Report Number: ICRR14724

IEG ICR Review
Independent Evaluation Group

1. Project Data:		Date Posted: 05/11/2015		
Country:	Egypt, Arab Republic of			
Project ID:	P082952		Appraisal	Actual
Project Name:	Early Childhood Education Enhancement Project (eceep)	Project Costs (US$M):	108.62	189.29
L/C Number:		Loan/Credit (US$M):	20	19.25
Sector Board:	Education	Cofinancing (US$M):	30.81	22.63
Cofinanciers:	CIDA, WFP	Board Approval Date:		02/15/2005
		Closing Date:	12/31/2010	06/30/2014
Sector(s):	Pre-primary education (98%); Central government administration (2%)			
Theme(s):	Education for all (40%); Participation and civic engagement (20%); Education for the knowledge economy (20%); Gender (20%)			

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2. Project Objectives and Components:

a. Objectives:

The original project development objective in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, p 5) and the Loan Agreement (p 12) was: "to support the Borrower in providing quality early childhood education to improve the school readiness of four and five year old children, particularly the disadvantaged."

The project was restructured in January 2010. The revised objectives were: "to support the Borrower to increase access to early childhood education of four (4) and five (5) year old children, particularly the disadvantaged, and to equip kindergarten (KG) classes with learning materials."

In this review, following IEG/OPCS guidelines, the project under both the original and revised objectives will be assessed over the entire project period, with the ratings weighted according to the percentage of the loan disbursed at the time of restructuring in order to arrive at the final outcome rating. The Bank had disbursed US$ 7.17 million at the restructuring, which is 37.2% of total actual Bank financing.

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

If yes, did the Board approve the revised objectives/key associated outcome targets?
Yes

Date of Board Approval: 01/29/2010

c. Components:

The project had three components. Actual IBRD project cost by component was not included in the ICR.

1. Increased Access (Appraisal: US$ 74.39 million of which IBRD US$ 18.89 million, Actual: US$ 114.23 million), included three sub-components:

- <u>Construction and maintenance of new KG:</u> 1,988 new public KG classrooms were to be constructed by the Bank and the government of Egypt (GoE) to improve access for 119,000 students.
- <u>Renovation and maintenance of existing KG and community facilities:</u> Existing KGs managed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were to be renovated by the Bank, GoE and local communities. The NGO-run KGs were to be registered by the Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs (MISA), which was later renamed as the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS). The project intended to convert 1,750 community facilities into KGs to improve access for 192,000 children.
- <u>Provision of community grants:</u> The preschool fee was to be reduced from LE 120 to LE 28 to facilitate enrollment. Moreover, NGOs, community development associations, parent-teacher councils, and other community-based organizations were to become eligible to receive technical and financial support to stimulate access to KGs by developing community action plans. These activities were to be supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and GoE.

2. **Improved Quality** (Appraisal: US$ 28.45 million of which IBRD US$ 0.7 million, Actual: US$ 68.3 million) included three sub-components:

- <u>Development of a new KG curriculum and education materials:</u> Technical assistance was to be provided by the Bank, CIDA, and GoE to develop a curriculum with child-centered and activity-based pedagogical approaches in accordance with national KG standards.
- <u>KG teacher training program:</u> Based on the new KG curriculum, teacher skills for early childhood development, lessons learned from the pilot field work, and teacher training programs were to be outlined by GoE. Training of trainers was also planned for 80 teacher trainers.
- <u>KG school nutrition and health program:</u> A school feeding program was to be provided by the World Food Program (WFP) and GoE to support children's ability to learn. The WFP planned to provide an in-kind grant in the form of milk and biscuits to seven governorates, and the Ministry of Education (MoE) was to cover the rest of the project areas through the national school feeding program.

3. **Capacity Development** (Appraisal: US$ 5.77 million, Actual: US$ 6.76 million), included two sub-components:

- <u>Implementation capacity development:</u> Technical assistance was to be provided by CIDA to design a system to assess the quality of KGs in the field. Through participatory sessions with government agencies and NGOs, this assistance was intended to develop national KG standards, including indicators for each standard and a checklist for a progressive model of implementation.
- <u>Capacity development of the MoE:</u> Technical assistance was to be provided for MoE and other stakeholders in managing, coordinating and monitoring project implementation by CIDA and GoE. For example, this subcomponent was to include implementation of early childhood education (ECE) reform, intra- and inter-ministerial coordination, and purchase of equipment and materials to manage the project.

During a Level-1 restructuring in 2010, the project maintained the basic structure of the three project components. However, according to the project restructuring paper, some of the sub-components, particularly the Bank-funded activities, were revised as follows:

1. **Increased Access**

- <u>Construction and maintenance of new KGs:</u> 4,950 new KG classroom constructions were expected. The Bank-funded loan planned to construct 750 new KG classrooms, and GoE aimed to cover the remaining 4,200 classrooms.
- <u>Renovation and maintenance of existing KG and community facilities:</u> 1,400 existing NGO-run KG classroom constructions were expected. The Bank-funded portion was to support 500 NGO-run classrooms, and CIDA and GoE intended to cover the remaining 900 classrooms.

2. **Improved Quality**

- <u>Development of a new KG curriculum and education materials:</u> The Bank’s role was clarified to support the production and distribution of new learning materials in 2,000 classrooms. CIDA and GoE were to assist in developing KG standards, curricula, and teacher training.

The project paper did not discuss the details of revised project sub-components parallel-financed by CIDA and the WFP.

d. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates:

Project cost: The project's cost at closure exceeded the original estimate by US$ 80 million (i.e., 174% of original estimate). The actual project cost was US$ 189.29 million, compared to the original appraised amount of US$ 109.03 million. Price escalation of construction materials, such as steel and cement, increased the first component related to increased access by US$ 40 million (i.e., 153% of original estimate). The second component related to improved quality was also expanded, which increased the cost by US$ 40 million (i.e., 240% of original estimate). This large increase was covered by the Borrower's increased contribution.

Financing: 96.3% of the original Bank commitment was disbursed. In fact, US$ 19.25 million was actually spent, compared with a US$ 20 million IBRD financing commitment. The undisbursed amount of the IBRD loan was cancelled at closing. The Level-1 restructuring was conducted when the Bank had disbursed 37.2% of the eventual total. The total financial commitment of the Bank did not change through the restructuring.

Two other agencies, CIDA and the WFP, provided parallel financing totaling US$ 22.63 million. CIDA disbursed US$ 13.5 million (i.e., 93.3% of the original financing estimate of US$ 14.47 million) for the capacity development component and community grants. The actual contribution of the WFP was only 55.9% of the appraisal estimate because of delays and reductions in funding (US$ 9.13 million actually spent to support the school feeding program in contrast to the appraisal estimate of US$ 16.34 million). Local communities were expected to contribute US$ 6.66 million at appraisal through donation of rooms and buildings when MISA-registered existing KGs were not available. However, information about the actual contribution of the local communities is not available (ICR, p 28).

Borrower contribution: Far more Borrower contribution was provided than the original appraisal estimate. The Borrower contributed US$ 147.38 million, compared with the estimate of US$ 51.56 million (i.e., 285.8% of original estimate).

Dates:

- January 2010: A Level-1 restructuring produced five changes. First, the environmental category was revised from "C" to "B". Second, the project development objectives and their associated project performance indicators were revised. Third, the project's scope was expanded from 18 to 19 governorates and from 152 to 165 districts. Fourth, the fixed amount of reimbursement for each new KG classroom construction was increased from LE100,000 to LE 150,000 due to increased costs. Finally, the project closure date was extended by 18 months to June 30, 2012.
- June 2011: Through a Level-2 restructuring, the closing date was extended by another two years to June 30, 2014.

3. Relevance of Objectives & Design:

a. Relevance of Objectives:

<u>Original Objectives</u>: Substantial

The original objectives addressed improved school readiness through early childhood education quality with an emphasis on disadvantaged children. The PAD (p. 5) and analytical work done in 2002 (Strategic Options for Early Childhood Education) implied that school readiness involves cognitive, language, and psychosocial development, which enables better transition to primary school. Disadvantaged children were addressed particularly through attention to gender, poverty, and disability (PAD, p 26).

Improved school readiness was not explicitly included in the Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Egypt at design and project closure. In fact, the Bank's CAS in 2001 and current Bank strategy, Interim Strategy Note (ISN) prepared in 2012, did not discuss improved school readiness. However, both of the Bank strategies paid attention to disadvantaged children from the perspective of social inclusion. The ISN also discussed early childhood education as a means to increase relevance of education for labor markets, and planned to have policy dialogue on early childhood education to close the gap between rural and urban area.

The government prioritized improved school readiness with the assistance of the Bank analytical work. In 2002, a Strategic Options for Early Childhood Education study was prepared by the Bank to improve school readiness, and improved quality of early childhood education was included as one of major challenges.
In 2003, GoE's National Educational Standards Initiative was launched, which included improved early childhood

education, such as higher standards of teaching and curriculum.

Revised Objectives: Substantial

The revised objectives addressed limited access to KG, particularly for disadvantaged children, and also aimed to distribute KG learning materials. In relation to access, the MoE had outlined a strategy to expand early childhood education coverage from 13% in 2001 to 60% by 2010. This KG enrollment rate is very low compared with the near universal access to primary school. Moreover, this target was achieved neither by the time of restructuring in 2010 nor project closure in 2014, and this challenge appears to be continuing. Improved access to KG was also in line with the intention of the new constitution to improve equity in acquiring early childhood education. GoE's Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education for 2014-2030 also supports improved access to KG. The Bank's CAS in 2001 did not acknowledge limited access to KG nor provision of KG learning materials as a challenge, but ISN 2012 acknowledges the importance of early childhood education to fulfill the key government objectives of increasing access to all levels of education, including pre-school. Yet, while the focus on disadvantaged children is relevant for the Bank strategy, the revised objective became less ambitious. In particular, the second sub-objective was entirely output-oriented.

b. Relevance of Design:

Relevance of Design to the Original Objectives: Substantial

Quality early childhood education has direct linkage with the second component of improved quality. In addition, the project logic of having three components, (i) increased access to KG, (ii) improved quality, and (iii) capacity development, was reasonable to collectively generate a favorable effect on school readiness, such as cognitive, language, and psychosocial outcomes. This approach consisted of supply-side inputs such as education and nutrition as well as demand-side measures of community grants. Knowledge, experiences, and resources from the development partners (i.e., CIDA and WFP) were mobilized to implement the activities.

For disadvantaged children, the geographical targeting of poor governorates and districts was used as a proxy to improve their school readiness. This approach was reasonable because the PAD and the analytical work at the design stage showed a strong positive correlation between KG enrollment and GDP per capita by governorates. While it was still possible that KG students from relatively rich households were more likely to self-select to enroll in KG, the project carefully selected project participation districts based on poverty data, and deliberately included NGO-run KGs that specifically served the poor. The results framework (PAD, p 27) touched on accessibility for the disabled, but specific considerations for this group were not discussed. Specific activities related to gender were also not included in the results chain.

Relevance of Design to the Revised Objectives: Substantial

The objectives were revised to have a stronger linkage with the Bank-funded activities for better monitoring the progress to achieve project objectives. In fact, the results framework more closely connected the Bank-financed interventions and the revised objectives.

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy):

Providing quality early childhood education to improve school readiness of four and five year old children, particularly the disadvantaged (Original Objective): Substantial

Outputs:

- A new KG curriculum was developed based on national standards, and procedural manuals were also developed for teachers and other stakeholders.
- The Effective Teacher Competition was continued to honor KG teachers using effective practices.
- In-service training programs were organized through MoE directorates and teacher training institutions. 937 supervisors, 1,474 KG directors and deputy directors, 21,269 community trainees, and 10,189 KG trainers were trained (ICR, p 17).
- At least 35,000 teachers were trained on national KG standards and the new curriculum by the GoE, which exceeded the original target of 14,200 teachers (i.e., 246% of the original target).
- The Bank-funded component supported the distribution of 1,762 KG learning materials, but no evidence was provided on the distribution of learning materials for non-Bank-funded classrooms.

Outcomes:

- On average, based on classroom observation data (n=11) in 2013, 73% of KG time was spent on play-based activities in project targeted areas (ICR, p 22). The 2012 observation data also suggested that play-based activity time was higher in project-targeted governorates (i.e, more than 70% on average) than in other areas (i.e., 63% on average).
- All aspects of school readiness (i.e., physical, cognitive, language, and socio-emotional abilities) were improved from the initial stage of KG1 to end of KG2 for those who attended KG (ICR, p 35).
- The with and without analysis suggested that children with KG had better performance (i.e., Arabic language, English and math) in the first year of primary school.
- The teachers' observations were also more positive for primary school students with KG backgrounds.

The before and after comparison of KG students does not necessarily provide evidence of improved school readiness, since the cognitive, language, and socio-emotional abilities of these children were enhanced as they grew regardless of KG enrollment. With and without study results did not address the self-selection bias, and improvements were not necessarily directly attributable to project interventions. However, it is plausible and likely that there were positive effects for those who enrolled in KG because of the improved quality of early childhood education.

Increase access to early childhood education of four (4) and five (5) year old children, particularly the disadvantaged (Revised Objective): Substantial

Outputs:

- 820 new public KG classrooms were built in targeted areas by the Bank, which exceeded the target of 750.
- 523 existing KG classrooms were refurbished in the targeted areas by the Bank, which exceeded the target of 500.
- All the above Bank-funded classrooms were constructed or renovated in the poor districts identified by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- The Borrower's ICR (ICR, p 37) states that 6,722 classrooms were built under the project in total, which met the target of 6,350 (i.e., 4,950 new public KG classrooms and 1,400 existing NGO-run KG classrooms).
- An additional 11,668 teachers of early childhood education were employed between 2006/07 and 2012/13.

Outcomes:

- An additional 35,823 KG students enrolled in KG, which met the target of 30,000 enrollments in the Bank-funded facilities (i.e., 120% of original target).
- The project team later reported that the central statistical bureau, Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), has KG enrollment data by gender. Between 2004/05 and 2012/13, the proportion of girls in pre-primary education did not show any sign of improvement over time (i.e., the proportion is stable between 47.4% and 48.0% at the national level).
- Cross sectional CAPMAS data in 2012/13 by governorates also showed that all the governorates have more boys than girls in public KGs. In private KGs, most of the governorates have more boys than girls.
- No evidence was provided for disabled children.
- A 2013 evaluation study showed a 13% increase in the overall KG enrollment rate from 13% to 25.9% (2012 statistics).
- It was not clear in ICR whether 19 governorates and 165 districts were actually covered at project closure. ICR indicator 3 (p.vii) describes coverage of 18 governorates, but elsewhere in the ICR (p.18, item 66 (i)) it is implied that key access indicators exceeded the target.

There was increased access to KG classrooms in general, and the project specifically targeted poor governorates, but the evidence is slim for girls and disabled children.

Equip KG classes with learning materials (Revised Objective): Substantial

1,762 KG classrooms received learning materials produced by the Bank-funded component, which did not fully meet the target of 2,000 classrooms. Assembly of the packet of learning materials required a collection of small goods supplied by different vendors, and it took more time than anticipated to collect these materials and distribute the packets to KG classrooms. Nevertheless, the target was 88% achieved.

5. Efficiency:

The estimated benefit-cost ratio in the PAD (p 65) was at least 2.3. Prior to appraisal, an early childhood education (ECE) economic analysis was conducted by an external consulting firm in 2001 supported by a Japanese trust fund, which became the basis of the economic analysis in the PAD. The economic analysis anticipated that the project would improve the primary and preparatory school enrollment rate, and that it would lead to improved productivity in the labor market. The PAD argued that these benefits were conservative because other individual and social gains (e.g., improved health) were not taken into account as benefits. The PAD also discussed an expected reduction in drop-out rate and projected that the targeted areas in poor governorates would experience a benefit-cost ratio greater than 2.3. A Net Present Value analysis was also conducted at the design stage, and it suggested that the benefit of investing in KG expansion would exceed the costs to increase enrollment rates and decrease repetition rates for schooling. The rate of return was, however, not calculated in the PAD.

The economic analysis examined an alternative option for greater efficiency. The costs became prohibitively high to achieve the project objectives just through the construction of new KGs. Therefore, renovation of NGO-run KGs was included and also implemented under the project. However, the arrangements for obtaining financing from local communities were not clear, and therefore another opportunity for efficiency gains was missed. In addition, the efficiency of ECE investment compared with other early childhood development interventions (e.g., nutrition and/or stimulation for the first 1,000 days, conditional cash transfers) to achieve the same objectives was not examined at design.

The ICR did not re-calculate or analyze the benefit-cost ratio or rate of return at project closure. According to the discussion with the last TTL, this is because ECE intervention includes externalities that are hard to quantify as benefits. However, the actual benefit-cost ratio would be smaller if the same assumptions in the PAD were used for analysis. Due to price escalation of construction materials, such as steel and cement, the cost of the first component (i.e., improved access) required an additional US$ 40 million (i.e., 153% of original estimate). In fact, the fixed amount of reimbursement for each new KG classroom built by the General Authority for Education Buildings (GAEB) was increased by 150% (i.e., from LE 100,000 to LE 150,000). In addition, the project required an additional US$ 40 million (i.e., 240% of the original estimate) for the improved quality component to train more teachers. As a result, total project costs exceeded the original estimate by US$ 80 million (i.e., 174% of the original estimate) to achieve the project development objectives. The ECE economic analysis also assumed that the school enrollment rate would improve by 2%, but no evidence was provided to show that this key assumption was achieved.

Extension of the project period by 3.5 years was another sign of inefficiency. Initial unavailability of the CIDA funding and insufficient coordination between MoE and MISA delayed the construction and renovation activities. Frequent leadership changes in the MoE project team also had an influence on increasing processing time for approvals on procurement and disbursement. These delays also provided spaces for price escalation.

Efficiency is therefore rated as **Modest**.

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR)/Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point Value	Coverage/Scope*
Appraisal	No		
ICR estimate	No		

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome:

Project under the original objectives : Moderately Satisfactory

The relevance of the original objectives and the relevance of design to the original objectives are both rated Substantial. Achievement of the original objectives (i.e., improved school readiness through quality early childhood education, particularly for the disadvantaged) is rated Substantial. Efficiency is rated Modest. These ratings suggest moderate shortcomings in the operation’s preparation and implementation, resulting in an Outcome rating of Moderately Satisfactory (corresponding to a rating of 4 on the 6-point scale).

Project under the revised objectives : Moderately Satisfactory

The relevance of the revised objectives and the relevance of design to the revised objectives are both rated

Substantial. Achievement of the revised objectives (i.e., improved access, particularly for the disadvantaged, and equipping KGs with learning materials) is rated Substantial for both objectives. Efficiency is rated Modest. These ratings suggest moderate shortcomings in the operation's preparation and implementation, resulting in an Outcome rating of Moderately Satisfactory (corresponding to a rating of 4 on the 6-point scale).

According to OPCS/IEG guidelines for restructured projects, the final outcome rating is the weighted average of the disbursement rate before and after project restructuring. 37.2% of Bank funds had been disbursed at the time of the Level-1 restructuring. As a result, a final outcome rating is obtained as follows:

Outcome, original objectives = Moderately Satisfactory (4) x 0.372 = 1.488
Outcome, revised objectives = Moderately Satisfactory (4) x 0.628 = 2.512

Total: 4 or Moderately Satisfactory

a. Outcome Rating: Moderately Satisfactory

7. Rationale for Risk to Development Outcome Rating:

The current government's ownership of the project's objectives is strong. The financial commitment remains sound, based on MoE's continued focus on ECE as stated in its Strategic Plan for Pre-University Education for 2014-2030. The 2014 Constitution could also underpin the government's focus on improved access to KG. The new KG curriculum has been prepared, and KG will continue to use packets of learning materials. The MoE has provided a large number of KG teacher trainings. In addition to these supply-side improvements, the demand for KGs is still high.

Despite these strong commitments, political risk remains significant in Egypt. Political and social instability was a major concern during the Arab Spring movement. Even though the political turmoil has subsided gradually, risk is still significant. This risk could produce government leadership changes, which could bring financial risk. The risk associated with inter-governmental coordination between MoE and MOSS is also significant.

a. Risk to Development Outcome Rating: Significant

8. Assessment of Bank Performance:

a. Quality at entry:

The Bank prepared the project based on a series of analytical works because of GoE's weak analytical base for early childhood education. For instance, cost-benefit analyses and Strategic Options for Early Childhood Education were prepared, which became the basis to institute the project. The Bank also facilitated involvement of the CIDA and the WFP to collectively strengthen ECE in Egypt. The project's implementation mechanism was designed to utilize existing government functions.

Despite these strengths, there were several shortcomings at entry. The Bank team incorrectly assigned an environmental category classification of "C" even though the project design included construction of new KG classrooms (see Section 11a below). The construction roll-out plan was not flexible. The initial roll-out plan expected six new governorates to start classroom construction every two years. However, this design did not fully take into account the heterogeneous project readiness in different locations and administrative KG units across governorates. In addition, the definition of some output indicators and their baseline data collection were left for the implementation stage. The Bank also failed to anticipate frequent changes of government leadership. While the Bank identified a risk of seniority-based appointments, the ICR (p 8) countered that there was no such risk.

Quality-at-Entry Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory

b. Quality of supervision:

During implementation, the Bank took action to correct the shortcomings in design. For instance, the Bank corrected the misclassification of the environmental category through restructuring. The construction roll-out plan was also revised to allow flexibility. The Bank team had regular semi-annual supervision meetings to facilitate overall project success, including the components related to the CIDA and the WFP. During the unforeseen “Arab Spring” movement, the Bank team made efforts to complete the project, including financial management and procurement support.

Taking into account that the three components were closely related to one another, there was a certain logic underlying the Bank's decision to wait for CIDA’s funding for capacity development. In this vacuum of two years, however, the Bank could have prepared other parts of the project, such as baseline data collection and reviewing of the roll-out plans, to accelerate the subsequent project implementation. The TTL at the time of restructuring had a dual role of overall project supervision and procurement review, which could be perceived as a potential conflict of interest. The TTL was also overloaded. The correction of the environmental category misclassification took more than one year after the error was identified.

Quality of Supervision Rating :	Moderately Satisfactory
Overall Bank Performance Rating :	Moderately Satisfactory

9. Assessment of Borrower Performance:

a. Government Performance:

The government's commitment to achieve the project development objectives was sound, but inter-governmental coordination had some weaknesses. The government's financial commitment became stronger over time. While the project experienced challenges in the initial stage, such as the unavailability of project management costs, the actual final Borrower’s financial contribution amounted to 2.86 times more than originally envisaged. The government also outlined an education sector policy that included the objectives of the project. However, inter-governmental coordination, particularly between MoE and MISA/MOSS, experienced challenges to identify, monitor, and upgrade NGO-run KG classrooms.

Government Performance Rating	Moderately Satisfactory

b. Implementing Agency Performance:

The project implementation unit (PIU) within MoE had experienced staff to handle the project. While the audit report at an initial stage was not submitted to the Bank in a timely manner as requested (see Section 11b), the financial management team provided timely reports after disbursement started. The procurement staff also made efforts to handle documentation during a politically unstable situation at a later stage of implementation. The GAEB had the necessary experience and expertise to construct KG classrooms. The project benefited from good relationships between MoE and GAEB through frequent communications.

Despite the strong efforts of working staff, frequent changes of MoE senior management led to implementation delays. In fact, the MoE appointed nine different project directors for this project. As a result, there were delays in obtaining procurement and disbursement approvals.

The monitoring and evaluation capacity of the MoE remained weak. The MoE could track the number of public classrooms built or renovated under the project, but the project team within MoE failed to monitor the progress of NGO-run KGs in a timely manner because MISA/MOSS supervised these KGs (see Section 10b).

Implementing Agency Performance Rating :	Moderately Unsatisfactory
Overall Borrower Performance Rating :	Moderately Satisfactory

10. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization:

a. M&E Design:

The original PDO indicator did not reflect the original project objectives. The original PDO indicator was "20% increased enrollment over baseline in KG1-2 of adequate quality in targeted areas (with particular emphasis on those who are disadvantaged by gender, poverty and disability)" (PAD, p 26), and it could not directly measure either quality early education or improved school readiness. The PAD (p 5) explained that these higher-order outcome indicators were difficult to assess at the initial stage. However, some common indicators were available, such as the Early Development Instrument and Wecshler Scales, to measure school readiness in terms of physical, cognitive, language, and socio-emotional abilities. In addition, distinction of outputs and outcomes was not clear in the results framework (PAD, pp 27-28). For example, the first component (i.e., increased access) had only outcome indicators, but the second component (i.e., improved quality) had only output indicators.

The PAD did not discuss the details of the data collection methodology, but the data management approach was embedded in the existing M&E system. The KG department within the MoE was expected to take a leading role to integrate ECE data into the existing Education Management and Information System (EMIS) to monitor and evaluate the project's progress. However, baseline data for the output indicators was not available, and a data collection strategy was not discussed in the PAD except that all indicators in the results framework would be disaggregated by gender. A baseline data survey strategy, such as sampling, comparators, and timeline, was not included in the PAD.

b. M&E Implementation:

No evidence was provided in ICR that baseline data for project output indicators was collected. The 2010 restructuring revised the PDO and output indicators, but this revision had both positive and negative consequences for M&E. On one hand, this revision established stronger links with Bank-funded activities, and these activities were monitored for the rest of the project period. On the other hand, while the Bank team joined project meetings beyond the scope of the Bank-funded components, this revision missed the opportunity to officially monitor the progress of other related project components. The project failed to collect and analyze data on disadvantaged children. In addition, the project intended to build on M&E capacity of the MoE at design, but the ICR (p 11) stated that strengthening of M&E capacity did not take the form of specific project activities during implementation.

The revised PDO indicator, the number of children enrolled in public KG, was overestimated by the PIU. The figure was estimated using the product of the number of classrooms built or renovated and the average number of children per classroom. This calculation provided an overestimation because the public classrooms completed in the middle of the fiscal year did not have any KG students until the next school year. (Relying on the EMIS instead was also not satisfactory as the EMIS did not include the upgraded classrooms managed by the MISA/MOSS.) In the end, reliable data was obtained through a concerted data collection effort by the PIU directly with the help of local MOE offices at the final stage of project supervision.

c. M&E Utilization:

While the original indicators were not used to monitor the project, the revised indicators, though they were not precise nor complete, were used to monitor performance.

M&E Quality Rating: Modest

11. Other Issues

a. Safeguards:

At the design stage, the environmental category was misclassified as "C", but because of the new classroom construction activities, the environmental category was restructured into "B" in 2010. The Environmental Assessment safeguard (OP/BP 4.01) was triggered through restructuring.

Before the restructuring, an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) and Resettlement Policy Framework (RPF) were prepared by the GAEB. The selection criteria for new classroom constructions included "away from direct access to railroads, highways, high voltage power lines, rivers, uncovered waste water systems, garbage collection areas and cemeteries" (Project Paper in 2010, p 12). The mitigation measures against dust, noise and construction workers' safety were included in the ESMP. The ESMP and RPF did not anticipate any resettlement issues, but all bidding and construction works for new classroom constructions were suspended until they were cleared by the Bank. The renovation of existing classrooms was continued in accordance with the Bank safeguard policy. At project close, according to the ICR and discussions with the project team, the project complied with the Bank safeguard policy.

b. Fiduciary Compliance:

Financial Management: According to the ICR (p 25), timely reporting with accurate information was provided by the financial management team, and annual audit reports were submitted in a timely manner and were unqualified. However, the ICR should have provided more information on the initial challenges. For example, a 2008 Aide Memoire (p 16) acknowledged that initial audit reports were not submitted by the GoE as requested because there was no disbursement from the Bank.

Procurement: Procurement was supported by experienced staff, and procurement processes for the classroom construction were led by the GAEB. The ICR should have provided information on the procurement post review in 2014, which found no serious deviation from the Bank's procurement guidelines and procedures, though there were some delays in processing procurement documentation.

c. Unintended Impacts (positive or negative):

None reported.

d. Other:

12. Ratings:	ICR	IEG Review	Reason for Disagreement/Comments
Outcome:	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Risk to Development Outcome:	Moderate	Significant	Political risk and inter-governmental coordination risk remain significant.
Bank Performance:	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Borrower Performance:	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	
Quality of ICR:		Satisfactory	

NOTES:
- When insufficient information is provided by the Bank for IEG to arrive at a clear rating, IEG will downgrade the relevant ratings as warranted beginning July 1, 2006.
- The "Reason for Disagreement/Comments" column could cross-reference other sections of the ICR Review, as appropriate.

13. Lessons:

IEG has identified four lessons learned from this project. The first two lessons are drawn from ICR, with some adaptation of language. The third lesson integrates lessons from the ICR with those identified by IEG. The fourth lesson is drawn by IEG.

Frequent changes in key leaders in government can critically delay project implementation . During this project's duration of 9.5 years, the project's leadership in the government changed nine times. These changes led to implementation delays because of discontinuities in knowledge and additional time for approval of procurement and disbursement documents. This risk and its mitigation measures can be clarified in the early stage of a project cycle.

Smooth implementation of project roll -out plans requires flexibility , taking project readiness into account . In this project, the roll-out plans were not flexible. The project's design assumed a focus on six governorates every two years, missing opportunities for early intervention where the project sites were safe, ready, and consistent with the project's objectives. This lesson could have been reflected into project design if the project team had thoroughly reviewed similar education project experiences in the country.

Assessment of a project's heterogeneous impact (e.g., gender, poor, and disabled) requires a detailed data collection strategy at the design stage . The project did not collect timely and precise data on PDO indicators. A division of labor between MoE and separate national statistical bureaus could be one solution, but evaluating impacts on disadvantaged children, such as girls, the poor, and the disabled, could require additional MoE expenditure of effort, time, and expense, with a clear sampling methodology. This lesson could be particularly relevant if there are multiple parallel financing agencies, such as the CIDA and the WFP in this case, and the consequent need to assess their progress toward the shared project objectives.

Improved school readiness (i.e., cognitive, language and socio-emotional abilities) requires more than classroom construction. The ICR (p 27) states that increased enrollment is an appropriate measure of outcome because the Bank-funded intervention focused on KG classroom constructions. However, this project involved various ministries of the government and other donors (i.e., CIDA and WFP), and it addressed both demand and supply constraints. In fact, KG classroom construction, improved materials and teacher training based on a new curriculum, capacity development of the MoE, and KG fee reductions were conducted. While the 2013 evaluation study showed just correlation, this holistic approach could improve school readiness of children. A common metric, such as the Early Development Instrument, is available for evaluation of the impact of these multifaceted interventions.

14. Assessment Recommended?

○ Yes ● No

15. Comments on Quality of ICR:

The ICR provides basic project information to assess its performance. The ICR includes candid views, such as admitting the shortcomings of environmental and social category at design. The ICR also collects information from relevant sources, such as previous Bank analytical works.

However, ICR still lacks clarity and candor in some areas. no evidence is included on the project's impact disaggregated by gender, even though this information is available. In addition, the ICR does not sufficiently discuss relevance of objectives at the time of the ICR, particularly in view of the Bank strategy, as recommended in OPCS ICR guidelines. The economic and financial analysis at the time of the ICR is also weak.

There are other minor errors and incomplete descriptions collectively made it challenging for readers to understand or accurately evaluate the project's performance. The environmental category of the data sheet is incorrectly specified as “C”. Important dates, such as the approval date of the Level-1 restructuring, are occasionally wrong (p 7). Contrary to what is presented in the ICR, all of the audit reports, particularly at the initial stage, were not submitted on time. Information about compliance with the Bank's procurement policies and procedures is not included in the ICR. The statement of the total actual project costs has minor inconsistencies in Annex 1 between the project's cost by component and financing (p 28).

a.Quality of ICR Rating: Satisfactory