcome**: The measure of the project’s overall performance, derived from the three sub-elements above.

Once an ICR is completed, the IEG provides an independent review or validation of the ICR—the ICRR—using the same aspects and ratings scales.

Nineteen Bank projects had a completed ICR at the time of this review, of which 10 also had an ICRR.\textsuperscript{13}

**Overall outcome**

Eighteen of the 19 Bank completion reports (ICRs) assigned overall outcome ratings in the satisfactory range (1 is rated Highly Satisfactory; 10 Satisfactory; 7 Moderately Satisfactory; and 1 Moderately Unsatisfactory). Similarly, all 10 of the ICRRs assigned overall outcome ratings in the satisfactory range (7 are rated Satisfactory; 3 Moderately Satisfactory).

**Table 4: Overall outcome ratings for Bank GPE projects, according to ICRs and ICRRs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>ICR rating</th>
<th>ICRR rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P113435</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P113441</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P117662</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfactory</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P119328</td>
<td>Cote d’Ivoire</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfactory</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P120867</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P123503</td>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfactory</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P124134</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfactory</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P129381</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P129555</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P129600</td>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Moderately Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P131120</td>
<td>Congo, DR</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfactory</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{12} Six-point scale for overall outcome: Highly Unsatisfactory, Unsatisfactory, Moderately Unsatisfactory, Moderately Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Highly Satisfactory; four-point scale for the three sub-elements: Negligible, Modest, Substantial, High.

\textsuperscript{13} For the non-Bank projects in this review, only one project assigned ratings in the completion report—the Rwanda Education Sector Strategic Support project (2015–18), administered by DFID. However, the ratings were assigned for relevance (High) and efficacy (Modest), but not for overall outcome or efficiency; therefore, it is not included in this section.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Code</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Relevance Rating</th>
<th>Efficacy Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P131441</td>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P132490</td>
<td>Kyrgyz Republic</td>
<td>Highly Satisfactory</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P132616</td>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P133079</td>
<td>Gambia, The</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P133557</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P144715</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfactory</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P145323</td>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfactory</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P146451</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relevance of objectives**

Seventeen of the 19 ICRs assigned relevance ratings in the satisfactory range (13 are rated High; 4 Substantial). (Note: Djibouti and Guyana did not rate relevance). Similarly, all 10 of the ICRRs assigned relevance ratings in the satisfactory range (7 are rated High; 3 Substantial).

The relevance rating is based on consistency with country conditions, Bank country partnership strategies and corporate strategies, and government education strategies. The rating also takes into account whether the project was responsive to changing needs and that it remained important to achieving Bank and country development objectives throughout the project period.

**Efficacy**

World Bank projects are sometimes subject to a Bank Board-approved restructuring, which may or may not include a formal revision of the project objectives during the project period. Two of the 19 Bank projects in this review underwent formal restructurings (Liberia: revised objectives because of weak capacity; Haiti: revised objectives because of external shocks). For the 17 Bank projects that did not undergo restructuring, 16 of the 17 ICRs assigned overall Efficacy ratings in the satisfactory range (2 are rated High; 14 Substantial; 1 Modest [Benin]). For the two formally restructured projects, the rating for both projects under the original objectives was Modest, but under the revised objectives, both projects were rated Substantial.

**Box 12: High achievement in Efficacy**

In Tajikistan, the project objective was to contribute on improving the learning conditions in preschool and general education, with learning conditions defined as education standards and content, teaching and learning materials and practices, and physical environment. Activities in the preschool subsector included the introduction of a new preschool curriculum, furnishing of preschool classrooms, provision of learning materials and teacher training; activities in the general education subsector included the shift from knowledge-based to competency-based curriculum, provision of learning materials, teacher training, upgraded classrooms and strengthened sector management.

Almost all outputs were delivered, with learning conditions improved through the updated curriculum and materials, teacher training and improved facilities. An impact assessment demonstrated that 52 percent of certified teachers were applying improved teaching practices in the classroom. Outcomes achieved and/or surpassed the target in the number of students enrolled in schools with these improved learning conditions: 18,000 additional children enrolled in preschool (target: 18,000);

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14 GPE approves “material revisions,” which are revisions that result in an extension of more than 12 months; a reallocation of GPE funds that exceeds US$10.0 million or 25 percent of total grant, whichever is lowest; or changes to indicators and/or means of verification for disbursement.
160,000 additional children enrolled in primary school (target: 100,000); and an additional 19,000 students benefited from physical improvements at their existing schools (target: 7,900).

**Box 13: Modest achievement in efficacy**

In Benin, one of the project objectives was to improve access at the basic education level. Activities included provision of school kits for girls in grades 1 and 2, construction of classrooms and provision of school meals.

Most outputs were delivered beyond targeted levels, including the construction and equipping of 318 primary classrooms and 212 lower secondary classrooms (target: 255 primary classrooms and 192 lower secondary classrooms), provision of at least one meal per day for 318,245 primary students (target: 270,000 students) and provision of 323,455 school kits (target: 265,000). Technical audits indicated that quality of construction was good, although it could have been improved; guidelines on portioning of school meals were not established, although quality of school meals were monitored by school committees, with 95 percent of parents sampled satisfied with the school canteens; initial quality of school kits was inadequate, although subsequently upgraded, with 89 percent of parents sampled satisfied with the school kits.

Although outputs were mostly delivered, the gross primary intake rate decreased from 107 percent to 104.3 percent (target: 117 percent) and gross lower secondary enrollment rate also decreased from 45 percent to 35.6 percent (target: 48.5 percent). For the latter, more rigorous enforcement of secondary school admission standards by government was considered a factor in the decline. For the former, no conclusive factors in the decline could be identified by the project team.

**Efficiency**

Twelve of the 19 ICRs assigned efficiency ratings of Substantial, while 5 ICRs assigned ratings of Modest. (Note: Djibouti and Guyana did not rate efficiency). Similarly, of the 10 projects with ICRRs, 7 have efficiency ratings of Substantial and 3 have ratings of Modest.

Ratings were based on unit cost comparisons, cost-benefit analyses and other indications of implementation efficiency.

(Note: A companion study of efficiency is being undertaken in a separate report to review the findings on efficiency and identify shortcomings in results and/or methodology).

Main messages on project ratings:

- Outcome ratings were almost entirely favorable across Bank GPE projects, as rated by the ICRs and ICRRs. There is no disconnect between the ICR and ICRR ratings for the 10 projects that have an ICRR.
- Ratings on efficiency, while still mostly in the satisfactory range, were slightly less favorable compared with those for relevance or efficacy.
MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Results frameworks: See the previous section on “project design” for comments on the quality of the results frameworks/key project indicators.

National assessments: Nine projects provided direct support for conducting a national learning assessment during the project period, to aid in measuring learning outcomes. Five additional projects relied on existing/ongoing national learning assessments to monitor changes in learning outcomes as a result of project support.

The following were noted as strengths in the M&E design, implementation and/or utilization:

- **Project M&E support**: Recruitment of an M&E specialist or otherwise explicit project support for implementing M&E is critical to ensure M&E quality, including strengthening the integrity of EMIS data. Examples of effective support are developing detailed reporting templates with clear instructions, conducting working sessions with the ministry of education (MOE) during the initial implementation period to clarify understanding of indicator definitions and calculation methods, providing well-defined data collection and reporting protocols, ensuring up-to-date school census/EMIS data to set baseline and targets, and providing vehicles for monitoring visits. M&E can still be effectively carried out in fragile situations if fragility factors are taken into account in the M&E design.

- **Use of M&E data**: Valid and reliable data, provided in a timely manner, are essential to the feedback loop to inform the following school year’s activities. Data on achievements/shortcomings can be used to engage stakeholders. Third-party verification, sample-based classroom observations, spot checks or qualitative studies can further supplement validity of education data. Use of web-based EMIS, or via mobile phones, can help capture real-time data and facilitate more timely data input with fewer errors.

- **M&E culture**: Full implementation of EMIS helps cement a culture of M&E in the MOE. The integration of M&E arrangements into existing MOE institutional arrangements helped sustainability. Regular use and demonstration of methodological soundness of M&E data has helped institutionalize M&E.

- **School construction**: Rigorous monitoring of civil works is critical to the completion of activities and contributes to improved quality. Data on school construction were used to track progress and amend/cancel contracts in subsequent rounds. Third-party monitoring can be effective in monitoring civil works in remote or conflict-affected regions. Community-based construction can lower costs and contribute to sustainability.

The following were noted as challenges in the M&E design, implementation and/or utilization:

- **Quality of data**: Inaccurate or delayed EMIS data led to setting of inaccurate targets. All stakeholders need to understand how indicators are defined, how to report data and the importance of collecting data in a timely manner. EMIS data are being inputted and used unevenly across the different levels of the education system. Data self-reported by schools may be less reliable.

- **Use of M&E data**: MOE staff need to move beyond mechanistic data collection to a better understanding of the role of data in understanding access and quality issues. Feedback loops from
EMIS into policymaking and decision-making are not yet systematic. Lack of timely data meant that adjustments in project design could not be carried out in time for the following school year, or that project results could not be verified.

- **Monitoring**: Geographic challenges limited project monitoring, which ultimately affected implementation quality. Some school construction sites could not be reached to ensure quality of construction. Follow-up support to teachers was difficult because of competing demands on MOE staff and lack of project funding for travel costs. Equipment to maintain databases was lacking in some regional/local offices.

- **Low capacity**: The MOE did not have sufficient capacity to manage technical aspects of impact evaluations, ensure quality of questions on learning assessments or procure technical equipment for EMIS to launch project activities in a timely manner. Weak capacity in the MOE meant that the project implementation unit handled M&E, and therefore the MOE did not take ownership.

- **Indicators**: There was misalignment between project objectives and selected indicators. Measuring improved management capacity and accountability is a challenge.

**Box 14: High-quality M&E**

In Tajikistan, the M&E design featured accurate baseline and target figures, measurable indicators clearly linked to project activities (although some were less outcome oriented), project support to M&E implementation and planned evaluations. Project monitoring was carried out in a timely manner, the relevant EMIS modules were functioning properly and evaluative studies on teacher training and school construction were conducted. M&E information was thus utilized to monitor teacher performance (and replacement of some teacher trainers as a result), decisions for further funding support by other donors, impact of school construction on education outcomes and improved quality of civil works.

**ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS**

**GPE operational model**

The GPE operational model includes three specific elements that reflect the collaborative and coordinated approach all partners are to take to national education development: the development of the education sector plan, the engagement of the local education group, and joint sector reviews. This review notes the extent to which these elements are discussed in the completion reports, given their centrality to the GPE 2020 model. (Note: There is likely more content in the project design documents, but this review does not include that context. In addition, as noted earlier, the projects reviewed in this paper were designed prior to GPE 2020).

However, because these topics are not integral to the reporting requirements on ESPIG implementation and outcomes, as agreed upon in project documents, the information presented in this section is not disaggregated by the two main grant agent groupings (Bank and non-Bank).

**Education sector plan**: The ESP is referenced in 22 of the 30 project completion reports. As part of the project context, the completion reports describe the main priorities of the ESP and, in most cases, draw a clear link between the GPE project and the ESP, for example, that the project serves as a “vehicle” for implementing the ESP. In fewer projects, there is an explicit overlap between the project and the ESP; for
example, the ESP is explicitly included in the PDO statement, the key project indicators are directly drawn from the ESP, or supervision arrangements are shared with the ESP. With regards to outcomes, only one project reports a direct and attributable contribution in achieving ESP objectives: the project “promoted the improved use of information...to support key reforms under the ESP.”

**Box 15: Complementary support to ESP**

In Pakistan, the Sindh Education Sector Plan for 2014–18 has four pillars that are closely aligned with national legislation and directives on education. An ongoing Bank operation supports various operational aspects of the ESP, while the GPE project is designed to be complementary by specifically supporting the ESP pillar on strengthened governance and accountability to improve service delivery. The GPE project was expected to enhance the key reforms supported under the ESP, namely by generating, disseminating and utilizing information about the education system to improve the design of activities under the ESP’s three other pillars (2–4).

*Local education group:* The LEG is referenced in 19 of the 30 project completion reports. The reports primarily discuss the LEG in its function as a platform to facilitate alignment and harmonization of donor activities during the project design stage, as well as to provide technical inputs. For example, the LEG is mentioned as the “main coordinating mechanism among donors to prevent overlap of activities,” or “the LEG played a particularly critical role in ensuring consistency of objectives with ESP and other donor programs.” During the implementation stage, the LEG is mentioned in its role coordinating joint monitoring reviews. One project notes that the LEG provided stability during frequent MOE leadership transitions. With regard to outcomes, there is limited analysis of the most effective aspects or functional arrangements of the LEG that contribute to project achievements; two projects do state that the LEG facilitated close coordination among partners that “improved likelihood of sustaining outcomes,” although no specific details are provided.

*Joint sector review:* JSRs are referenced in 15 of the 30 project completion reports. The JSRs are highlighted as a key monitoring mechanism during the implementation stage, with regular meetings and supervision visits to review project progress and provide technical inputs. For example, the JSRs included “an impressive amount of guidance and analysis conveyed by the DPs as they received consolidated data reports and other documents submitted for each Joint Annual Review,” and the JSRs “brought together a broad range of players in the education sector to review progress.” With regard to outcomes, the completion reports suggest that JSRs contributed by flagging implementation problems; facilitating information sharing; building ownership, trust and stronger cohesion; adjusting project design; and providing a common results-based approach to effectively monitor implementation progress and maintain focus on key activities.

*Domestic public financing*

Half of the projects make a brief reference to domestic public financing/expenditures (that is, reporting public expenditure figures for the sector), mainly as part of the discussion on project context. One project notes that community-based construction of schools “promoted efficiency gains in public expenditures on capital investments,” but no specific evidence is cited.
Gender
Gender is not explicitly included in any of the PDOs, although some PDOs target “marginalized groups,” which may or may not include girls. Also, some projects report that as gender parity has been largely achieved in the country, gender-targeted activities are not planned. Nonetheless, 11 projects that had formal results frameworks included KPIs disaggregated for outcomes among girls: net enrollment/first-year intake rate among girls (5); number of girls enrolled/participating (3); number of female teachers trained (3); primary survival/retention rate for girls (1); primary completion rate for girls (1); and gender parity index (1).

Fifteen projects planned interventions targeted to girls that appear to address the main demand-side obstacles to girls’ enrollment. The most frequent is construction of separate latrines for girls, but also interventions that target incentives for girls’ enrollment, recruitment of female teachers, communication campaigns to encourage girls’ participation and supporting the development of a national girls’ education strategy. Other aspects of project design that were noted because of the gender aspect include gender element as part of criteria for project site selection and gender-auditing of school curriculum.

Regarding outcomes, four projects report fully/mostly achieved KPIs relating to gender. The outcomes were increased enrollment rate among girls (3); improved gender parity index (2); and increased completion rate (1).

There are no lessons on gender in the “lessons learned” section of the completion reports.

Risk to development outcomes
Bank projects also discuss any potential risk to the development outcomes achieved by the project. Some assign an actual rating on this element; others just include a discussion in the ICR text. Risks usually fall into the categories of fiscal/financial, human resources, macroeconomics and politics. Of the 12 projects that assigned a rating in the ICR, two were rated “Significant/High” and the other 10 were rated “Low/Negligible.” Table 5 illustrates the risks to development outcomes cited in the completion reports (including those without a rating).

Table 5: Risks to development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risks to development outcomes</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal/financial capacity</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External shocks</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resource capacity</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political environment</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Risks are most frequently cited in the category of fiscal/financial capacity of the central government, such as that programs/schools cannot be properly maintained once donor financing runs out. Similarly, there

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15 Some Bank projects include “% female project beneficiaries” as a KPI, but these are not tabulated in this section.
16 Negligible, Low, Significant, High.
17 As a result of ICR reform, ratings for risk to development outcome are no longer required.
18 Ratings were consistent with ICRR ratings.
is a risk that government financing cannot be expanded given the increasing school age population in many of the countries to reach adequate coverage.

Other projects cite human resource capacity risks, such as the continued availability of qualified teachers to fill teaching positions, high turnover among teachers that received training through the project or that serve in remote areas, limited transfer of teacher training into actual classroom practices and continued weak capacity at the decentralized level.

Other projects cite risks related to changing political support, such as sustaining commitment to key sector reforms, or legal hurdles for policy or institutional reforms. There was also the risk of external shocks or unpredictable macroeconomic environment, because of both direct negative impact on project activities as well as indirect impact through reduced government funding.

Main messages:

- Two-thirds of the completion reports acknowledge linkages between the GPE project and the country’s ESP, as an important element of GPE’s work is to support implementation of a country’s ESP in general (for example, strengthening the country’s capacity to monitor the ESP); however, very few explicitly discuss the contribution of the project to achieving ESP outcomes. Additionally, half of the projects reference the role played by LEGs and JSRs in implementation, but there is limited analysis of which functional aspects of the LEGs or JSRs were most effective. While there are no requirements to report on these specific elements of the GPE process, as they are not formal parts of the project, such reporting would be highly informative.

- Completion reports do not discuss whether or how GPE engagement affected/influenced domestic public expenditures on education, aside from reporting general figures on public expenditure in the education sector.

- Fewer than half of the projects include KPIs disaggregated for gender, although half of the projects plan interventions targeting girls, all of which address the demand-side obstacles to girls’ access to schooling. For these projects, no lessons are being captured on implementation experience.

- While risks to development outcome are, on the whole, assessed as low, there remain concerns, mostly in the area of financial/fiscal ability of the central government to maintain, let alone expand, activities that were initiated through the projects.

LESSONS LEARNED

This review presents highlights from the “lessons learned” section of the ICRs/ICRRs, with careful consideration of the specific country/local conditions under which the projects were implemented.

Technical

- **Curriculum:** Curriculum revision is a core activity that is horizontally linked to other activities (textbook revision, teacher training) that need to be implemented concurrently. These quality-focused interventions can create synergies that can lead to even more improved outcomes, but they require careful planning and consistent government support.

- **Teacher training:** A decentralized teacher training model (non-boarding) and a lower-tiered teachers basic diploma program (less skilled) can lower costs, allow a greater number teachers to
be trained and enable deployment of teachers into remote areas; however, there is limited evidence on the quality of the outcomes. Incentives-based management of teachers (training, deployment) can produce further results. Also, in the absence of frequent supervision visits from MOE staff, teacher cluster groups can provide critical peer-to-peer support.

- **EMIS**: EMIS development can have high value in strengthening accountability and improving outcomes. EMIS support should include communication campaigns to demonstrate the value of data (and also incentivize stakeholders to provide accurate and timely data), training on the use of data and regular sample-based independent verification of data to ensure reliability. The creation of immediate feedback loops to connect data with implementation decisions also increases value for those on the ground.

- **Local construction industry**: Prior knowledge about the local context and local capacity is critical for designing effective capacity-building measures and mitigation measures.

- **Outreach and information campaigns**: Communication, including through school management committees, is critical to ensure stakeholder understanding and buy-in of project activities that improve quality (not just increase access). Similarly, communication prior to school supervision visits help ensure the purpose/value of such visits is understood and accepted.

**Implementation arrangements**

- **Decentralized approaches**: Decentralized implementation arrangements can be effective if accountability systems are in place. The compliance criteria need to be commensurate with local capacity and also flexible enough to allow for diversity in local contexts. Although decentralization may help improve access to and quality of education, execution rates and timely delivery depend on the level of local capacity and governance quality.

- **Community-based interventions**: Community engagement can benefit school construction by ensuring sustainability and accountability, and increasing social cohesion. This can be particularly evident in fragile situations. However, there is mixed evidence whether community-based construction is more or less costly compared with centrally procured and managed construction.

- **Project management meetings**: Weekly meetings of the project implementation team can ensure prompt response to problems and defining responsibilities. It can also increase capacity and cohesion among the different implementing entities, particularly if using a learning-by-doing approach.

**Donor harmonization and aid effectiveness**

- **MOE leadership**: Strong committed leadership of the MOE in the LEG can contribute to achieving results by creating a conducive environment for synergies and cooperation among donor partners, which improves the exchange of ideas and quick resolution of issues.

- **Results-based approach**: A common results-based approach among donor partners can help maintain focus on the key activities.
Issues of fragility and conflict

- **Government role:** Establishing project objectives that hinge upon government commitment can be risky. Building in backup options and flexibility in the project design can be an effective mitigation measure.

- **Monitoring:** Project monitoring can be effectively carried out in fragile situations. Third-party monitoring and social accountability (from parents and communities) can be alternatives to direct project supervision, particularly for school construction.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Project objectives and interventions are largely consistent with the broad GPE themes of learning, equity and systems. However, the more specific aspects of those themes are less frequently articulated in the PDOS nor included in project interventions. For example, as articulated in GPE 2020, these more specific aspects include more equitable student learning outcomes, increased gender equality, increased inclusion, more efficient education systems. **Projects prepared under the strategic plan should be tightly aligned with and focused on more specific aspects of GPE goals.** Note that only a small number of projects prepared under GPE 2020 have closed to date, and a similar assessment of alignment to GPE goals will be possible once a sufficient number of completion reports are available for review.

- Project interventions are more frequently addressing supply, compared to demand. For example, construction of school facilities and teacher training. **In addition to reporting on outputs, project indicators should also be carefully selected to provide information on whether there is actual “uptake” or effectiveness of the increased supply.**

- Goals for improved quality and increased equity can be multifaceted. For example, improved quality could mean improved student learning—a specific GPE 2020 strategic goal—but it is frequently framed as a less ambitious goal of improved learning environments. Increased equity might address one aspect of equity, but not all—for example, gender, poverty or special education needs—and not all projects identify the specific disadvantaged population in the PDO statement. **Project objectives and results frameworks (particularly KPIs) should have clarity on which facets of these goals are being addressed and that KPIs are outcome oriented.**

- Some projects do not have a robust results framework, for example, no PDO, no outcome (only output) indicators, no baseline or target figures. In addition, some do not report on achievements according to the results framework. **All GPE projects should have a clear results chain and indicators pointing to attributable outcomes, and these should be used to determine whether GPE funding has been utilized effectively if the project is a stand-alone mechanism. If it is not, then the results chain should be clarified for the program/policy receiving GPE financing to enable an assessment of GPE’s contributions.**

- M&E data on the education sector—enrollment, pupil-teacher ratio, learning outcomes and so on—are a key input to decision-making and therefore timeliness and reliability of the data, starting from the local school level, are essential. **GPE M&E support could include communication on and demonstration of the important role of data (in order to more effectively engage stakeholders) and capacity building for decentralized entities.**
Completion reports are largely focused on reporting on achievements and reflecting on implementation experience. These have generated valuable lessons learned, although there is less analysis on other aspects of the processes related to GPE financing, such as the effectiveness of the GPE operational model (LEG, JSRs) or the influence on domestic financing. **Completion report requirements could include more explicit reflection on these aspects to better understand their role in outcomes achieved.**

Lastly, the following are suggested areas for further exploration:

- What lessons can be drawn from GPE support to countries affected by fragility and conflict, and how can that support be more effectively provided?
- What is the effectiveness of community-based approaches (school construction, monitoring of school grants, preschool, teacher training)?
- Is gender being adequately addressed in the GPE projects?
- How is improved student learning most effectively measured—through project-level evaluations or through national student assessments?
- Although many GPE projects are stand-alone operations, there is significant donor activity in the education sector alongside the GPE operations. Is GPE support contributing to expected sector outcomes?
- What is the effectiveness of GPE support on decentralized institutional capacity, such as local MOE units and school management committees?
- What is the role played by the MOE in the LEG, and are outcomes improved when the MOE is elevated to the leadership role?
## Appendix A: Projects included in the review

### World Bank projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Modality</th>
<th>Approval FY</th>
<th>Closing FY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P113435</td>
<td>Bangladesh&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Third Primary Education Sector pooled</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>P113441</td>
<td>Nepal&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>School Sector Reform Sector pooled</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td></td>
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<td>P117662</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
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<td>2017</td>
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<td>P119328</td>
<td>Cote d’Ivoire</td>
<td>Emergency Basic Education Support Stand-alone</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P123503</td>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>Emergency Education For All Stand-alone</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2018</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>P124134</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Education for All 2 Cofinanced</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<td>P129381</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
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<td>P129555</td>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education Stand-alone</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2019</td>
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<td>P129600</td>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>GPE Stand-alone</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<td>P131120</td>
<td>Congo, DR</td>
<td>Support to Basic Education Stand-alone</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>P131441</td>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>GPE-4 Stand-alone</td>
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<td>P132490</td>
<td>Kyrgyz Republic</td>
<td>GPE 3 Stand-alone</td>
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<td>P132616</td>
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<td>Emergency Support for Education for All Stand-alone</td>
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<td>P133079</td>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>Results for Education Achievement and Development Project-pooled</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2019</td>
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<td>P133557</td>
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<td>Education Sector Strategy Support Cofinanced</td>
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<td>P144715</td>
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<td>GPE Education Support Stand-alone</td>
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<td>P146451</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Sindh GPE Stand-alone</td>
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<td>2018</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<sup>Note:</sup> Two projects were omitted because the ICRs were not yet completed at the time of this review: Mauritania (P126902) and Sudan (P128644).

<sup>a</sup> Nepal and Bangladesh were sector wide approach operations (SWOp), with GPE contribution comprising only 2 percent of total program funding.

### Non-Bank projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Modality</th>
<th>Approval CY</th>
<th>Closing CY</th>
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<tr>
<td>AFDBF2013</td>
<td>Burkina Faso&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Sector pooled</td>
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<td>2016</td>
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<td>AFG2012</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Stand-alone</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFIDRWA2015</td>
<td>Rwanda&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Sector pooled</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<td>SC130195</td>
<td>Guinea-Bissau&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Stand-alone</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC130197</td>
<td>Chad&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Cofinanced</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>SC130320</td>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>Stand-alone</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC130321</td>
<td>Somalia (Somaliland)</td>
<td>Stand-alone</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC130322</td>
<td>Somalia (Puntland)</td>
<td>Stand-alone</td>
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<td>Zimbabwe</td>
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<td>Chad&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Cofinanced</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: Two projects were missing completion reports: Central African Republic (SC150036) and South Sudan (SC130196). Burkina Faso, Burundi, and Chad were prepared in French, and therefore coded by another team member.

a. Only completion reports were available, no PADs.
b. Burkina Faso and Burundi were pooled grants. They are included in this review for learning purposes; however, it should be noted that contribution is unclear and the influence of the GPE operational approach on project design and implementation is likely limited.