

Document of
The World Bank
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Report No: ICR00006350

IMPLEMENTATION COMPLETION AND RESULTS REPORT
ON A
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION GRANT
TF0A7093
IN THE AMOUNT OF US\$11.07 MILLION
TO THE
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
FOR A
Liberia - Getting to Best in Education Project
December 21, 2023

Education Global Practice
Western And Central Africa Region

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

(Exchange Rate Effective December 21, 2023)

Currency Unit = Liberian Dollar
(LRD)

LRD 1 = US\$ 0.0100

US\$1 = SDR 0.75

FISCAL YEAR

January 1 - December 31

Regional Vice President: Ousmane Diagana

Country Director: Pierre Frank Laporte

Regional Director: Meskerem Mulatu

Practice Manager: Scherezad Joya Monami Latif

Task Team Leader(s): Binta Beatrice Massaquoi, Alonso Sanchez

ICR Main Contributor: Tracy M. Wilichowski

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASC	Annual School Census
AWP&B	Annual Work Plan and Budget
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CEO	County Education Officer
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
CSA	Civil Service Agency
DA	Designated Account
DEO	District Education Officer
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DLI	Disbursement-Linked Indicator
DP	Development Partner
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPAG	Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
ESDC	Education Sector Development Committee
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
FM	Financial Management
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoL	Government of the Republic of Liberia
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
G2B ESP	Getting to Best Education Sector Plan 2017-2021
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IFR	Interim Financial Report
IPF	Investment Project Financing
IRI	Intermediate Results Indicators
IT	Information Technology
IVA	Independent Verification Agency
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MGCSW	Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Welfare
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoE	Ministry of Education

MoPEA	Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NER	Net Enrollment Rate
NPF	New Procurement Framework
NSQS	National School Quality Standards
PAPD	Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development
PBC	Performance-Based Condition
PBR	Performance-Based Result
PDT	Project Delivery Team
PDO	Project Development Objective
PFMU	Project Financial Management Unit
PIM	Project Implementation Manual
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RF	Results Framework
RBF	Results-Based Financing
RP	Restructuring Paper
RTTI	Rural Teacher Training Institute
SCR	Student-Classroom Ratio
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMT	Senior Management Team
SQA	School Quality Assessment
STR	Student-Teacher Ratio
TA	Technical Assistance
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAEC	West African Examinations Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DATA SHEET	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
I. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES.....	5
A. CONTEXT AT APPRAISAL	5
B. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES DURING IMPLEMENTATION	14
II. OUTCOME	16
A. RELEVANCE OF PDOs	16
B. ACHIEVEMENT OF PDOs (EFFICACY)	17
C. EFFICIENCY.....	21
D. JUSTIFICATION OF OVERALL OUTCOME RATING	23
E. OTHER OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS	23
III. KEY FACTORS THAT AFFECTED IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME	26
A. KEY FACTORS DURING PREPARATION	26
B. KEY FACTORS DURING IMPLEMENTATION.....	27
IV. BANK PERFORMANCE, COMPLIANCE ISSUES, AND RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME ..	29
A. QUALITY OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)	29
B. ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND FIDUCIARY COMPLIANCE.....	31
C. BANK PERFORMANCE.....	32
D. RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME.....	33
V. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	33
ANNEX 1. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND KEY OUTPUTS.....	36
ANNEX 2. BANK LENDING AND IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT/SUPERVISION.....	45
ANNEX 3. PROJECT COST BY COMPONENT	48
ANNEX 4. EFFICIENCY ANALYSIS.....	49
ANNEX 5. BORROWER COMMENTS.....	56
ANNEX 6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS	57



DATA SHEET

BASIC INFORMATION

Product Information

Project ID	Project Name
P162089	Getting to Best in Education
Country	Financing Instrument
Liberia	Investment Project Financing
Original EA Category	Revised EA Category
Not Required (C)	Not Required (C)

Organizations

Borrower	Implementing Agency
Ministry of Finance and Development Planning	Ministry of Education

Project Development Objective (PDO)

Original PDO

The Project Development Objectives (PDOs) are to : (a) improve equitable access to early childhood education, teacher quality in early childhood education (ECE), and primary education in targeted disadvantaged counties, and (b) strengthen National School Accountability Systems.



FINANCING

	Original Amount (US\$)	Revised Amount (US\$)	Actual Disbursed (US\$)
World Bank Financing			
TF-A7093	11,070,000	10,476,000	10,075,306
Total	11,070,000	10,476,000	10,075,306
Non-World Bank Financing			
Total	0	0	0
Total Project Cost	11,070,000	10,476,000	10,075,306

KEY DATES

Approval	Effectiveness	MTR Review	Original Closing	Actual Closing
17-May-2018	25-Jun-2018	30-Nov-2020	30-Jun-2022	30-Jun-2023

RESTRUCTURING AND/OR ADDITIONAL FINANCING

Date(s)	Amount Disbursed (US\$M)	Key Revisions
16-Jun-2022	7.02	Change in Results Framework Change in Components and Cost Change in Loan Closing Date(s) Cancellation of Financing Reallocation between Disbursement Categories Change in Implementation Schedule

KEY RATINGS

Outcome	Bank Performance	M&E Quality
Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Modest

RATINGS OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN ISRs

No.	Date ISR Archived	DO Rating	IP Rating	Actual Disbursements (US\$M)
01	03-Oct-2018	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	0
02	28-Jun-2019	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	1.16
03	17-Jan-2020	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	1.89
04	02-Oct-2020	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	3.26
05	14-May-2021	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	3.53
06	30-Jun-2021	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	4.37
07	21-Mar-2022	Moderately Unsatisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	5.90
08	28-Jun-2022	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	7.02
09	12-Jan-2023	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	9.76

SECTORS AND THEMES

Sectors

Major Sector/Sector (%)

Education 100

Early Childhood Education 50

Public Administration - Education 27

Primary Education 23

Themes

Major Theme/ Theme (Level 2)/ Theme (Level 3) (%)



Human Development and Gender	100
Education	100
Access to Education	35
Education Financing	35
Teachers	56
Student Assessment	41
Education Governance, School-Based Management	27

ADM STAFF

Role	At Approval	At ICR
Regional Vice President:	Makhtar Diop	Ousmane Diagana
Country Director:	Henry G. R. Kerali	Pierre Frank Laporte
Director:	Amit Dar	Meskerem Mulatu
Practice Manager:	Halil Dundar	Scherezad Joya Monami Latif
Task Team Leader(s):	Peter Darvas	Binta Beatrice Massaquoi, Alonso Sanchez
ICR Contributing Author:		Tracy Marie Wilichowski



I. PROJECT CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

A. CONTEXT AT APPRAISAL

Country context

1. **At the time of project Appraisal in early 2018, Liberia was navigating a period of economic and political transition and the departure of the United Nations Mission from the country.** At project Appraisal, the country had a population of approximately 4.9 million, having grown from 1 million since 1962.¹ The country remained fragile and vulnerable to internal and external shocks although the 14-year civil war had ended in 2003. Liberia's civil wars killed 10 percent of the population, resulted in many disabled persons,² displaced a majority, and led to tens of thousands of people being forcibly recruited into combat. Although Liberia was no longer in active conflict at Appraisal, there were still many manifestations of fragility, conflict, and violence that affected Human Capital accumulation and utilization, including: (a) attacks on health and education facilities; (b) an extremely weak institutional setting; (c) low levels of interpersonal and institutional trust; and (d) widespread interpersonal violence.

2. **Liberia experienced rapid economic growth, with the annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate averaging 7 percent between 2009-13, then one of the highest economic growth rates in the world.** In 2013, the Government of Liberia (GoL) outlined a strategy through The Agenda for Transformation, which sought to set the country on a course for inclusive growth.³ This course slowed in 2014 when Liberia then faced twin shocks: the Ebola crisis and a sharp decline in global commodity prices. In 2015, there was still no GDP growth due to the low commodity prices, though this had improved slightly at the time of Appraisal, with the economy expanding 3.5 percent in 2017. Despite ongoing efforts by the GoL, Liberia's level of poverty remained high, with nearly 40 percent of the population living on less than US\$1.90 per day.⁴ Although gross national income per capita nearly doubled between 2003 and 2016, human development achievements remained extremely low. In 2016, Liberia received a value of 0.427 in the United Nations-Human Development Report, ranking 177 out of 188 countries.⁵ Moreover, according to the 2016 Household Expenditure and Income Survey (HEIS), more than half of the population was living below the national poverty line in 2016, with higher poverty rates observed in rural areas. With the support of development partners (DPs), including the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia, Liberia maintained peace and stability through the 2017 election, revived the state administration, improved governance, rebuilt basic infrastructure, and made progress on select human development indicators.⁶ Unfortunately, Liberia grappled with a fiscal crisis beginning in 2019, with inflation and the year-on-year exchange rate depreciation peaking at 30 percent in late 2019, further stalling growth.

3. **COVID-19 impacted all aspects of life in Liberia and threatened human capital gains.** When the global COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, Liberia was already facing a challenging domestic and external environment. Weak

¹ World Bank DataBank, 2018. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>.

² Civil war, endemic poverty, and the long-term effects of Ebola resulted in high levels of disability among the population – nine percent of households have at least one disabled member.

³ Liberia's Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (MoPEA). Republic of Liberia Agenda for Transformation. 2012.

⁴ World Bank. Poverty and Equity Data Portal. <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/LBR>. Processed February 20, 2018.

⁵ United Nations Development Program. Human Development Report.2016. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/LBR>. Accessed February 17, 2018.

⁶ World Bank. Liberia Country Partnership Strategy FY13–17 (IDA/R2013-0191[IFC/R2013-0268; MIGA2013-0063). 2013.



consumption and declining output caused the Liberian economy to contract by an estimated 2.3 percent in 2019. Meanwhile, the inflation rate reached 27 percent, eroding consumer purchasing power and undermining household welfare. Moreover, fiscal consolidation and monetary tightening further weakened domestic demand.⁷ The GoL's ability to maintain social services, already at risk prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, and ensure necessary imports to curb food insecurity given the country's reliance on food imports, were further weakened, to the point of failure. The economy was significantly impacted by inflation rates and by shocks to international prices for the commodities that Liberia imports, notably rice. As a result of these fiscal constraints, the GoL required additional resources to mitigate the public health crisis. While Liberia benefitted from debt payment relief during this shock, there was a high premium on concessional borrowing to cover the additional financing needs.⁸

Sector context

4. **In 2011, a new education law strengthened the right to quality education, restructured the Ministry of Education (MoE), and set up the National Education Advisory Board to improve accountability and decision-making.** The 2011 Education Reform Act enshrined compulsory free basic education (up to Grade 9). As of 2015, an estimated 20 percent of 6 to 14-year-old children were not enrolled in basic education, and the majority of these children had never been enrolled in school. As of 2015, 40 percent of children entering Grade 1 dropped out before completing basic education. Children aged 6 to 11 from urban and wealthier households were twice as likely to attend primary school compared to their counterparts from rural and poor households.⁹ Disparities in basic education access and completion rates were largely explained by household income, urban-rural status, distance from school, and gender. Just under half (47 percent) of youth ages 10–19 from households in the lowest two wealth quintiles (the poorest 40 percent of households in the population) reached Grade 6 compared to 88 percent of youth from households in the top wealth quintile.¹⁰ 67 percent of households indicated that the main reason that a girl child in their household had dropped out of school was because schooling was not considered safe, especially given the large distances and a lack of adequate sanitation. Most children with disabilities did not attend school.¹¹

5. **The quality of teaching, teacher recruitment, and teacher deployment reinforced inequality and the “Montserrado effect.”** The MoE Bureau for Teacher Education oversees all pre- and in-service teacher education in Liberia, including the activities of three Regional Teacher Training Institutes (RTTIs), as well as several semi-autonomous colleges and universities that offer teacher education and education administration programs. The minimum qualifications for teachers are articulated in the Education Reform Act (2011) for each level of education, apart from ECE. The Act also prescribes the role of the MoE in teacher recruitment, certification (licensing), registration, and teacher policy. District Education Officers (DEOs) are responsible for recruiting teachers to vacant positions and for ensuring quality education is

⁷ World Bank. 2020. Liberia Economic Update, The COVID-19 Crisis in Liberia: Projected Impact and Policy Options for a Robust Recovery. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/159581596116122714/liberia-economic-update-the-covid-19-crisis-in-liberia-projected-impact-and-policy-options-for-a-robust-recovery>.

⁸ World Bank. 2022. Liberia Economic Update, Investing in Human Capital for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099455109192219278/pdf/P177994009187f0f60ba8d0fe0eeb8b19ec.pdf>.

⁹ Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) Liberia, 2013. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR291/FR291.pdf>.

¹⁰ At Appraisal, Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa were the most affluent counties in Liberia, with well-paved roads and greater interconnectivity. All other counties suffered and continue to suffer from a lack of basic infrastructure and have an absolute incidence of poverty that is higher than 50 percent (at Appraisal this was based on the Household Income and Expenditure Survey [HIES] 2014). River Gee, Maryland, and Grand Kru (GPE target counties) were the poorest counties with an absolute poverty index close to 80 percent. (Liberia Education Statistics Report 2015–2016).

¹¹ DHS Liberia, 2013. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR291/FR291.pdf>.



delivered in schools in their district. County Education Officers (CEOs) are responsible for ensuring adequate payroll positions for their schools. The “Montserrado effect” reflects that Montserrado County was and continues to be the country’s economic hub, being home to more than one-third of Liberians and almost half of Liberia’s teachers. The uneven distribution of population and educational resources was and continues to challenge Liberia’s education system. Approximately 75 percent of the country’s estimated 4.5 million citizens, as of 2015, lived in the “big six” counties: Montserrado, Nimba, Bong, Lofa, Grand Bassa, and Margibi.¹²

6. **As of 2015, less than half of ECE teachers were qualified and over 5,000 teachers (62 percent) serving in public primary schools did not hold the minimum teaching qualification – a C certificate.** Some teachers did not possess the basic literacy skills required to teach. Schools in poor, rural, and remote areas were less likely than those in urban areas to have qualified teachers. Administrators in these areas also faced great difficulties in attracting qualified teachers. As captured by the Education Sector Analysis 2016, many teachers encountered challenging working conditions, often with limited institutional support. For instance, a significant number of teachers reported having to work in schools with unsafe or inadequate infrastructure, with few resources (chalk, textbooks, curriculum guides, etc.). Moreover, many teachers highlighted challenging housing or living situations (insecure housing, the absence of clean water, no access to cell phone networks) and encountered additional challenges in the classroom (poor classroom discipline, unfavorable pupil-teacher ratio, multi-age/multi-level learners, etc.). Also, approximately 26 percent of teachers working in Government and community schools (ECE to senior high) were classified as volunteer or “household” teachers. These are teachers who were not on the Government payroll, but who were paid by households. At project Appraisal, female teachers were significantly under-represented in the workforce across all sectors. Due to severe fiscal restraints, the GoL struggled to add teachers to its payroll to meet increased student enrollment. Management qualifications were not uniform across the sector (e.g., there were no pre-defined qualifications or standards for school leadership roles), resulting in variations in school management and performance.¹³

7. **As of 2015, there was a growing demand for ECE, notably, while the NER for ECE remained low (29.4 percent) the STR and SCR in Government ECE schools was 37.7 and 64.4, respectively.** Six counties reported STRs for ECE of greater than 50.¹⁴ In terms of ECE teachers, while a small number of teachers participated in ECE Bureau pilot initiatives, the vast majority of ECE teachers had not received ECE-specific training. From the student side, the levying of fees for ECE contributed to the exclusion of children from poor households. Government policy permitted public ECE centers to charge a fee of 3,500 Liberian dollars per child on an annual basis. ESA consultations in 2015 and analysis of Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) data indicated that fees constituted a significant barrier to children’s enrollment in ECE classes.¹⁵ In addition, there was a high incidence of overage enrollment at the ECE level: nearly fifty percent of children enrolled in ECE were of primary school age, as of 2015. Specifically, according to the 2015 School Census, nearly 50 percent of children enrolled in ECE were between the ages of 6 and 11. Put another way, this means that there were over 250,000 children enrolled in ECE programs who should instead be enrolled in primary school.¹⁶

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Liberia MoE and World Bank. 2016. Liberia Education Sector Analysis.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Government of Liberia (GoL), Ministry of Education. 2016. Annual School Census (ASC) 2015/2016.



8. **As captured by the 2016 Education Sector Analysis, Liberia had made progress in improving access to education and beginning to address learning outcomes.** Between 2008-2015, Liberia’s school age population grew from 1 million to 1.7 million. A total of 1.4 million students were enrolled in all schools in 2015, and of those, 822,006 were in basic education (ages 6-14).¹⁷ The gross enrollment ratios (GERs) for primary and junior secondary education were 87 and 53 percent, respectively, with the net enrollment ratio (NER) at approximately 48 percent, 13 percent, and 12 percent for primary, junior and senior secondary levels, respectively.¹⁸ Approximately 46 percent of primary school students attended non-Government, fee-paying faith-based or private schools, rising to 61 percent for senior secondary school students. Between 2007 and 2015, the teaching workforce grew significantly, doubling in size from 26,359 to 55,243 teachers, with the share of qualified ECE and primary teachers reaching 49 percent and 62 percent, respectively. From 2008 to 2015, several programs conducted small-scale assessments of early grade students’ literacy outcomes. In nearly all assessments, the mean score for Grade 3 students’ oral reading fluency was lower than 25 correct words per minute—far below the MoE literacy benchmark of 45 correct words per minute.¹⁹ Similar poor outcomes extended to higher levels: in 2014, only 46 percent of students sitting for the Grade 12 West African Examinations Council (WAEC) exam obtained a passing score overall.²⁰

9. **In 2016, building on achievements and lessons of the previous decade including lessons learned from a US\$40 million Global Partnership for Education (GPE)-funded project that launched in 2010 and closed in 2016, the GoL developed a strategy focused on improving equity, quality, and the relevance of teaching and student learning.** This strategy is articulated through nine priorities outlined in the Getting to Best in Education Sector Plan (G2B ESP) 2017–2021.²¹ While working on the G2B ESP, the GoL removed hundreds of ghost teachers from the payroll to enable financial transparency and efficiency, started the Partnership Schools for Liberia,²² conducted the first Annual School Census (ASC) since the civil war, and provided school improvement grants to over 2,500 schools. The G2B ESP also recognized the significant challenges faced by the sector, including limited financial resources, many schools without water or electricity, many teachers without the proper qualifications, principals who required school leadership training, and large numbers of children who were too old for their grade, had dropped out, or never attended school. The G2B ESP aimed to support reforms at the national, county, district, and school levels, outlining objectives to be achieved by 2021 including: (a) reducing ECE school fees to ensure all children could attend ECE; (b) training more teachers (1,000 new C certificate graduates, 2,500 in-service); (c) conducting at least one inspection visit per year to every school; and (d) carrying out national assessments for Grade 3 and 6 in English and Mathematics.

10. **The education sector’s share of total government spending increased incrementally until FY15 when the EVD epidemic forced the closure of schools and redirected government resources toward emergency recovery efforts.** In FY16 and FY17, while most other sectors saw budget reductions, the GoL allocated 14.36 percent and 15.7 percent to the education sector, respectively. These public contributions are channeled through the MoE as well as the Ministry of Youth

¹⁷ Emmanuel, Bruce. “Education System in Liberia.” Center for West African Studies of UESTC. September 28, 2021. <https://cwas.uestc.edu.cn/info/1042/1679.htm#>.

¹⁸ Government of Liberia (GoL), Ministry of Education. 2016. Annual School Census (ASC) 2015/2016.

¹⁹ Liberia MoE and World Bank. 2016. Liberia Education Sector Analysis; King, S., M. Korda, L. Nordstrum, and S. Edwards. 2015. Liberia Teacher Training Program: End Line Assessment of the Impact of Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Interventions.

²⁰ Liberia MoE and World Bank. 2016. Liberia Education Sector Analysis.

²¹ Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Education. Getting to Best in Education Sector Plan 2017–2021. 2016. Accessed at: https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/getting_to_best_education_sector_plan_2017-2021._liberia.pdf

²² A public-private partnership between the GoL and non-government organizations and providers to initially manage 94 Government ECE and primary schools (approximately 25,000 students) for three years starting with the 2016/17 academic year.



and Sports (MYS); the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA); the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare (MGCSW); direct allocations to TVET programs; scholarship funds; concessions to businesses (which in turn fund local educational services); and county development funds. Between 2012-2016, 8 to 12 percent of all ODA to Liberia went to the education sector. Donor funding made up 30 to 50 percent of the total education budget between 2011-2014.²³

11. **Not surprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic also adversely impacted an education system struggling to strengthen access, equity, and learning.** An estimated 2,247,380 students were out of school during the COVID-19 lockdown from 2020 to early 2021.²⁴ The MoE finalized their COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan in May 2020. The plan captured four policy priorities: (i) Activation and operationalization of the education cluster; (ii) Protection of lives and learning continuity for all students; (iii) Psycho-social, health, child protection and nutrition support for parents and children; and (iv) Recovery, school re-opening and system strengthening. Based on the plan, the MoE applied for the GPE COVID-19 accelerated funding and was granted an allocation of US\$7 million. Implementation of the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan began in July 2020. While the MoE largely delivered on the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan, the sector continued to struggle with the access, equity, and quality challenges and fiscal constraints that existed prior to COVID-19 and were exacerbated due to COVID-19.

12. **COVID-19, inflation, and stalled economic growth presented unique challenges for project implementation.** Schools closed for extended periods, travel to conduct planned teacher trainings was postponed and when travel was possible, fuel costs had nearly tripled. These challenges, coupled with commodity prices, caused the doubling and tripling of the costs related to project activities, adversely affecting implementation efforts.

Theory of Change (Results Chain)

13. **The Project Appraisal Document (PAD) for the Liberia-Getting to Best in Education Project did not include a Theory of Change (ToC).** The ToC was included as text for each sub-component yet not presented as a central table or figure to guide the document. The ToC for this Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) was thus constructed ex post, presented in Table 1, based on the PAD text and project's Results Framework (see Annex 1). The project was designed to implement the priorities detailed in the G2B ESP, focusing on ECE and primary education as well as system-level governance and efficiency reforms. The project aimed to address five key challenges facing the education sector in Liberia: (a) low learning outcomes; (b) overage enrollment at the ECE and primary education levels; (c) disparities in access and completion at the basic education level; (d) inadequately trained and inequitable distribution of teachers; and (e) inadequate management and accountability systems at the central and school levels. The G2B development outcomes contributed to the achievement of national development priorities focusing on learning outcomes, ECE, basic education, teacher qualifications and deployment, and system management and accountability.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ UIS, UNESCO, 2020 <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/lr>.

Table 1: G2B Theory of Change

Objectives	Activities/Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Long-Term Outcome
Improve equitable access to early childhood education (ECE)	Provide ECE grants to schools to improve access to and quality of ECE services in the targeted disadvantaged counties	Increased Net Enrollment Rate (NER) of ECE students in the targeted disadvantaged counties	Improved equitable access to ECE in targeted disadvantaged counties	The education system in Liberia is better able to provide access to high-quality ECE and primary education services
	Support the establishment of 20 remote community-based ECE centers and train 60 community caregivers to teach in the newly established centers in the targeted counties	Increased percentage of public schools receiving ECE grants in the targeted disadvantaged counties	Improved teacher quality in ECE and primary education in targeted disadvantaged counties	
		Increased number of trained ECE caregivers in community-based ECE centers in the targeted disadvantaged counties		
Improve teacher quality in ECE and primary education in targeted disadvantaged counties	Establish a nationally recognized ECE qualification, equivalent to the C certificate, for unqualified ECE teachers through an in-service teacher training program	Increased share of qualified ECE and primary education teachers, through:	Strengthened National School Accountability Systems	
	Provide an accelerated in-service teacher training program for unqualified primary, public-school teachers	Increased number of teachers receiving ECE C certificate		
	Develop and deliver a school leadership certification program for primary school principals	Increased number of primary teachers receiving accelerated C certificate Increased number of school principals receiving school leadership certificate		
Strengthen National School Accountability Systems	Develop and implement the school quality assessment (SQA) tool	Increased percentage of SQA reports completed for public schools		
	Develop and implement the National School Quality Standards (NSQS)	Implementation of national school quality standards Trained DEOs		
	Provide training and support to District Education Officers (DEOs)	Decreased number of functionally illiterate teachers on GoL payroll		
	Improve teacher payroll management	Implementation of a national primary student learning assessment system		
	Establish a national primary student learning assessment system for Grades 3 and 6 in English and Mathematics	Published MoE personnel registries		



Project Development Objectives

14. The Project Development Objectives (PDOs), as specified in the Grant Agreement (P162089) were to: (a) improve equitable access to early childhood education, teacher quality in early childhood education (ECE) and primary education in Targeted Disadvantaged Counties, and (b) strengthen National School Accountability Systems. The PDO statement in the PAD and the Legal Agreement are the same.

Key Expected Outcomes and Outcome Indicators

15. The four (4) PDO-level indicators were directly linked to the overarching project objectives and were supplemented by 8 intermediate results indicators (IRIs) and three indicators under the project's variable part. Below is a description of each objective and associated PDO-level indicators.

- **Outcome 1 was improved equitable²⁵ access to early childhood education (ECE) in targeted disadvantaged counties** as measured by: (1) *direct project beneficiaries* (percentage and disaggregated by percentage female), (2) *Net Enrollment Rate (NER) in ECE in targeted counties* (percentage and disaggregated by percentage female).
- **Outcome 2 was improved teacher quality in ECE and primary education in targeted disadvantaged counties** as measured by: (1) *share of qualified ECE and primary education teachers in targeted counties* (percentage and disaggregated by percentage female).
- **Outcome 3 was strengthened National School Accountability Systems** as measured by: (1) *percentage of public schools receiving feedback from a SQA visit annually in targeted counties*.

16. In addition, in line with the GPE funding model, 30 percent of the grant total was allocated as results-based financing. As such, the project disbursed tranches against performance-based conditions (PBCs) for the following targets: (a) Equity (PBC 1). Increase the proportion of qualified ECE and primary teachers in the targeted disadvantaged counties, (b) Efficiency (PBC 2). Improve the system of teacher payroll management, and (c) Learning outcomes (PBC 3). Establish a national primary student learning assessment system.

Components

17. G2B consisted of five project components: (a) Improving the quality of and access to ECE services in targeted counties; (b) Supporting teacher training and certification in targeted counties; (c) Improving school management, accountability, and systems monitoring; (d) Achieving better learning through improved equity, efficiency, and accountability; and (e) Project management and sector program support and coordination. Most project interventions were conducted in six targeted counties (River Gee, Grand Kru, Sinoe, Maryland, Rivercess, and Bomi) that were

²⁵ The equitable part of the PDO was considered by primarily measuring the progress of the NER in the targeted disadvantaged counties during the course of project implementation. The counties targeted by the project, as described by the county selection methodology, were those counties with the highest poverty rates and lowest access rates to ECE and primary education services based on the last available National Census data, household surveys, and the 2016 Education Sector Analysis. Moreover, these counties did not benefit from existing education projects at the time of project appraisal. The six targeted disadvantaged counties were identified during project preparation as being the counties disproportionately lacking services due to poor road access, distance from Monrovia, and few economic opportunities. The other PDO-level indicators and the IRIs were meant to further equitable access to quality education services in the six targeted disadvantaged counties by increasing the skill levels of teachers and principals, implementing school improvement plans with a focus on students who previously could not attend school due to school fees, increasing community engagement to reinforce accountability, and implementing regular school visits that centered on the implementation of the National School Quality Standard and School Quality Assessments, which include dimensions to capture equity.



selected based on poverty and educational indicators.²⁶

18. **Component 1:** *Improve the quality and access to early childhood education (ECE) in targeted counties* (Committed: US\$2.3 million; Actual: US\$2.3 million):

Subcomponent 1.1: *ECE School Improvement Grants* (US\$2.09 million). This subcomponent aimed to provide school improvement grants for ECE services to improve quality of and access to ECE in targeted counties.

Subcomponent 1.2: *Community-based ECE* (US\$0.24 million). This subcomponent aimed to address the lack of access to school-based ECE in targeted counties by supporting the establishment of at least 20 remote community-based ECE centers and training 60 community caregivers to teach in the newly established centers.

19. **Component 2:** *Support teacher training and certification in targeted counties* (Committed: US\$1.4 million; Actual: US\$1.4 million):

Subcomponent 2.1: *ECE teacher training* (US\$0.7 million). This subcomponent aimed to establish a nationally recognized ECE qualification, equivalent to the C certificate²⁷ for 700 unqualified ECE teachers, through an in-service teacher training program.

Subcomponent 2.2: *Primary teacher training* (US\$0.7 million). This subcomponent aimed to finance an accelerated in-service teacher training program for 700 unqualified primary public-school teachers in the targeted counties.

20. **Component 3:** *Improving school management, accountability, and systems monitoring* (Committed: US\$1.0 million; Actual: US\$.99 million).

Subcomponent 3.1: *School quality standards, school monitoring, and inspection* (US\$1.0 million). This subcomponent aimed to develop and roll out a School Quality Assessment (SQA) tool and complementary training to DEO staff. The objective was to develop and enforce National School Quality Standards (NSQS), systematizing the school inspection process for DEOs.

Subcomponent 3.2: *School management and quality improvement through principal training* (US\$.9 million). This subcomponent aimed to finance the development and delivery of a school principal certification program for 1,500 school principals in public schools at the basic education level.

21. **Component 4:** *Achieving better learning through improved equity, efficiency, and accountability* (Committed: US\$3.13 million; Actual: US\$2.73 million). In line with the GPE mandate that 30 percent of the grant be used as variable financing, this component addressed essential dimensions of the education system, namely equity, efficiency, and learning outcomes —using a results-based financing modality. The PBCs used for this were the following: (a) increase the proportion of qualified ECE and primary teachers in the targeted counties; (b) improve teacher payroll management; and

²⁶ For poverty, the selection method used incidence of extreme poverty disaggregated at the regional level (Poverty data in HIES 2014 was only representative at the regional level) and severe stunting. Stunting data were used as proxy indicators because they consider intrahousehold inequalities such as failure to receive adequate nutrition over an extended period, recurrent and chronic illness, or malnutrition (specifically, undernutrition). The combined index was created by allocating a weightage of 25 percent to extreme poverty, 25 percent to severe stunting, and 50 percent to education indicators (NERs in primary and ECE and percentage of unqualified teachers at the primary and ECE level). At the request of the GoL, counties expecting to receive substantial investment to education from projects funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) were excluded, as were public schools in targeted counties that are already benefitting from other externally financed programs. It is worth noting that for Liberia, public schools include both public and community schools (community schools were established by communities during the civil war and reconstruction period and continue to function as such, though they currently receive additional support from the GoL. For example, the teachers in community school are often on the GoL payroll.

²⁷ The C certificate refers to the certificate awarded to candidates who have completed the requirements for teaching at the primary level.



(c) establish a national primary student learning assessment system. The DLIs/PBCs and associated milestones were aligned with the overall project objectives and design and thus were directly linked to the G2B ESP.

22. **Component 5:** *Project management and sector program support and coordination* (Committed: US\$1.72 million; Actual: US\$1.72). This component aimed to ensure effective project management and key sector support, capacity building, and coordination. Specifically, it financed: (a) operations and salaries of the Project Delivery Team (PDT); (b) technical assistance (TA) for EMIS and the design and development of a national learning assessment system; (c) communications; and (d) verification by the Independent Verification Agency (IVA) for the variable part.

B. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES DURING IMPLEMENTATION

Revised PDO Indicators

23. **Adjustment of targets for IRIs 3, 4, and 5.** These indicators supported the objectives of training ECE teachers, primary teachers, and principals (respectively). As a result of the restructuring which took place in June 2022, the number of ECE teachers, primary teachers, and principals was reduced to account for delays due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, increased training costs, and lack of capacity at the Rural Teacher Training Institutes (RTTIs) to deliver the training. Specifically, even though schools reopened in September 2020, disruptions to the education sector continued as the system attempted to address learning losses and manage teachers, personnel, and students who did not return to school. Moreover, increased inflation and rising fuel costs led to substantial increases in the unit cost of training, necessitating a contingency budget for cohort two training. For instance, for the teacher training, the project originally budgeted for a cost of US\$800 per teacher. The revised unit cost as of June 2021 was US\$1,338 per teacher. Similarly, for the principal training, the unit cost increased from US\$660 to US\$1,350.28 As a result of increased costs and challenging logistics, cohort three training was canceled, and the number of training recipients was reduced. These revised targets were determined as achievable for the remaining implementation time.

Revised Components

The following changes were also made during the June 2022 restructuring:

24. **Component 1:** The only change was a reduction in the overall component allocation from US\$2.9 million to US\$2.33 million. The initial budget estimate for school grants (subcomponent 1.1) was US\$2.66 million. There were cost savings in the amount of US\$570,000 under subcomponent 1.1, given lower than anticipated oversight costs and other efficiencies while still enabling the complete implementation of the school grants program and accounting for and responding to increased enrollments at the targeted schools.

25. **Component 2:** Two changes were made: (i) Subcomponent 2.1 was revised to reduce the number of ECE teacher trainees from 560 to 390, with 370 passing the certification assessment; and (ii) Subcomponent 2.2 was revised to reduce the number of primary teacher trainees from 560 to 360, with 345 passing the certification assessment. The cost savings of downsizing these components amounted to US\$197,000 and was reallocated to component 5.

26. **Component 3:** (a) Subcomponent 3.1 was revised to cancel the SQA evaluation; however, the funds associated with this activity remained within this subcomponent and were used to support the MoE in the implementation of the ASC; and (b) Subcomponent 3.2 was revised to reduce the number of principals trained from 1300 to 880, with 850 passing the certification assessment. The cost savings of downsizing this subcomponent amounted to US\$80,000 and was reallocated to component 5.

27. **Component 4:** Given IVA verification of Performance-Based Results (PBRs) was limited in years two and three due to COVID-19, withdrawal conditions in the Grant Agreement were amended for all PBRs to allow for disbursement in Year 5. The verification mechanisms for the PBRs remained the same. For each PBR, the following adjustments were made: (a) PBC 1 and PBC 2.1 remained the same but were amended to allow for withdrawal in Year 5 and (b) PBC 2.2 was revised to remove and compensate a total of 305 functionally illiterate teachers, resulting in the cancellation of US\$444,000. A cancellation of US\$444,000 was agreed with the MoE and relayed to the GPE Secretariat, ahead of RP submission. The GPE Secretariat advised that the canceled amount under PBC 2.2 would be captured as a “non-disbursed” part of the Variable



Part of the ESPIG. This cancellation reflects that the original end target of removing 750 teachers was not possible and the removal of 306 teachers from the payroll to create the fiscal space to bring qualified teachers onto the payroll.

28. **Component 5:** US\$697,000 was reallocated from Components 1 (school grants cost savings), 2 (teacher training given the cancelation of cohort 3), and 3 (principal training given the cancelation of cohort 3) to Component 5. This reallocation covered the cost of project management and M&E activities (operations, M&E, PDT salaries, and community outreach and communications), given the revised closing date of June 30, 2023. As part of this reallocation, an emphasis was also placed on the effective implementation of the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM). The GRM is complemented by key outreach on gender-related issues within teacher and principal training and within communities, as was detailed in the Gender Action Plan (GAP) for the project. This reinforced that project monitoring and oversight should meet the standards for community engagement, prevention, and mitigation of any issues related to violence, exploitation, or abuse and deliver on the gender targets agreed under the project.

Other Changes

29. The project underwent one restructuring in June 2022. At the time of the restructuring, US\$7.02 million had been disbursed. Besides the changes described in the preceding paragraphs, the restructuring also involved the extension of the project closing date by 12 months from June 30, 2022, to June 30, 2023, allowing for additional time for the project to complete planned activities.

Rationale for Changes and Their Implication on the Original Theory of Change

30. As discussed in the preceding sections (paragraph 24-28), the project scope remained the same, the PDO remained the same, and no PDO-level indicators were changed as part of the project restructuring. Minor adjustments to only three of the twelve targets were made in response to implementation challenges related to the unforeseen COVID-19 pandemic. Given the nature of these minor changes and based on the latest ICR guidance, a split rating is not triggered, and the project should be assessed against the clarified outcomes/targets.

²⁸ World Bank. Aide Memoire: Implementation Support Mission (P162089-TFA7093). Pages 5-6. May 28, 2021.



II. OUTCOME

A. RELEVANCE OF PDOs

Assessment of Relevance of PDOs and Rating: HIGH

31. **The PDO was highly relevant to the country’s education sector needs at the time of project preparation and at project closing.** The project was aligned with the government’s 2011 Education Reform Act, which aimed to ensure the provision of quality education to every citizen at every educational level, promote equal access to education opportunities for all, reduce illiteracy, promote public confidence in the educational system, decentralize the education system, promote gender equity and equality, and ensure adequate governance and management of the education sector (among others).²⁹ These education sector challenges were captured by the G2B ESP with education challenges substantiated through the data captured by the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) completed in 2016. At the time of closing, the PDOs remain fully aligned to the MoE’s new Education Sector Plan (ESP; 2022/23-2026/27)³⁰ and the foundational priorities outlined in the World Bank’s Country Partnership Framework (CPF; FY19-FY24),³¹ including the development of human capital by improving access to and quality of ECE and primary education. The PDOs are aligned to the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) 2018–2023 – which emphasizes the provision of education, health, youth development, and social protection and outlines specific strategies for how to reduce gender inequality and empower women and girls through education programming.³² The project remained highly relevant to SDG 4,³³ specifically with reference to ensuring that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

²⁹ RL, MoE, ESP, pg.59. 2022.

³⁰ Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Education, 2022. Education Sector Plan 2022/23-2026/27. August 17, 2022.

³¹ World Bank. County Partnership Framework for the Republic of Liberia for the Period FY19-FY24. Page 57. October 26. 2018.

³² RL, MoE, ESP, pg. 60. 2022.

³³ SDG 4 refers to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

B. ACHIEVEMENT OF PDOs (EFFICACY)

Assessment of Achievement of Each Objective/Outcome

32. **The overall efficacy is rated SUBSTANTIAL.** Out of four PDO-level indicators, all four end targets for the indicators were achieved and surpassed. Ratings of achievements of each objective and their justifications are discussed in the following paragraphs.

33. **Objective 1: Improve equitable access to early childhood education (ECE) in targeted disadvantaged counties. Achievement of this objective is rated HIGH.** The indicators relevant to this objective are PDO indicator 1 (direct project beneficiaries), PDO indicator 2 (NER in ECE in targeted counties), PDO indicator 3 (ECE teachers in targeted counties), IRI 1 (percentage of schools receiving ECE grants), and IRI 2 (number of trained ECE caregivers in community-based ECE centers). Each indicator is reviewed against its target, followed by a discussion on the contribution of G2B-supported activities toward the achievement of Objective 1.

Table 2. Objective 1: Indicators and Achieved Results

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Actual	Achievement
PDO Indicators				
Direct project beneficiaries (percentage female)	0 (0)	43,000 (47)	62,720 (48)	Achieved and surpassed
Net Enrollment Rate (NER) in ECE in targeted counties	23	27	55	Achieved and surpassed
Intermediate Result Indicators				
Percentage of eligible public schools receiving ECE grants in targeted counties	0	90	92	Achieved and surpassed
Number of trained ECE caregivers placed in community-based ECE centers in the targeted counties	0	60	60	Achieved

34. **Direct project beneficiaries (PDO indicator 1), NER in ECE in targeted counties (PDO indicator 2), ECE teachers in targeted counties (PDO indicator 3).** The EOP target for these three PDO indicators was achieved and surpassed. This was achieved by the following activities:

35. **ECE school grants (IRI 1).** In Liberia, ECE is free and compulsory; however, it is common for schools to charge extra fees, which further prevents already disadvantaged populations from accessing ECE.³⁴ This challenge is exacerbated by limited government funding, a shortage of trained ECE teachers, and no formalized provision of ECE teaching and learning materials.³⁵ Given these challenges, the MoE prioritized the reduction and gradual elimination of ECE fees through school improvement grants, which targeted public schools in counties with high incidents of poverty and low ECE enrollment levels to address access and equity. These grants were distributed to 523 schools, in which principals, in coordination with community leaders, received approximately US\$10 per ECE student, benefiting 58,754 ECE students over three academic years. The subcomponent was a success in terms of increasing access to ECE and addressing equity, as measured by: (i) an increase in the enrollment of ECE students, as school fees were reduced; and (ii) an increase in students who had previously not attended due to their family's fiscal constraints in the targeted disadvantaged counties.³⁶ Moreover, the learning environment improved, as schools had funds to purchase teaching and learning materials. This scheme was also



effectively monitored, wherein 97 percent of the total targeted schools (153 of the 157 schools sampled) were effectively monitored throughout the course of the project.³⁷

36. **Community-based ECE centers (IRI 2).** Building on the lessons learned from the UNICEF project that supported the establishment of 40 ECD centers in 40 remote communities, this project trained 60 community members to become ‘community caregivers’ in hard-to-reach communities.³⁸ The goal was twofold: (i) to equip these caregivers to instruct effectively and (ii) to provide the caregivers with the skills to establish and operate their own community-based ECE centers. Due to the strong implementing firm, We Care, and the leadership of the MoE, the project successfully recruited and trained all 60 caregivers, improving access to ECE in hard-to-reach areas by establishing 20 community-based ECE centers. Before the centers were established, students in these disadvantaged and predominantly remote communities were out of school and had no access to ECE services. Therefore, the interventions under the project improved equitable access to services.

37. **Overall, the training of caregivers and the establishment of ECE centers was a success.** Regarding the training, only two of the 60 caregivers (3%) did not meet the certification requirement.³⁹ As a result of the trainings, the caregiver’s performance in integrated lesson planning for ECE instruction and play-based teaching and learning improved, specifically, 80% demonstrated an ability to plan and execute lessons from the ECD teacher’s planner.⁴⁰ Moreover, the DEOs were present during the caregiver trainings, which served as a motivator for the caregivers and demonstrated MoE’s commitment to the establishment of these ECE centers.⁴¹ Lastly, there is strong evidence as to how the implementing firm and MoE consistently followed up and convened meetings with the caregivers and community leaders, supporting the project approach, community involvement, payment of fees, and certification of caregivers.⁴² Regarding the establishment of ECE centers, all twenty were and remain fully operational as of November 2023 with continued follow up and mentoring by the implementing firm and MoE.⁴³

38. **Objective 2: Improve teacher quality in ECE and primary education in targeted disadvantaged counties. Achievement of this objective is rated SUBSTANTIAL.** The indicators relevant to this objective are PDO indicator 3 (qualified teachers), IRI 3 (ECE teachers receiving C certificate),⁴⁴ IRI 4 (number of primary teachers receiving accelerated C certificate),⁴⁵ and IRI 5 (number of school principals awarded certification). These indicators are collectively reviewed against their targets, followed by a discussion on the contribution of G2B-supported activities toward the achievement of Objective 2.

³⁴ Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Education. The Liberia Education Reform Act of 2011, section 4.4.1. 2011.

³⁵ Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Education. Education Sector Analysis of 2016 and 2022. November 2016 and 2022.

³⁶ Republic of Liberia, Ministry of Education. ECE School Grant Compliance, Monitoring and Focus Group Discussion Report. Page.10. April 2023.

³⁷ RL, MoE. Grants. Pg. 4. 2023.

³⁸ World Bank. Project Appraisal Document. Page 65. May 17, 2018.

³⁹ WE CARE. Final Narrative Report. pg.25. June 19, 2022.

⁴⁰ WE CARE. Narrative. Pg.25. 2022.

⁴¹ WE CARE. Narrative. Pg.26. 2022.

⁴² WE CARE. Narrative. Pg.44. 2022.

⁴³ WE CARE. Final Implementation Presentation. April 2023.

⁴⁴ As defined in the project Legal Agreement, the in-service ECE C Certificate means a certificate awarded to kindergarten teachers upon successful completion of training [taking an exam] to meet the requirements of teaching at pre-primary level as set forth in the Liberia Education Reform Law of 2011. The Liberia Education Reform Law of 2011 set the parameters for the ECE C Certificate given not much qualification existed before the 2011 law.

⁴⁵ As defined in the project Legal Agreement, the in-service primary C Certificate means an accelerated training program for teachers pursuing C Certificate at the primary level provided by the MoE under the Liberia Education Reform Law of 2011. A primary C certificate is the minimum requirement for teaching in primary school (grades 1–6) and requires one year of post-secondary training.

Table 3. Objective 2: Indicators and Achieved Results

Indicator	Baseline	Revised Target	Actual	Achievement
PDO Indicators				
Share of qualified ECE and primary education teachers in the targeted counties	45.77	60 (<i>not revised</i>)	69	Achieved and surpassed
Intermediate Result Indicators				
Number of teachers receiving ECE C certificate	0	370 (original target: 560)	380	Achieved and surpassed
Number of primary teachers receiving accelerated C certificate	0	345 (original target: 560)	356	Achieved and surpassed
Number of school principals awarded certification	0	850 (original target: 1,300)	876	Achieved and surpassed

39. **Share of qualified ECE and primary education teachers in the targeted counties (PDO 4).** The EOP target for qualified teachers was achieved and surpassed. The total percentage stood at 69 (EOP target: 60). This was achieved through the following interventions:

40. **Training of ECE teachers, primary teachers, and principals (IRI 3, 4, and 5).** The project aimed to increase the number of certified teachers and principals in Liberia and, while the original end targets were revised down, the objective was achieved. The goal of the ECE C Certificate teacher training program was to raise the quality of Liberia’s ECE system by increasing the number of ECE teachers who were certified at the ECE level. Prior to the project, Liberia had a very limited number of qualified ECE teachers due to the lack of training opportunities for ECE professionals and there was no formal ECE teacher training courses. The program was structured to provide ECE specific in-service training both residential and field-based, over school breaks and once a month at the county level through cluster trainings. The program aimed to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to enable them to teach effectively at the ECE level and to address the issue of low-quality instruction and also the learning needs of overage learners given the high number of overage learners at the ECE level.⁴⁶ Similar to the ECE C Certificate training program, the primary level in-service teacher training program and school leadership training focused on upskilling primary teachers and school principals, providing training on child-centered teaching and learning as well as effective school management.⁴⁷

41. **As a result of project support, 380 ECE teachers, 356 primary teachers, and 876 principals passed the certification exam and are qualified to teach and lead at their respective levels.** Moreover, over the course of the project, the MoE increased the proportion of qualified ECE and primary teachers in targeted disadvantaged counties from 45.7 percent to 69 percent (PBC 1). It bears mentioning; however, that there were significant challenges in implementing these training(s) that hampered RTTI’s effectiveness in providing consistent, high-quality trainings. The first cohort training occurred in February 2020,⁴⁸ bringing 320 principals and 200 teachers from across the six project counties. Participants were meant to learn new pedagogical and leadership skills during the training. This training cohort experienced some operational difficulties in getting the training delivered (discussed in later sections).

⁴⁶ MoE. 2021. Early Childhood In-service “C” Certificate Teacher Training Program Manual. Final Implementation Manual.

⁴⁷ MoE. 2021. Primary In-service “C” Certificate Teacher Training Program Manual. Final Implementation Manual.

⁴⁸ Liberian Educational Action for Development (LEAD). Final Report. Page 19. February 26, 2021.

42. **The second cohort training, led by the RTTIs, did not have as many logistical challenges as the first cohort, and overall, was better planned and implemented.**⁴⁹ The second and final cohort training occurred in March 2022, bringing principals (under subcomponent 3.2), ECE teachers (under subcomponent 2.1), and primary teachers (under subcomponent 2.2), from across the project counties. The MoE utilized the lessons from the first cohort training to improve the second cohort training; although logistical challenges remained.

43. **Given the prevalence of overage students/learners at the ECE and primary levels and the reality that many ECE teachers also teach primary grades in Liberia and vice versa, the project grouped ECE and primary teachers together under Objective 2.** As highlighted by the 2016 ESA, candidates often arrived at RTTIs with weak literacy and numeracy skills. The training programs addressed fundamental numeracy and literacy for teachers before adding teaching competencies. The ECE and primary teacher trainings supported by the project emphasized basic skills development and subject content knowledge applicable at both levels and reflective of the needs of Liberian students. This situation while not unique to Liberia, does blur the lines between the ECE and primary levels.

44. **Objective 3: Strengthen National School Accountability Systems. Achievement of this objective is rated HIGH.** The indicators relevant to this objective are PDO indicator 4 (percentage of schools receiving feedback from SQA), IRI 6 (percentage of SQA reports completed), IRI 7 (establishment of school quality standards), and IRI 8 (number of annual project progress reports). Each indicator is reviewed against its target, followed by a discussion on the contribution of G2B-supported activities toward the achievement of Objective 3.

Table 4. Objective 3: Indicators and Achieved Results

Indicator	Baseline	Target	Actual	Achievement
PDO Indicators				
Percentage of public schools receiving feedback from an SQA visit annually in targeted counties	0	50	55	Achieved and surpassed
Intermediate Result Indicators				
Percentage of SQA reports completed for public schools in targeted counties	0	75	79	Achieved and surpassed
Establishment of national school quality standards	N	Y	Y	Achieved
Number of annual project progress reports publicly accessible	0	5	5	Achieved

45. **Percentage of public schools receiving feedback from an SQA visit annually in targeted counties (PDO indicator 5). The EOP target for the percentage of public schools has been overachieved. The total number stood at 55 (EOP target: 50). This was achieved by the following activities:**

46. **Completed SQA reports & National School Quality Standards (IRI 6 & 7). This component aimed to address inadequate management and accountability systems at the system and school levels.** Prior to the project, there were no national school quality standards or measures for evaluating school quality in place in Liberia. The intended purpose of the SQA tool was threefold: (a) promote a systemwide understanding and measure of school quality; (b) support school quality improvement, including the identification of key barriers and high potential solutions; and (c) strengthen accountability at both central and school levels. As part of this process, DEOs benefited from receiving several trainings

⁴⁹Kalama, Alphonso G. "Education Ministry Improves on Handling School Leadership, Management". New Public Trust. March 28, 2022. <https://newspublictrust.com/education-ministry-improves-on-handling-school-leadership-management>



on the protocol for school visits and how to collect data using the tool. The project successfully developed and operationalized this tool across the country, achieving the target of having at least 50 schools receive feedback from the SQA visit. Moreover, the tool was piloted in over 450 primary schools, and each of these schools was provided with a report card. 317 schools were visited with 280 (88%) receiving the SQA report card and 37 schools responded that they did not. Moreover, the majority of participants agreed that the scores given were fair. For instance, 278 schools agreed that the score given for Staff verification on the SQA report card was accurate and fair, while one school remained neutral and one disagreed.⁵⁰ To date, there is limited evidence that this system has been formally institutionalized. It does, however, seem to have been utilized at a school level – 220 (84%) of surveyed schools self-reported that they implemented priority actions agreed from the SQA.⁵¹ Ultimately, this tool succeeded in capturing data points that are within the control of the school. More work can be done to institutionalize the tool and ensure the findings are continuously shared with principals to address issues of quality.

47. **Annual progress reports (IRI 8).** As part of this project, MoE produced Annual Progress Reports and Joint Education Sector Reviews (JESR), which covered activities, expenditures, and progress toward targets specified in the ESP. Although these reports were completed, thus achieving IO8, the quality of the JESR reports varied. For instance, a 2019 JESR assessment, conducted by the GPE Secretariat using GPE’s JESR indicator methodology, found three of the five quality standards were met.⁵² According to this methodology, the JESR met the criteria of being evidence-based, comprehensive, and participatory/inclusive; however, the JESR did not meet the criteria of using a monitoring instrument or ensuring the JESR was anchored in a policy cycle.⁵³ This is particularly troublesome, as the main purpose of a JESR is its monitoring and evaluation function for joint accountability, ensuring all stakeholders track progress on the ESP indicators and use this information to assess what was planned versus what was achieved. The recommendations from the JESR neither designated responsible parties for implementation nor included a timeline for implementation. The GPE JESR assessment noted these findings were also constrained by limited financial information and analysis (e.g., domestic and international budget and expenditure), which makes it difficult to effectively monitor project progress.

Justification of Overall Efficacy Rating

48. **The overall efficacy rating for the project is, on balance, SUBSTANTIAL given the specific ratings across the three parts of the PDO.**

C. EFFICIENCY

Assessment of Efficiency and Rating

49. **To assess the project efficiency in achieving its objectives, two types of analysis are conducted: (i) economic analysis and (ii) implementation efficiency analysis. Considering the findings from these analyses, the project is rated SUBSTANTIAL on efficiency.**

50. **The Project’s economic efficiency is HIGH.** The original economic efficiency analysis conducted during the Appraisal phase, which remained unchanged at the project restructuring, did not include a formal cost-benefit or return-

⁵⁰ Republic of Liberia: Ministry of Education. SQA School Visit Follow-Up Progress Report. Page 12. June 1, 2022.

⁵¹ RL, MoE. SQA Feedback Report. Pg. 14. 2022.

⁵² Global Partnership for Education. Methodology Sheet for Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Indicators.

⁵³ World Bank. Joint Sector Review CY19 Liberia. 2019.



on-investment analysis. Instead, the analysis, drawing from international literature, emphasized various channels through which economic benefits could potentially materialize through the achievement of the project objectives such as increased access to ECE, increased knowledge and skills of teachers, and improved system monitoring and accountability through trained school managers. By presenting justification for these channels, which were partially supported with quantitative analysis, the initial analysis made the case for the value of project investments. The economic analysis conducted at the project ICR stage validates the claims made in the original analysis and provides a robust economic efficiency rationale for the project investments.

51. **The cost-benefit analysis conducted at the project ICR stage shows promising results.** The analysis considers the increased future earnings for beneficiaries, direct project costs, and the opportunity costs. The present discounted value of benefits from full project implementation is estimated at US\$26.55 million, while the present discounted value of costs is US\$10.48 million. This results in a positive Net Present Value of US\$17.07 million and an Internal Rate of Return of 15 percent. Overall, the benefit-cost ratio shows US\$2.53 in returns accrued for every dollar invested in the project. Sensitivity analyses reveal the project remains favorable even under a lower-bounds scenario. Here, the benefit-cost ratio is US\$1.09, generating approximately US\$1.09 cents per dollar invested. Under an upper-bounds scenario, returns could reach as high as US\$6.76 for every dollar invested.

52. **The cost-benefit analysis carried out for each of the project components confirms that the project is economically viable.** The analysis shows that each of the components considered for the cost-benefit analysis yields a positive net present value and internal rate of return of at least 15 percent. Component 1, which accrues economic benefits through improvement in access to quality ECE, yields a net present value of US\$12.78 million and an IRR of 21 percent. Component 2, which accrues economic benefits through improvement in the quality of teaching and learning through teacher training, yields an NPV of US\$6.05 million and IRR of 19 percent. Component 3, which accrues economic benefits through improvement in school management and accountability through training of school principals, yields an NPV of US\$2.63 million and IRR of 15 percent. The benefits-to-cost ratio for components 1, 2, and 3 are 6.39, 5.23, and 2.23, respectively. The overall estimates, which account for all the project costs, do not include unquantifiable benefits, yield an NPV of US\$17.07 million and IRR of 15 percent. Therefore, although some benefits are not fully quantifiable, the NPV from the quantifiable benefits is larger than the NPV costs, and this strongly supports the efficiency of investments undertaken under the project. Based on this analysis, the overall efficiency rating for the project is Substantial.

Design and Implementation Efficiency

53. **Efficiency in project design.** The G2B project was particularly efficient in generating value for money as the project components were rooted in global evidence on how to efficiently increase access to and quality of learning. Moreover, the strategic alignment of the various project components fostered complementarity within and across project components, ensuring long-term value for money. For instance, the primary and ECE teacher in-service trainings were strongly linked: they shared the same training modalities and geographical targeting. Further, principal training on instructional leadership and mentoring teachers targeted the same schools, complementing the effectiveness of the teacher training and ECE components. These complementary efforts imply cost savings and synergies in building foundational skills by improving the quality of teaching and access in the most disadvantaged counties.

54. **Investments targeting systemic change enhanced the value for money of education spending in the long run.** The project included a number of interventions such as payroll clean up, removal of ghost teachers to free up space for fiscal spending, higher salaries for trained teachers contributing to better working conditions, and incentivizing teachers to stay in remote locations which are most underserved; project investments in low stakes learning assessment and in



resuming the school census are critical to sector diagnostics, informing policy design to increase learning and access in most cost-effective ways and measuring progress over time.

55. **Efficiency in project implementation.** The project fully disbursed and received a 1-year extension to complete its activities which were all implemented effectively. Important to note here that this was despite delays in project implementation due to factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the fiscal situation in Liberia, and work disruptions at the MoE due to power and internet outages. Cost savings of US\$570,000 were realized under the ECE component due to lower-than-anticipated costs and efficiency gains. Due to the increased unit costs of training (due to inflation and rising fuel costs) and overly ambitious target setting, the target number of teachers and principals trained was reduced, which led to cost savings. Under the restructuring, the cost savings of US\$697,000 from components 1 (ECE), 2, and 3 (teacher and principal training) were reallocated to cover the cost of project management and M&E activities. Given the cost savings under component 1 due to efficiency gains, delays in implementation of trainings, and increase in training costs (both of which seem largely due to exogenous factors), the reallocation was efficiency enhancing.

56. **The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with other exogenous shocks on the Liberian economic system, cannot be understated.** During project implementation, Liberia faced significant development challenges on the heels of low overall productivity and economic efficiency; huge infrastructure gaps in terms of roads, electricity, water, and telecommunications; and inadequate level of human capital. Owing in part to repeated exogenous shocks, including the Ebola outbreak, the collapse of iron ore and rubber prices, the drawdown of UN peacekeeping forces, and the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy contracted by an average of 0.4 percent per year between 2014 and 2020, and per capita gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 12.3 percent cumulatively. As a result, the poverty rate is projected to have risen to 51 percent in 2021, wiping out nearly half of the gains made post-conflict, when the poverty rate declined from 64 percent to 42 percent between 2007 and 2014. The recent increase in poverty experienced by the country has occurred due to health crises. The COVID-19 pandemic alone is projected to have worsened poverty by 2.3 percentage points. Headline inflation moderated to 7.9 percent in 2021, down from 17.4 percent in 2020.⁵⁴ Against the backdrop of these challenges, the MoE and World Bank teams proactively worked together to find alternative and innovative solutions to achieve results (e.g., by implementing virtual trainings, virtual M&E follow-up with CEOs and DEOs, and setting up virtual mentoring opportunities for teachers and principals via WhatsApp instead of in-person meetings).

57. **The overall efficiency of the Project is rated SUBSTANTIAL.** This rating is based on the Project's economic efficiency as well as aspects of project design and implementation. Annex 4 includes a detailed efficiency analysis.

D. JUSTIFICATION OF OVERALL OUTCOME RATING

58. **The overall outcome of the G2B Project is rated SATISFACTORY based on its HIGH relevance, SUBSTANTIAL efficacy, and SUBSTANTIAL efficiency.**

E. OTHER OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

Gender

59. **The G2B project was gender-informed.** The relevant project indicators were gender disaggregated, thereby ensuring that implementation focused on improving gender quality throughout the project. In fact, one of the main PDOs in the project focused on improving the percentage of female project beneficiaries, which increased from a baseline of 0

⁵⁴ World Bank.2022. Liberia Economic Update.

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099455109192219278/pdf/P177994009187f0f60ba8d0fe0eeb8b19ec.pdf>



percent to 48 percent. The project also prioritized recruiting and training female teachers and officers with the goal of addressing the poor pipeline for and attractiveness of the teaching profession. For instance, over half (62 percent) of the ECE community caregivers who were recruited and trained for the community-based ECE centers are women.⁵⁵ This intervention – complemented by the IRISE (P164932) project – was meant to address a disparity in a workforce that is predominantly male and one in which the voices of female teachers and officers are not included in decision-making. Moreover, the principal and teacher training content included a special focus on G2B priority areas, including modules on school violence and Gender-based Violence (GBV) that were adapted from the Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girl (EPAG) program. In addition, the project supported the MoE in addressing gender-related issues identified during SQA-related school visits. These interventions included establishing a mechanism for reporting and supporting school guidance counselors and other school staff to respond appropriately to female students who experienced or witnessed violence, including abusive relationships, intra-family violence, and sexual violence. The project coordinated with local agencies and other development partners to monitor and support activities that address and combat GBV and promote student health and safety. Lastly, it implemented safeguarding processes and instated training requirements on gender sensitivity and how to respond if incidents of GBV or other forms of gender-based violence.

60. **Despite all these efforts, gender equity remains a work in progress in Liberia, as highlighted by sector documents and the new ESP.** Cultural norms continue to be a challenge in the effort to decrease the gender disparity between males and females in the classroom. In particular, young girls are often kept out of school to handle household and family responsibilities including younger siblings. Additionally, the ESP highlights other challenges keeping girls from school, including GBV and the overall school environment often not being safe or conducive to learning. The MoE has instituted several policies to address the gender barrier, including the 2013 National Policy on Girls' Education and the National Girls' Education Strategy, prepared with support from UNESCO, which was launched at the JESR 2023. Not limiting the gender equity issue to only students, recruitment of female teachers is an issue the MoE faces. This is evidenced by the primary teacher training and the principal leadership training: of the 185 primary teachers certified, only 15 percent were female, and of the 320 principals in cohort one to be trained, only 11 percent were female. The MoE is aware of and is closing tracking this issue. Recruiting and retaining more women in the teaching profession is a stated priority in the new ESP.

Institutional Strengthening

61. **Early Childhood Education.** G2B supported the development and expansion of community-based ECE centers, which provided increased access to ECE for populations in hard-to-reach areas. In addition, ECE community caregivers were provided with support and training to become certified ECE teachers. These efforts helped lay the foundation for the continued strengthening of ECE and increased access to ECE in areas that otherwise did not have this form of education available.

62. **Rural Teacher Training Institutes.** The project enhanced the capacity of the RTTIs to deliver training programs to public school teachers and principals, specifically, by offering: (a) an ECE C certificate training for ECE teachers, (b) an accelerated C certificate training for primary teachers, and (c) a school leadership training for principals and school administrators. In addition to offering these training programs, the RTTIs received resources to upgrade their training facilities and provide capacity development for their staff. This support positions the RTTIs to support the GoL in meeting the training needs of public-school teachers and administrators in the future.

⁵⁵ Global Partnership for Education. Mission of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Secretariat to Liberia Mission Summary Report. Page 7. July 4-8, 2022.



63. **District Education Officers and the School Quality Assessment tool.** The project also built DEO's capacity and provided the resources to effectively oversee schools and provide technical support to school administrators. Namely, DEOs were trained on how to use the SQA tool. The SQA tool was designed as a feedback and accountability mechanism to track school quality for parents and communities. This training equipped DEOs with the skills to better support school administrators in achieving school quality standards and to effectively monitor the implementation of the school improvement grants. The financial resources complemented these training efforts, enabling DEOs to visit schools at least once annually. Although the SQA tool is not fully integrated and mainstreamed into the MoE due to preexisting institutional constraints – this type of intervention had not been implemented in Liberia before and signals a shift from focusing solely on inputs to quality. Moreover, the upskilling of DEOs ultimately contributed to improved system-level management and accountability.

64. **School Administrators.** The project built on the capacity of public-school administrators to effectively manage schools. School administrators participated in a school leadership program and implemented the school grants program that had been started under the Global Partnership for Education Grant for Basic Education Project (GPE-BEP) (P117662). While the leadership program allowed school administrators to acquire relevant knowledge and skills to effectively manage their schools, the grants program provided the resources for their schools to operate. The school grant guidelines were updated to reflect the intended purpose of the grant, the eligibility criteria, the schedule of disbursement, School Improvement Plan (SIP) template, penalties for noncompliance, eligible expenditure list, and procedures for verifying grant utilization. These efforts improved management and accountability at the school level.

Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity

65. **The G2B project mainstreamed poverty reduction and shared prosperity into the overall design of the project.** Specifically, the core activities in the project (including the PDO), targeted disadvantaged counties (River Gee, Grand Kru, Sinoe, Maryland, Rivercess, and Bomi). These counties were selected based on poverty and educational indicators, pulled from stunting data, NERs in primary and ECE, and the percentage of unqualified ECE and primary teachers (respectively).⁵⁶ To further focus project efforts and at the request of the GoL, counties that received substantial investment in education from USAID were excluded, as were public schools in targeted counties that were already benefitting from other externally financed programs.

66. **A large component of this project focused on strengthening teacher training and improving access to and quality of ECE for children in these disadvantaged counties.** Evidence has shown that high-quality early childhood programs are essential because ECD programs and interventions can provide a “fair start” to children, potentially ameliorating socioeconomic and gender-related inequities.⁵⁷ Moreover, such ECE programs can have a profound impact on children’s brain development, affecting learning, health, behavior, and, ultimately, productivity and income.⁵⁸ The project also directly addressed the issue of teacher quality in Liberia. Teachers are arguably one of the most important determinants of student learning. Thus, by attempting to remove absentee and/or illiterate teachers from the Liberian payroll and upskill preexisting teachers in the system, the project shared prosperity by improving overall teacher quality in the country. These activities were critical in providing enhanced service delivery to underserved communities in Liberia.

⁵⁶ World Bank. PAD. Page 6. 2018.

⁵⁷ RL, MoE. ESA. 2016.

⁵⁸ World Bank. “Nearly 350 Million Children Lack Quality Childcare in the World”. March 4, 2021.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/earlychildhooddevelopment#2>.



III. KEY FACTORS THAT AFFECTED IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOME

A. KEY FACTORS DURING PREPARATION

67. **Well-designed project objectives and choice of interventions.** The project was fully aligned with the Government’s ESP (2022/23–2026/27)⁵⁹ and the foundational priorities outlined in the WBG’s CPF (FY19–FY24).⁶⁰ The PDOs mirror these priorities by ensuring education to every citizen at every educational level, promoting equal access to education opportunities for all, and ensuring adequate governance and management of the education sector.⁶¹ Relatedly, the PDO is also aligned with another one of the government’s national development plans – PAPD (2018–2023) – which emphasizes the provision of education, health, youth development, and social protection and outlines specific strategies for how to reduce gender inequality and empower women and girls through education programming.⁶²

68. **Choice of lending instrument.** The choice of the lending instrument, an Investment Project Financing (IPF) with a RBF component, made for some difficulties during implementation. The IPF portion of the grant was an appropriate choice because it provided the client with the necessary technical and financial support to ensure smooth project implementation. In line with the GPE Guideline mandating that 30 percent of the grant be used as variable financing, the project also included an RBF component with three disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs that became PBCs based upon guidance received during project restructuring) related to equity, efficiency, and learning outcomes (US\$3.57 million). These PBCs and associated milestones were aligned with the overall project design; however, these indicators did not disburse in comparison to the other components of the project. This delay is understandable, as G2B was the first education grant to include an RBF, and it took the client some time to effectively understand the RBF process and modality. Relatedly, it was difficult to find a qualified and truly independent verification agency. Lastly, the RBF indicators largely relied on EMIS data, which was either not available or raised issues of reliability and validity.

69. **Evidence-Based Design.** The selection of key targets was appropriate for each stage. The PDO was focused and highly appropriate to the challenges the Liberia education sector faces, yet the original PAD lacked a clear ToC. The objective was outcome-oriented and was appropriately pitched for the government capacity and development of education programs in Liberia. The RF was developed to measure achievements related to improving the quality of ECE and general education and government accountability systems using measurable indicators available at the time of project design. The technical design of the project drew from globally recognized approaches to improving the quality of and access to ECE and general education for disadvantaged children in hard-to-reach areas. The project-supported activities, as inputs to achieve the PDO, were appropriate and selected in collaboration with the government. Lastly, the targeted project beneficiaries (and associated counties) were highly appropriate for the needs of Liberia.

70. **Implementation Arrangements.** At the project management level under the original project design, the implementation arrangements granted overall responsibility for project management to the MoE. The Education Sector Development Committee, which served as the oversight body of the G2B-ESP and includes members from other GoL agencies, civil society organizations, private education providers, teachers’ unions, and donor representatives, assisted with policy dialogue and decision-making at the macro level. Specifically, the ESDC’s role was to advise MoE on general issues related to policy, monitoring, and development coordination. As the implementing agency, MoE delegated day-to-

⁵⁹ RL, MoE. ESP. 2022.

⁶⁰ World Bank. CPF. Page 57. 2018.

⁶¹ RL, MoE. ESP. Page 59. 2022.

⁶² RL, MoE. ESP. Page 60. 2022.



day operations to a Project Delivery Team. Subnational offices, led by County Education Officers (CEOs) who oversee DEOs based in district offices, were responsible for overseeing and implementing projects at a school level. Staff at county and district levels received training and played a key role in supervising and monitoring the interventions and results. Financial Management was carried out by the project's Financial Management Officer, a financial management specialist who was recruited and dedicated to the World Bank project portfolio overall (three projects as of 2021). Subnational offices, led by CEOs who oversee DEOs based in district offices, were responsible for overseeing and implementing projects at a school level. Staff at county and district levels received training and played a key role in supervising and monitoring the interventions and results. Technical responsibilities were contracted to several service providers, selected based on their technical expertise and comparative advantage. For example, subcomponent 1.1 was implemented by We Care Foundation in coordination with the respective government structures, i.e., the ECE Bureau at the MoE, DEOs, and the communities themselves.

B. KEY FACTORS DURING IMPLEMENTATION

71. **Project implementation progress was largely rated moderately satisfactory throughout implementation.** There were various factors that played a role in the challenges and successes of the project.

Factors subject to Government and/or implementing entities control:

72. **Project achievements.** Much of the project's success can be attributed to the efforts of key members of the MoE's Senior Management Team (SMT) and the PDT who navigated many unexpected challenges including a global pandemic with COVID-19, interruptions to global supply chains that impacted imports to Liberia, and soaring inflation that made the cost of fuel and food prohibitively expensive. These shocks made it nearly impossible during certain periods to carry out all project activities such as teacher training or even getting to and from the MoE offices. Weekly, sometimes daily, calls and check-ins aligned to the project action plans allowed for a solution-oriented approach to many implementation challenges.

73. **The project leveraged the strength of implementing partner agencies/firms to enhance efficiency.** Partnerships, particularly with We Care for component 1, supported project activity implementation and enabled efficient project operations. This organization, with its technical expertise and on-the-ground presence, significantly contributed to the smooth implementation of key G2B Project activities. Throughout implementation, the G2B engaged with these partner agencies and held them accountable for results by requiring the submission of periodic progress reports and by engaging them directly in supervision missions.

74. **Use of the government's system expedited the implementation of school grants, although there were some complications related to transportation logistics and banking documentation complexities.** Using the GoL's system helped reduce transaction costs and ensure demand-based purchase of grant-funded items at a school level. The school grants were disbursed directly to the schools under the DEO's field-level administration. Principals were allocated grants to the selected schools following training and guidelines outlined in the School Grant Implementation Manual. Despite certain successes, some communities experienced challenges in accessing the grant funds. Accessing these funds typically required documentation that those required to sign for the funds at the designated banks did not always have and involved travel to designated county banks to receive the funds, often in hard-to-reach locations. On multiple occasions, principals traveled several days to acquire funds, only to find that the account funds were not accessible, or they were missing a critical document necessary to access funds. Given the extended travel time required to get to banks, these individuals had to wait several days before the accounting issues got sorted and these costs often had to be covered from their



personal accounts. This noted, the MoE addressed school grant issues in the first year of implementation through school spot checks and formally reported these misuses to the World Bank.⁶³ Lastly, there is evidence that these funds were used appropriately, with the majority of schools being able to show a valid receipt that authenticates items bought, and only 8% were found to be not compliant with the grant guidelines.⁶⁴

75. The ECE, primary, and principal training faced implementation challenges due to a combination of logistical challenges, RTTI capacity, and fiscal constraints caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and inflation rates within Liberia. Specifically, training participants cited poor preparation and a number of logistical issues, including, yet not limited to: (i) inadequate and insufficient food and lodging; and (ii) no transportation reimbursement and per diem from education authorities.⁶⁵ The shortcomings of training cohort one impacted the overall training project outcomes, wherein during the restructuring in 2022, the number of teachers and principals trained and certified had to be reduced, and the third cohort of training was canceled to account for a contingency budget for cohort two.⁶⁶ While the second training went better than the first, there were some logistical challenges that affected training delivery, namely: (i) the residential training areas lacked a water supply, as the main water system went down and was not repaired during the training; (ii) there were not enough desks to account for the number of participants who attended the training; and (iii) given teachers low levels of reading and math, they had a difficult time understanding the training concepts.⁶⁷

76. An operational Grievance Redress Mechanism was delayed, becoming operational 6 months before project closing. Although the World Bank and GoL project preparation teams had an implementation arrangement designed to ensure smooth implementation, the project lacked the necessary staff needed to establish an operational GRM. A Safeguards specialist, responsible for training the hotline operators, overseeing rollout to all 15 counties, and addressing all grievances related to the project, was not hired until June 1, 2021. Subsequently, the GRM was not operational until January 2023 (6 months before project closing). As such, the effectiveness of the GRM was quite limited due, in part, to the late hiring of a Safeguards specialist.

Factors subject to World Bank control:

77. Project restructuring. The restructuring process took over twelve months to complete; this was during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and involved a lot of back and forth with the GoL and the GPE. This restructuring process was further complicated by an evolving implementation context and new policies within the World Bank and GPE. Throughout the restructuring process, the team was available to facilitate discussions and support MoE and key project activities continued to advance as restructuring was under discussion. As a result of these ongoing efforts, the team was ultimately effective in restructuring the project to allow for the full completion of project activities.

78. Teacher and principal training and data constraints required a solutions-driven approach and dedicated supervision support from the World Bank. The reputational risk that resulted from the first cohort of teacher and principal training meant that the World Bank took a much more hands-on approach in supervising the subsequent teacher training activities. The World Bank and MoE team worked together over many weeks to correct the cohort one training experience for trainees, ensuring cohort two was not a repeat of cohort one. Monitoring visits by the World Bank team to the RTTIs

⁶³ RL, MoE. Grants. Page. 13. 2023.

⁶⁴ RL, MoE. Grants. Page. 6. 2023.

⁶⁵ Kalama, Alphanso G. "Why Did Scores of Teachers, Education Administrators Boycott Education Min. Workshop?". *New Public Trust*. October 27, 2021. <https://newspublictrust.com/why-did-scores-of-teachers-education-administrators-boycott-education-min-workshop>.

⁶⁶ World Bank. Restructuring Paper. Page 15. May 17, 2018.

⁶⁷ Webbo Rural Teacher Training Institute. Webbo Rural Teacher Training Institute: 2nd Residential Training Report. Page 6. April 27, 2022.



increased as did monitoring by the central MoE. An implementation action plan, which had existed for cohort one, was expanded and involved many more status meetings with all involved and trainee process evaluations throughout cohort two training.

79. **Similar to the focused, nearly daily check -ins conducted by the World Bank team following training cohort one, the World Bank team took a more proactive engagement approach to the Annual School Census (ASC) process when it was clear the ASC was not going as captured by project design or by agreed revisions to the implementation approach.** The World Bank team enacted proactive interventions including supporting an international consultant to provide support to the MoE, facilitating a virtual (due to COVID-19 restrictions) knowledge exchange workshop with EMIS counterparts in Sierra Leone to enable Liberia to learn from Sierra Leone's ASC experience, and highlighting where the ASC census process was working within Liberia (i.e., Maryland excelled at the ASC process).

80. **Exogenous factors.** As mentioned above, in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact the implementation of G2B. As a result of the pandemic, Government offices and schools were periodically shut down or operating with restrictions, which often slowed decision-making, approvals, and implementation at the school level. The subcomponents servicing schools were affected, delaying the teacher/principal training(s), school grants, and community-based ECE programs. In October 2020, the program activities began to resume after the GoL's COVID-related restrictions were eased. However, coupled with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic was the financial crisis that had started to emerge prior to the pandemic and was exacerbated by the pandemic. As a result of COVID-19 and pre-existing fragilities, the domestic currency depreciation worsened, food prices increased, and inflation rose.⁶⁸ These factors affected the implementation of the school grants and teacher training components, as the unit costs that were budgeted for at Appraisal were much lower and insufficient to cover the activities included in the original project design.

IV. BANK PERFORMANCE, COMPLIANCE ISSUES, AND RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

A. QUALITY OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

M&E Design

81. **The RF was designed around PDO indicators and intermediate-level outcomes, which were clear, easy to understand, and relevant.** In addition to the standard RF, the team included Annual Progress Reports, which tracked activities, expenditures, and progress toward targets outlined in the ESP. These reports were informed by reporting from TA, service providers, and bureaus responsible for individual subcomponents. The original PDO was clearly specified at Appraisal and was not modified at the time of the restructuring.

82. **The M&E design of the G2B largely relied on existing EMIS systems and monitoring arrangements of the GoL, in addition to third-party assessments.** Established GoL monitoring systems constituted primary key data sources and official statistics from the ASC, conducted by the EMIS Unit, provided data for some indicators to measure progress toward achievement of the PDO. The team was limited in how they were able to design an effective M&E system, as Liberia's EMIS system remains nascent and there were not many other reliable data sources available to the World Bank. Liberia has a limited technology infrastructure, which impedes timely and efficient data collection, analysis, and reporting, making it difficult for the World Bank (and fellow development partners) to trust the quality and reliability of available data.

⁶⁸ Saito, Mika. "Four Things to Know on How Liberia Is Reforming Its Economy Amid COVID 19". *International Monetary Fund*. December 21, 2022. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/12/18/na121820four-things-to-know-on-how-liberia-is-reforming-its-economy-amid-covid19>.



M&E Implementation

83. **At the time of Appraisal and throughout implementation, the GoL's systems struggled to systematically collect high-quality data, particularly with regards to the ASC and NER.** Thus, relying heavily on these sources made it difficult to track overall project progress during implementation. ASC data, which was a key source for monitoring the RF progress, was collected and available three times with a delay (2019/2020, 2020/2021, 2021/2022). For example, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 were collected and delivered in 2023.⁶⁹ The MoE faced serious challenges with data collection, analysis, and reporting and ultimately was unsuccessful in transitioning to a digitized platform for data collection. The MoE hired a firm to provide technical support to develop the digitized platform, train the enumerators (who for two censuses were DEOs), and supply relevant equipment. The first census report (which was expected in 2019) was not published until 2022, three years after the process began. The quality of the ASC report was also an issue – the WBG team provided several rounds of in-depth comments to improve the quality of the report and raise the report to international standards; however, at the time of project closing, most of these recommendations were not addressed.⁷⁰

84. **The other indicators used to measure the implementation of M&E progress were achieved with significant challenges and delays.** The project was also supposed to use data from other sources, including the SQA, national student assessments, household surveys, and teacher payroll. Payroll data and SQA data were available, however, it was not possible to conduct household surveys due to COVID-19. The MoE was also expected to hold annual JESRs to measure the progress made against the achievement of the ESP, which is aligned with results monitoring. Over the course of the project, three JESRs were held to review the ESP progress indicators. However, the complementary JESR reports did not include progress on these indicators and did not meet GPE's quality standard for monitoring and evaluation. Lastly, an impact evaluation was supposed to be conducted for the school accountability management interventions, utilizing SQA feedback from DEOs, and this was canceled as part of the project restructuring.

M&E Utilization

85. **M&E data were not regularly available for the RF, making it difficult to track and measure project results.** It was particularly challenging to track direct beneficiaries and NER in ECE, given that the last population census was conducted in 2008. The ASC was supposed to support these activities and ultimately did, though, there were many issues with data quality (as described above), and these data were not consistently collected for the duration of the project.⁷¹ This had particularly adverse effects on tracking PBC indicators, as two of the three PBCs relied on these data for verification. With this said, M&E findings were consistently communicated to the various stakeholders throughout the project. For instance, the Annual Progress Reports were utilized to communicate progress on activities and associated expenditures. Moreover, the subgrant compliance reports verified whether schools received the funds and provided some details as to how school leaders were using the fiduciary and safeguard knowledge.

Justification of Overall Rating of Quality of M&E

86. **Based on the above discussions, the overall quality of M&E is rated MODEST.** The M&E framework heavily relied on one data source (the ASC) which was behind schedule due to reasons that have been explained. The PDT and World Bank team continued to support and supplement this source with other data sources as and when available. However, for these reasons, the M&E framework was delayed in monitoring key indicators in a timely manner.

⁶⁹ World Bank. Aide Memoire: Implementation Support Mission (P162089-TFA7093). April 24-25, 2023.

⁷⁰ Republic of Liberia: Ministry of Education. Education Statistic Report 2021-2022. 2023.

⁷¹ World Bank. Aide Memoire: Implementation Support Mission (P162089-TFA7093). April 24-35, 2023.



B. ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND FIDUCIARY COMPLIANCE

87. **Environmental and social safeguards.** According to the World Bank Environmental and Social guidelines, the G2B project was rated as Category 'C.' On the E&S screening of the project components, no significant risks or negative impacts were identified, thus no further assessment was required. Minor civil works for school building maintenance and repair were eligible expenditures under the school grant component. The proposal and scope of maintenance and repair works were screened, and E&S impacts were anticipated minimal. The minimal impacts were managed by implementing C-ESMP. The other project activities, including teacher training, M&E, and sample-based assessment, were determined to have no environmental and social impact. The Project Social Assessment was conducted and concluded that the project's social impact is expected to be largely positive. The need for actions and accountability mechanisms to address and stop the prevalence of gender-based violence was discussed during project preparation, leading to MoE enforcing a code of conduct to ensure a safe learning environment for girls. Safeguards were monitored during project implementation, and Implementation Status Reports (ISRs) were rated moderately satisfactory and satisfactory. The areas of weakness identified related to the safeguards were: (a) delays in hiring a safeguards specialist, (b) delays in MoE's signing of the code of conduct, (c) delays in establishing a centralized hotline to address complaints, resulting in limited mechanisms for managing complaints and accident incidences. In February 2023, the project developed and finalized a grievance redress mechanism (GRM) and disclosed the information to the public (only four months before the project formally closed). Grievances can now be lodged through a call center and the system will be available for the period during project implementation to register grievances or feedback related to the project. Ultimately, the environmental safeguard performance rating was upgraded from Moderately Satisfactory (MS) to 'Satisfactory' (S) following the closing mission (April 2023) and before project closing (June 2023).

88. **Financial management (FM).** FM performance rating remained Moderately Satisfactory throughout the life of the project, and the FM risk rating was substantial when the project closed. During the project, Interim Financial Reports (IFRs) needed to be better prepared, reviewed, and managed for timely review and submission. On several occasions, errors were noted in the IFR and the project struggled to consistently adhere to FM policies. Improved communication and coordination between MoE and Project Financial Management Unit (PFMU) was necessary to achieve the three milestones associated with project closing: project completion, grant closing, and designated account closing. FM arrangements needed to be established to ensure: (a) the funds for the Project are used for the intended purposes with regard for economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, (b) timely and reliable financial report (IFRs) for the project are produced, and (c) there are measures to protect the project's assets. The revised project amount following the June 2022 restructuring was project financing was US\$10,476,000M equivalent, with a total disbursement of approximately US\$10,075,306.46M or 96.2 percent of all restructured project funds. As of June 21, 2023, there were US\$400,695.54 of unused funds. The increased challenges with inflation during the project was one impetus for the restructuring of the project, in which the components were revised to account for unit price increases associated with inflation. Despite these inflation challenges and exchange rate losses, the project successfully achieved most of its envisaged outputs and outcomes.

89. **Procurement.** Procurement was consistently rated Moderately Satisfactory in the project ISRs. During the project implementation, the procurement arrangement remained as agreed with the GoL. The project engaged a national procurement consultant who provided procurement support to the project. The International Procurement Specialist hired by IRISE also supported in training staff of the MoE. World Bank procurement staff also provided training to the PIU at intervals to ensure compliance with the World Bank Procurement Regulations. MoE demonstrated a high level of competency in working with service providers to ensure the contracts were signed and executed. The project had challenges with uploading documents on Bank's Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP). These gaps were gradually addressed with the support of the Bank. The procurement plans were updated regularly and submitted to the



WBG for review and clearance. The quality of procurement implementation was rated to have improved tremendously before the closure of G2B.

C. BANK PERFORMANCE

Quality at Entry

90. **The project preparation team ensured that the project design was closely aligned with the G2B ESP (2017-2021) and the education priorities outlined in the World Bank’s CPF (FY19-FY24).** The project also fits into the international education development agenda and the World Bank’s focus on improving access to ECE and promoting improved standards of quality in ECE and general education classrooms in Liberia. The project’s design and key indicators were aligned with the PDO, and the project was informed by the latest evidence on ECE and TPD intervention design and programming. The design took into consideration the recommendations from peer reviewers and internationally recognized research that recognizes the critical role of investing in improving access to and quality of ECE/general education as an equalizing factor in an extremely unequal society. The preparation team identified the appropriate risks, incorporated design features to mitigate them, and included relevant technical specialists to support project development. Preparation for the project was a highly collaborative and consultative process with the government of Liberia.

Quality of Supervision

91. **The World Bank team demonstrated a high level of commitment to supporting the GoL to implement the project including many implementation support missions in Monrovia on a regular basis with a multidisciplinary team consisting of education, procurement, FM, and environment and social safeguards specialists.** The right mix of expertise helped ensure that implementation challenges were addressed effectively, especially during the restructuring. With the additional assistance of consultants and DC-based colleagues, the country-based TTL and team were available to provide on-the-ground supervision support and resolve challenges with the government counterparts. The ongoing support provided by the project’s team – both in-country and from afar in headquarters – was a strong contributing factor in ensuring the successful completion of the project.

92. **WBG’s implementation was co-led by seven task team leaders during the five-year project period, with one consistent lead team leader as of 2018.** The majority of these staff were based at headquarters, with one based in-country who started working on the project in August 2018. Ideally, the consistency of TTLs across preparation and implementation and the availability of more in-the-field implementation support would have benefitted implementation support; however, despite these challenges, the project team supported MoE in making progress based on the targeted implementation action plan, including bi-weekly implementation meetings between the MoE and Bank teams and intensive day-to-day support. Despite this potential for discontinuity, the changes in TTL leadership did not have a major effect on institutional memory, relationships with counterparts, or policy dialogue.

93. **The Aide Memoires were detailed and candid, with descriptions of the progress, challenges, and recommendations across each activity.** Agreed actions for the next six-month period formulated and included in the Aide Memoires are well structured and clear to indicate time-bound milestones for each subcomponent. Changes in ratings were frequent and used in the ISRs to flag critical issues that required management attention and urgent action. Throughout the project, the WBG team consistently reported on FM and procurement, during supervision missions and worked with MoE and other implementation agencies to build their capacity in these critical areas.



Justification of Overall Rating of Bank Performance

94. **Based on the sub-ratings of Bank performance at entry (SATISFACTORY), Bank performance during supervision (SATISFACTORY), the overall Bank performance is rated SATISFACTORY.**

D. RISK TO DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

95. **The risk to development outcomes is deemed SUBSTANTIAL.** This rating is based on the fact that the resource constraints for the education sector, along with capacity, will inevitably pose significant challenges to future activities. Most of the activities initiated under this project have not yet proven to be sustainable. The overarching risks to development outcomes are related to the great inequities that exist in Liberian society and in the Liberian education system, which were present throughout project implementation and will continue into the future unless properly addressed. The World Bank is supporting Liberia in responding to these challenges through the preparation of the forthcoming “Excellence in Learning in Liberia” (PP181455) project, which focuses on improving foundational literacy instruction and ensuring equitable access to public primary schools. The project includes activities that explicitly build on the G2B experience, including, but not limited to, providing teacher and principal trainings, and a continuation of the use of school grants and the SQA tool. At the time of project completion, the technical design for key components was being prepared, utilizing lessons from the G2B experience.

V. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

96. **To proactively mitigate implementation challenges and ensure the sustainability of project activities beyond the lifecycle of a World Bank Project, it is important for projects in limited capacity and fragile settings to: (a) select strong implementing partners, (b) build in fiscal flexibility to manage potential inflation, and (c) design PBCs in a way that facilitates client support and manages for a resource constrained environment.** During G2B implementation, certain implementing partners were more effective in supporting the MoE and enabling achievement of project outcomes than others (see discussion on objective 2’s training activities vs. objective 1’s community-based ECE rollout in the Efficacy section). It is crucial that the MoE vet and prioritize strong partners that have a proven track record of delivering, are accountable to the MoE, and can ensure effective, timely implementation. These efforts must be paired with appropriate funding, enabling the MoE and implementing partners to have the resources to implement the activities as planned. Specifically, project budgets must be designed with some flexibility to account for unforeseen economic challenges (i.e., inflation, rising fuel costs, etc.). In the case of G2B, adjustments to project activities, including restructuring and modified activities, were necessary to ensure that the project stayed relevant and addressed the client’s needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent rise in unit costs for teacher and principal training. Given the ongoing changing economic landscape, efforts should be made to ensure that interventions – in this case, the school grants and teacher training components – are designed to be ‘inflation-proof,’ such that the unit cost can be adjusted to reflect unit cost increases due to inflation. The project also faced several challenges with PBC disbursement due to lack of flexibility and design that stretched the MoE to deliver beyond what was possible given the implementation environment.⁷² At a minimum,

⁷² This project faced four main challenges with regards to PBCs: (a) the project had to be restructured to allow for disbursement financing to meet the allocated targets, (b) relatedly, the PBCs had ambitious targets that had to be met in year 1 yet year 1 was too soon given the implementation environment; the pricing structure was not set up in a way to incentive the government to meet disbursement targets, (c) the sector (i.e., IVA firms) had limited experience and capacity to appropriately verify PBCs, requiring extensive support in sampling for the project and delivering a report that was aligned with Bank standards; and (d) the project had too many targets to meet and was unable to balance delivering on the variable part along with the fixed part.



feasibility assessments should be conducted to ensure PBCs are designed in line with what will be feasible to achieve during implementation. Moreover, setting targets in year two or three, at least for some of the PBC results, rather than in year one, may provide the client with the additional support and time needed to build up capacity, particularly in settings where PBCs have not been used before. The PBCs also should be designed with a rollover built in to allow for greater flexibility and not trigger a project restructuring. Lastly, verification protocols must be detailed and agreed by all parties to mitigate uncertainties about required data and information, when verification will be conducted, and how long it will take.

97. **There is a need for multiple, high-quality data sources to enable continuous M&E of project activities.** As discussed at length in the M&E section, G2B lacked consistent data to effectively monitor project progress. It was particularly challenging to calculate Net Enrollment Rate (NER) in ECE in the targeted counties since the last population census was carried out in 2008. As of May 2021, there had been no reporting on NER since the project became effective due to a lack of sector and population data. This is, in part, due to the state of national data collection in Liberia as well as technical challenges with ASC data collection and complications in digitizing the data collection process. Future M&E efforts in Liberia should be designed to ensure multiple, reliable data sources are available to monitor progress on PDO-level and PBC indicators throughout the project's lifecycle. It is also key that PDO-level and PBC indicators be measurable and within the control of the MoE to monitor.

98. **Trainings for teachers and principals should ensure advanced logistical planning so that policymakers can focus on the quality of trainings, rather than the execution of them.** To avoid logistical challenges like those associated with objective 2, at an absolute minimum, all logistical aspects of trainings should be handled prior to the start of any given training. Participants should be compensated for their time in the training, receive their per diem in a timely manner, and all training content should relate directly to the challenges participants face in the classroom and at a school level. Relatedly, training participants should receive clear guidance, well in advance of the training, with regard to transportation, accommodations, and feeding. Moreover, mentoring and monitoring should be embedded into the training design to ensure that participants understand and apply the concepts learned during training back at their schools and as part of their recertification process. Relatedly, follow-up support and resources should be provided to help participants apply the training content in practice. Lastly, teachers and principals should have the opportunity to participate in refresher and future trainings to reinforce what was covered, and trainings should be offered on an ongoing and regular basis.

99. **Decentralizing support services through a school grant scheme, targeting a vulnerable student population, can expedite implementation and ensure ownership at a school level; however, efforts need to account for logistical challenges in obtaining grants and increased unit costs due to inflation.** The shift from an intervention, in which a centralized agency manages the implementation, to a decentralized school grant scheme empowered schools and resulted in a comparatively faster implementation process. The school grants enabled autonomy at the school level. School Management Committees and principals purchased the products they needed. Although this component was largely a success, areas for improvement include: (a) having an inflation clause that would enable the capitation grants to respond to inflation and (b) ensuring grant recipients/signees have easier access to funds, without having to commute to Monrovia.

100. **Community-based ECE centers have had preliminary success, yet they are not self-sustainable – to address this shortfall, these centers should be formally institutionalized in the Liberian education system.** To formally institutionalize the community-based ECE centers: (a) ECE community centers should be covered in the EMIS data and assigned school tracking numbers, (b) stronger linkages between ECE centers and the PTA/PTSA structures should be made to address participation, (c) the infrastructure of ECE community centers should be updated and improved, including ensuring access to relevant learning materials and resources, (d) caregivers should be transitioned to government payroll and these centers should receive government funding, (e) additional training opportunities should be offered to caregivers to not



only work in ECE but also to qualify them to teach grades one and two to accommodate the kindergarten graduates from the ECE center until primary schools are built in the communities.



ANNEX 1. RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND KEY OUTPUTS

A. RESULTS INDICATORS

A.1 PDO Indicators

Objective/Outcome: Improving the quality and access to ECD in targeted disadvantaged counties

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Direct project beneficiaries	Number	0.00 29-Dec-2017	43,058.00 30-Jun-2022		62,720.00 30-Jun-2023
Female beneficiaries	Percentage	0.00	47.00		48.00

Comments (achievements against targets):
Achieved and surpassed.

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Students benefiting from	Number	0.00	40,000.00		58,754.00



direct interventions to enhance learning		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022		30-Jun-2023
Students benefiting from direct interventions to enhance learning - Female	Number	0.00	20,000.00		28,202.00
Early Childhood Education - Total Number	Number	0.00	40,000.00		59,904.00
		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022		30-Jun-2023
Early Childhood Education – Total Female	Number	0.00	20,000.00		28,754.00
		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022		30-Jun-2023
Comments (achievements against targets): Target achieved ahead of project restructuring in June 2022 and surpassed.					

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Large-scale primary/secondary learning assessments completed	Number	0.00	1.00		0.00
		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022		30-Jun-2023
Comments (achievements against targets):					



Objective/Outcome: Increasing enrollment and improving access to education

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Net Enrollment Rate (NER) in ECE in the targeted counties	Percentage	23.00	47.00		55.00
		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022		30-Jun-2023

Comments (achievements against targets):

Objective/Outcome: Supporting Teacher training and certification in the targeted counties

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Share of qualified ECE and primary education teachers in the targeted counties	Percentage	45.77	60.00		69.00
		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022		30-Jun-2023

Comments (achievements against targets):

Objective/Outcome: Improving school management, accountability and systems monitoring

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Percentage of public schools receiving feedback from a School Quality Assessment	Percentage	0.00	50.00		55.00
		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022		30-Jun-2023



(SQA) visit annually in targeted counties					
Comments (achievements against targets):					

A.2 Intermediate Results Indicators

Component: Access to ECD in targeted counties

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Percentage of eligible public schools receiving ECE grants in targeted counties	Percentage	0.00 29-Dec-2017	90.00 30-Jun-2022		92.00 30-Jun-2023

Comments (achievements against targets):

Component: Support teacher training and certification in targeted counties

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Number of trained ECE caregivers placed in community-based ECE centers in the targeted	Number	0.00 29-Dec-2017	60.00 30-Jun-2022		60.00 30-Jun-2023



counties					
Comments (achievements against targets):					

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Number of teachers receiving ECE C certificate	Number	0.00	560.00	370.00	380.00
		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022	30-Jun-2023	30-Jun-2023
Comments (achievements against targets): Revised target was achieved and surpassed.					

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Number of primary teachers receiving accelerated C certificate	Number	0.00	560.00	345.00	356.00
		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022	30-Jun-2023	30-Jun-2023
Comments (achievements against targets): Revised target achieved and surpassed.					



Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Number of school principals awarded certification	Number	0.00	1,300.00	850.00	876.00
		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022	30-Jun-2023	09-Jan-2023
<p>Comments (achievements against targets): Revised target achieved and surpassed.</p>					

Component: Improving school management, accountability and systems monitoring

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Percentage of SQA reports completed for public schools in targeted counties	Percentage	0.00	75.00	75.00	79.00
		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022	30-Jun-2023	09-Jan-2023
<p>Comments (achievements against targets):</p>					

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Establishment of national school quality standards	Yes/No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022	30-Jun-2023	30-Jun-2023



Comments (achievements against targets):

Component: Project Management and sector program support and coordination

Indicator Name	Unit of Measure	Baseline	Original Target	Formally Revised Target	Actual Achieved at Completion
Number of annual project progress reports publicly accessible	Number	0.00	4.00	5.00	5.00
		29-Dec-2017	30-Jun-2022	29-Sep-2023	11-Oct-2023

Comments (achievements against targets):



B. KEY OUTPUTS BY COMPONENT

Objective/Outcome 1: Improve equitable access to early childhood education (ECE) in targeted disadvantaged counties	
Outcome Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct project beneficiaries (percentage female) 2. Net Enrollment Rate (NER) in ECE in targeted counties
Intermediate Results Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Percentage of eligible public schools receiving ECE grants in targeted counties 2. Number of trained ECE caregivers placed in community-based ECE centers in the targeted counties
Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 1)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 62,720 (48 percent female) project beneficiaries reached through project activities 2. Fifty-five (55) percent NER attained in ECE in targeted counties. 3. Ninety-two (92) percent of eligible public schools received ECE grants in targeted counties 4. Sixty (60) percent of trained ECE caregivers placed in community-based ECE centers in the targeted counties
Objective/Outcome 2: Improve teacher quality in ECE and primary education in targeted disadvantaged counties	
Outcome Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share of qualified ECE and primary education teachers in the targeted counties
Intermediate Results Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of teachers receiving ECE C certificate 2. Number of primary teachers receiving accelerated C certificate 3. Number of school principals awarded certification
Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sixty-nine (69) percent as share of total number of qualified ECE and primary education teachers in the targeted counties 2. 380 teachers received the ECE C certificate 3. 356 primary teachers received the accelerated C certificate 4. 876 school principals awarded certification



Objective/Outcome 3: Strengthen National School Accountability Systems	
Outcome Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Percentage of public schools receiving feedback from an SQA visit annually in targeted counties
Intermediate Results Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Percentage of SQA reports completed for public schools in targeted counties2. Establishment of national school quality standards3. Number of annual project progress reports publicly accessible
Key Outputs by Component (linked to the achievement of the Objective/Outcome 3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fifty-five (55) percent of public schools received feedback from an SQA visit annually in targeted counties4. Seventy-nine (79) percent of SQA reports completed for public schools in targeted counties2. National school quality standards established3. 5 annual project progress reports publicly accessible



ANNEX 2. BANK LENDING AND IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT/SUPERVISION

A. TASK TEAM MEMBERS

Name	Role
Preparation	
Peter Darvas	Task Team Leader(s)
Komana Rejoice Lubinda	Procurement Specialist(s)
MacDonald Nyazvigo	Financial Management Specialist
Saidu Dani Goje	Financial Management Specialist
Richard Neil Jones	Team Member
Kirsty Djalinda McLaren	Team Member
Sekou Abou Kamara	Social Specialist
Sekou Abou Kamara	Environmental Specialist
Yijun Shen	Team Member
Kabira Namit	Team Member
Yinan Zhang	Team Member
Gloria Malia Mahama	Social Specialist
David A. Balwanz	Team Member
Lemu Ella Makain	Team Member
Janet Omobolanle Adebo	Team Member
Oni Lusk-Stover	Team Member
George Ferreira Da Silva	Team Member
Laura S. McDonald	Team Member
Nightingale Rukuba-Ngaiza	Team Member



Supervision/ICR

Binta Beatrice Massaquoi, Alonso Sanchez	Task Team Leader(s)
Oyewole Oluyemi Afuye, Baba Imoru Abdulai, Anas Abba Kyari	Procurement Specialist(s)
Sydney Augustus Olorunfe Godwin	Financial Management Specialist
Oni Lusk-Stover	Team Member
Lemu Ella Makain	Team Member
Zoe Quoi Diggs Duncan	Procurement Team
Beageorge Matue Cooper	Social Specialist
Richard Neil Jones	Team Member
Akhilesh Ranjan	Social Specialist
Victoria Ewura Ekuwa Wood	Team Member
Ines Melissa Emma Attoua ETTY	Team Member
Aloysius K Kotee	Environmental Specialist
Daniel Tamba Sellu	Procurement Team
Edith Ruguru Mwenda	Counsel
Laura S. McDonald	Team Member



B. STAFF TIME AND COST

Stage of Project Cycle	Staff Time and Cost	
	No. of staff weeks	US\$ (including travel and consultant costs)
Preparation		
FY17	0	74,345.00
FY18	22.136	478,339.01
FY19	8.861	246,003.10
FY20	8.868	67,211.94
FY21	0	- 614.17
FY23	0	9,295.59
Total	39.87	874,580.47
Supervision/ICR		
FY18	7.160	85,629.64
FY19	29.073	452,336.09
FY20	30.718	449,412.37
FY21	41.253	253,187.79
FY22	19.571	241,828.06
FY23	4.675	34,928.37
FY24	3.114	7,926.73
Total	135.56	1,525,249.05

**ANNEX 3. PROJECT COST BY COMPONENT**

Components	Amount at Approval (US\$M)	Actual at Project Closing (US\$M)	Percentage of Approval (US\$M)
Improving the Quality and Access to Early Childhood Education in Targeted Counties	2.90	2.90	100.00
Supporting Teacher Training and Certification in Targeted Counties	1.60	1.40	62.50
Improving school management, accountability, and systems monitoring	2.00	1.45	72.50
Achieving Better Learning through Improved Equity, Efficiency, and Accountability	3.57	2.73 ⁷³	76.47
Project Management and Sector Program Support and Coordination	1.00	1.65	165.00
Total	11.07	10.13⁷⁴	95.12

⁷³ Reflects a cancellation of US\$444,000 and an undisbursed amount of US\$400,000 under PBC 3 as the GoL was not able to deliver a national assessment in grades 3 and 6 in English and Maths before project closing.

⁷⁴ Includes the 150k for Grant Agent Supervision Fee. Total revised project amount for disbursement by the GoL was US\$10,476,000M yet US\$400,000 did not disburse as detailed in footnote above.



ANNEX 4. EFFICIENCY ANALYSIS

1. To assess the project efficiency in achieving its objectives, two types of analysis are conducted: (i) economic analysis and (ii) implementation efficiency analysis. Considering the findings from these analyses, the project is rated Substantial on efficiency.

A. Economic Analysis

2. The original economic analysis conducted during the Appraisal phase, which remained unchanged at the project restructuring, did not include a formal cost-benefit or return on investment analysis. Instead, the original analysis emphasized various avenues through which economic benefits could potentially materialize by drawing from international literature. The analysis highlighted evidence on the positive impact of access to high quality ECD programs targeting vulnerable groups on increased educational attainment and career achievement as well as reduced costs in remedial education, healthcare, and criminal justice (Heckman et al 2009; Rolnick and Grunewald 2007, Naudeau et al 2010). Other potential advantages for beneficiaries included increased work hours for parents due to increase in quality of and equitable access to ECE, and improved productivity, better health, and long-term life outcomes because of improvement in teaching and learning conditions at both Primary and ECE levels. In addition, the analysis highlighted factors such as prohibitive cost of ECE attendance for children from poor households, lack of access to ECE, and low learning levels at primary to further justify project interventions. The initial economic analysis also laid out the expected development impact of the project deriving from increased access to ECE, increased knowledge and skills of teachers and improved system monitoring and accountability through school managers.

3. By presenting justification for the channels mentioned above, which were partially supported with quantitative analysis, the initial economic analysis made the case for the project investments. The economic analysis conducted at the project ICR stage underscores a robust economic rationale for the investments undertaken within the project. When considering the benefits that may result from increased future earnings for beneficiaries, the cost-benefit analysis reveals a net present value (NPV) of US\$17.07 million and an internal rate of return (IRR) of 15 percent.

4. The economic analysis examines several channels through which the project benefits arise and assesses the economic gains that can arise from the project achievements in the long-run and undertakes a cost-benefit analysis of the project investments. There are also important individual and social gains from investing in education, many of which cannot be captured in this analysis because of lack of data availability. Some of the long-term positive externalities associated with project investments in increase in access to quality ECE as well as improved teaching and learning in primary schools include female empowerment, better health outcomes, lower rates of crime and violent episodes, and general improvement in quality of life.

5. Gains through improved internal efficiency: As discussed in the project Appraisal document, an important channel through which economic gains arise is through improved internal efficiency in the education system in Liberia. Improvement in quality of teaching and learning due to project interventions is expected to result in reductions in grade repetition or dropout, which is expected to contribute to cost reductions. However, we are not able to estimate the amount of cost savings because of lack of data.

Gains through increased income to beneficiaries due to improved access to quality ECE and improvement in teaching and learning practices at primary level:



6. The PDO statement for the project “(a) improve equitable access to early childhood education, teacher quality in early childhood education (ECE) and primary education in Targeted Disadvantaged Counties, and (b) strengthen National School Accountability Systems” and relevant activities under different project components suggest that there are at least three channels through which economic gains can arise in the long-run due to the project investments and achievement of PDO objectives.

- First, as a result of increased access to quality ECE due to attainment of objective 1 (To improve the quality of and equitable access to ECE), economic gains can arise through the linkage between access to ECE programs and improved educational attainment and improved labor market outcomes.
- Second, as a result of attainment of objective 2 (Support ECE teacher, primary teacher, and principal training and certification), economic gains can be realized from improvements in quality of teaching and learning in primary schools as a result of training provided to primary school teachers. The project also supported training of ECE teachers, impact of trained ECE teachers is likely captured by the first channel above which captures improvement in both access and quality of ECE.
- Third, as a result of attainment of objective 3 (Improve school management, accountability, systems, and project management), economic gains can arise from improvements in quality of teaching and learning in primary schools as a result of interventions aimed at improving school management, accountability and systems monitoring.

Cost-benefit analysis

7. In undertaking the cost-benefit analysis, the first step is assessing the potential impact of project interventions on beneficiaries through each of the channels listed above. We draw upon established literature to link impact of interventions associated with objectives 1, 2, and 3 with benefits in the form of labor productivity and wages once the beneficiaries enter the labor market.

- Through improvement in access to quality ECE (Objective 1): Bailey, Sun, and Timpe (2021) evaluate the long-run effects of Head Start program using data between 1965 and 1980 and show that the program led to an estimated 6.5 percent wage increase⁷⁵. Bailey, Sun, and Timpe (2021) also find that Head Start program generated a 0.65-year increase in schooling. Patrinos and Montenegro (2014) show that the returns to an additional year of schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa is 12.4 percent. Combining the estimated returns on schooling and the estimated impact of 0.65 years of increase in school attainment from the ECE (Head Start) program we get a return of 8.06 percent as a result of access to ECE program. We assume conservative estimate of 6.5 percent increase in wage earnings to calculate benefits of the ECE intervention.
- Through improvement in teaching and learning at primary level by trained teachers (Objective 2): Economic gains could be realized from improvements in quality of teaching and learning at primary level as a result of training provided to primary school teachers. The project also supported training of ECE teachers, however we only include the impact of training primary teaches as the impact of trained ECE teachers is captured through improvement in both access and quality of ECE in objective 1. To estimate increase in wage earning from teacher training component we assume that the program intervention will lead to a 1 standard deviation (SD) improvement in instructional quality. 1 SD increase in instructional quality is reasonable assumption given a low level of

⁷⁵ Head Start is an early childhood learning and development program for low-income households in the United States.



instructional quality in Liberia and qualitative assessment of teaching practices have shown significant improvement in teaching quality. We rely on estimates from the teacher-value added literature to link improvement in instructional quality and increase in wage earnings.

A vast literature establishes the significant role that teachers have in improving learning and the importance of the early years of education (Hanushek, Rivkin and Cain 2005; Kane and Staiger 2008; Chetty, Friedman and Rockoff 2014a; Araujo et al. 2016; Bruns and Luque 2014). Chetty, Friedman and Rockoff (2014b) studied the long-term effects of teachers in terms of value-added and student outcomes in adulthood and found that teachers who have an impact on the learning of their students also have an impact on important long-term outcomes such as increased educational attainment and earnings. A key approach to improving teaching quality is to develop and strengthen the skills of the existing teacher workforce (Yoon et al. 2007; Kraft, Blazar, and Hogan 2016). Component 2 of the project is designed to increase the quality of teaching and learning by providing in-service trainings and certifications to ECE and primary school teachers. Based on the estimates from the above teacher training literature, these teacher training programs should have an impact on student achievement of 0.15 to 0.18 SDs for every 1 SD increase in instructional quality. Chetty et al. (2014a and 2014b) show that a one standard deviation improvement in teacher value added is associated to a 0.12 SD change in achievement, and a 1 percent increase in earnings. Assuming the ratio of gains between student achievement and earnings in instructional quality is the same as the one observed for teacher value-added, then a 1 SD change in instructional quality has an effect of 1.5 percent increase in earnings. This is a moderate estimate as compared to the estimates in Hanushek (2011) that compiles estimates from a variety of academic papers of the impacts that increases on student achievement have on earnings. The main results presented in this analysis for Liberia assumes only 60 percent of the impact from that estimated in the literature.

- Through improvement in school management, accountability, systems, and project management (objective 3): Economic gains could have arisen from improvements in quality of teaching and learning in primary schools as a result of interventions aimed at improving school management, accountability and systems monitoring. To estimate increase in wage earning from school management component we assume that the program intervention will lead to a 1 standard deviation (SD) improvement in school management quality. Bloom et. al (2015) find that a 1 SD increase in managerial index is associated with an increase in pupil outcomes of between 0.2 and 0.4 SDs. Similarly, Lemos et al (2021), using data from public schools in India find that a 1 SD higher people-management score is associated with 0.26 SD better teacher practices and 0.34 SD higher student value added. Chetty et al. (2014a and 2014b) and associated literature we know that 1 SD improvement in teaching practices is associated with 1.5% increase in wage earnings, which translates into 0.39 percent increase in wage earnings for 0.26 SD increase teaching practice. The main results presented in this analysis for Liberia assumes only 60 percent of the impact from that estimated in the literature.

Beneficiaries:

8. To estimate the number of beneficiaries, we rely on project reported data on the number of beneficiaries as well as available data on student enrollment and number of teachers to estimate the number of student beneficiaries from interventions targeted at the teacher level. For each component, we estimate the number of beneficiaries of project interventions who would not have benefited from such intervention in the absence of the project implementation.

9. For component 1, we have an estimated 58,754 beneficiary children who would not have access to quality ECE



program without project intervention. This number is obtained through project reporting. We assume average age of 6 years for beneficiaries of ECE program and assume that they will be active in the labor market for 40 years between ages 20 and 60 years. We assume that 70 percent of these beneficiary children will end up with a gainful employment and thus higher wages as a result of participating in quality ECE program supported by the project.

10. For component 2, 356 teachers (3.4%) out of the total of 10,594 public primary teachers participated in in-service primary C Certificate teacher training. Given the total public primary enrollment of 278,093 we assume that 9345 (3.4%) students benefit from these trained teachers during the teaching career of the trained teachers. We estimate that 186,900 unique students will benefit from improvement in quality of teaching and learning throughout the 20 years career of the teachers trained through project investments.

11. For component 3, 876 principals (35%) out of the total principals from 2,494 public primary teachers participated in principal training in school management and quality improvement. 97,678 students benefit from having trained school principals. We estimate that a total of 406,992 students will benefit from having trained school principals throughout the career of these trained principals.

Results of the Cost-Benefit Analysis:

12. Results of the cost-benefit analysis show promising returns to investment made under the project. For the main model, the present discounted value of benefits (monetary benefits deriving from the increase in access to quality ECE (objective 1), improvement in quality of teaching and learning through teacher training (objective 2) as well as improvement in school management and accountability through training of school principals (objective 3)) from full project implementation is estimated at \$26.55 million, while the present discounted value of costs is \$10.48 million. This results in a positive net present value (NPV) of \$17.07 million and an internal rate of return (IRR) of 15 percent. Overall, the benefit-cost ratio shows \$2.53 in returns accrued for every dollar invested in the project.

13. Table A4.1 below presents the results of the cost-benefit analysis. Column 1 presents the quantifiable benefits we estimate discounted at the rate of 10 percent and reflect the projected wage increase that results in improvement in access to quality ECE under component 1 and improvement in quality of teaching and learning in components 2 and 3. Column 2 presents the committed costs of the project discounted at a rate of 10. Column 3 presents the benefit cost ratio, and as it can be observed, the ratios for each component are between 2.23 and 6.39 with an overall ratio of 2.53 for the project. Column 4 presents the net present value of the overall project as well as for each of the components. The overall net present value of the project is 17.07 million USD. Lastly, column 5 presents internal rate of return for the overall project and each of the components. The overall IRR of the project is 15 percent.

14. The analysis shows that each of the components considered for the cost benefit analysis yields positive net present value and internal rate of return of at least 15 percent. Component 1, which accrues economic benefits through improvement in access to quality ECE, yields a net present value of \$12.78 million and an IRR of 21 percent. Component 2, which accrues economic benefits through improvement in quality of teaching and learning through teacher training, yield an NPV of \$6.05 million and IRR of 19%. Component 3, which accrues economic benefits through improvement in school management and accountability through training of school principals, yields an NPV of \$2.63 million and IRR of 15%. The Benefits to cost ratio for components 1, 2, and 3 are 6.39, 5.23, and 2.23, respectively. The overall, estimates, which accounts for all the project costs, but does not include unquantifiable benefits, yields an NPV of \$17.07 million and IRR of 15%. Therefore, although some benefits are not fully quantifiable, the NPV from the quantifiable benefits is larger than the NPV costs, and this strongly supports the efficiency of investments undertaken under the project. Based on this,

the overall efficiency rating for the project is Substantial.

15. The analysis was performed under the following assumptions: (i) 20 years of service for trained teachers; (ii) 70 percent participation rate in gainful employment; (iii) a 40-60% percent of the total impact estimated by the literature, (iv) gainful employment between ages 20 and 60, which means that the returns to the investments made are observed in the long term and are not tangible in the short run. The estimated internal rate of return of 15 percent makes the project an attractive investment.

Table A4.1: Summary of cost-benefit analysis findings by components

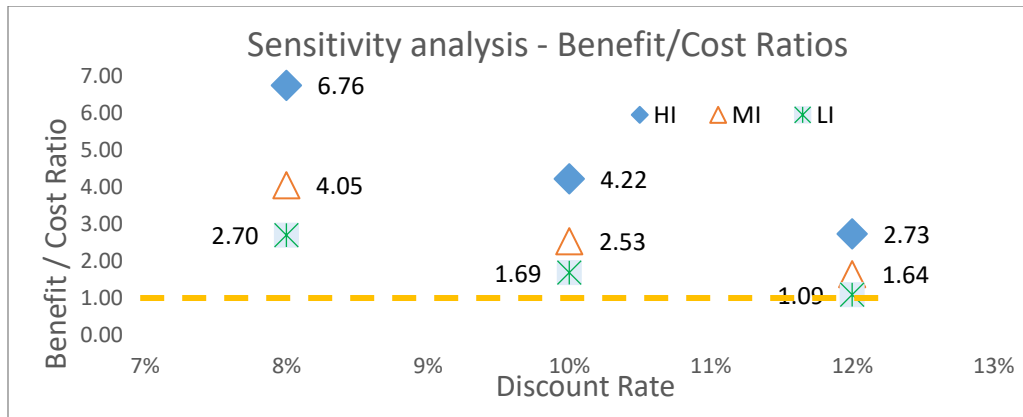
	Present Value of Benefits (Millions, US\$)	Present Value of Costs (Millions, US\$)	Benefit/Cost Ratio	Net Present Value (NPV) (Millions, US\$)	IRR
Component 1	\$14.9	\$2.33	6.39	\$12.78	21%
Component 2	\$7.32	\$1.40	5.23	\$6.05	19%
component 3	\$4.28	\$1.92	2.23	\$2.63	15%
Overall	\$26.55	\$10.48	2.53	\$17.07	15%

Sensitivity Analysis:

16. The economic analysis using a discount rate of 10 percent for the benefits yields an overall cost-benefits ratio of 2.53 and net present value of 17.1 million USD. The analysis also considers a number of scenarios to check the sensitiveness of the estimated results on the choice of discount rate and the use of the impact estimates from the literature. We conducted sensitivity analysis by testing scenarios with different discount rates of 8%, 10% and 12% and differing levels of impact of the project interventions. The benefit-cost ratios are above 1 for all the scenarios examined. The High Impact (HI) scenarios, attributes the project the full benefits according to the estimations of existing literature. For instance, in these scenarios, we used the 6.5 percent wage increase assessed by Bailey, Sun, and Timpe (2021) for impact of access to ECE (Head Start) program, 1.5 percent increase on wages resulting from a 1 SD change on instructional quality resulting from teacher training intervention based on our estimations relying on Araujo, et al (2016) and Chetty et al (2014b) and 0.39% increase on wages resulting from a 1 SD change on school management based on Lemos et al (2021) and the above estimates. By comparison, the Medium Impact (MI) scenarios assumed a more modest impact from that estimated in the literature (60% of the impact for each variable), and in the Low Impact (LI) scenarios, we reduced all our parameters even further and assumed a 40% impact of the estimated variables. The yellow dotted line reflects the 1:1 benefit cost ratio to show graphically that all our estimates, even with low impact scenarios, produce positive net present value. This reveals that the project remains favorable even under a lower-bounds scenario. Here the benefit-cost ratio is 1.09, generating approximately \$1.09 cents per dollar invested. Under an upper-bounds scenario, returns could reach as high as \$6.76 for every dollar invested. We have reported the medium impact scenario for the main analysis.



Figure A4.1: Sensitivity Analysis



B. Implementation Efficiency Analysis:

17. In addition to the Economic analysis, the efficiency analysis discusses gains through improvement in internal efficiency through both design and implementation aspects of the project.

18. Efficiency in project design. Amidst the challenges of low levels of human capital, budget constraints and low effectiveness and efficiency of public spending on education, the individual components of the G2B project are particularly efficiency enhancing in generating value for money. They are rooted in global evidence on cost-effective interventions to increase access and learning and were carefully tailored to sector diagnostics and the local context. Strategic alignment of project components fostering complementarity within and across project components is efficiency enhancing and ensuring long-term value for money. The primary teacher in-service and ECE in-service trainings were strongly linked. They shared similar modalities and same geographical targeting as the ECE component. Further, principal training on instructional leadership and mentoring teachers was targeted at the same schools, complementing effectiveness of teacher training and ECE components. This implies cost savings as well as synergies in building foundational skills by improving the quality of teaching and access in the most disadvantaged counties.

19. Investments targeting systemic change enhance the value for money of education spending in the long run. The project included a number of such interventions like payroll clean up, removal of ghost teachers to free up space for fiscal spending, higher salaries for trained teachers contributing to better working conditions and incentivizing teachers to stay in remote locations which are most underserved; project investments in low stakes learning assessment and in resuming the school census are critical to sector diagnostics, informing policy design to increase learning and access in most cost-effective ways and measuring progress over time.

20. Efficiency in project implementation. Despite the delay in project implementation due to several factors including the COVID-19 pandemic, the fiscal situation in Liberia and work disruptions at the MoE due to power and internet outages, the project was fully and efficiently implemented after the restructuring. The project restructuring included the following adjustments: extend the closing date by 12 months, include minor changes in components and reallocate funds across components. Cost saving of US\$570,000 were realized under the ECE component due to lower than anticipated costs and efficiency gains. Due to the increased unit costs of training (due to inflation and rising fuel costs) and limited capacity to deliver training, the target number of teachers and principals trained were reduced that led to cost savings. Under the



restructuring, the cost savings of US\$697,000 from components 1 (ECE), 2 and 3 (teacher and principal training) were reallocated to cover the cost of project management and M&E activities. Given the cost savings under component 1 due to efficiency gains, delays in implementation of training and increase in training costs (both of which seem largely due to external factors), the reallocation seems to be efficiency enhancing.

21. The project also used the government system that expedited implementation of subgrants and helped reduce transaction costs and ensure demand-based purchases of items at a school level funded by subgrants. Important lessons have been learnt that will help improve efficiency of implementation of future education projects in Liberia. Decentralizing support services through a subgrant scheme for targeting a vulnerable student population can expedite implementation and ensure ownership at a school level; however, efforts need to be made to account for logistical challenges in obtaining grants and increased unit costs due to inflation.

22. The overall efficiency of the Project is rated SUBSTANTIAL. This rating is based on the Project's economic efficiency as suggested by the estimated internal rate of return as well as efficiency aspects of project design and gains in efficiency through successful implementation of different aspects of the project—community-based ECE model, larger system-reform type of investments (such as learning assessment; annual school census; payroll clean up), and relatively efficient mitigation of implementation bottlenecks.



ANNEX 5. BORROWER COMMENTS

Government of Liberia comments prepared by the Ministry of Education received on December 20, 2023:

Page Ref.	Comments/Proposed Changes
#2	<p>-Probably this (loan) is a Bank terminology, but my understanding is that the project budget was a grant. The report consistently references loan which is unclear to me.</p> <p>-Suggested phrase: Cancellation of a part of the variable financing</p>
#20, para 42	<p>-For the second cohort of training, 481 principals were certificated, 171 primary teachers were certificated, and 196 ECE teachers were certificated.</p>
#21, para 47	<p>-It should be noted that the 2019 JES was deemed successful based on the achievement of 3 out of 5 assessment criteria.</p>
#22, para 52	<p>-We would like to follow up with the report author after the formal submission to GPE to understand more about how the cost-benefit analysis was done. The results are promising and we appreciate the narrative in Annex 4.</p>
#31, para 88	<p>The revised project budget (\$10,476,000 m) should stated instead of the original grant amount so that the disbursed amount aligns with the rate (96.2) indicated</p>
General	<p>-It would be good to make provision for the implementing agency to assess the performance of the GA in a future report.</p> <p>-I appreciate the way the ToC was organized into a single table and presented. This is a lesson learned for future project design.</p> <p>-The report may list members of the PDT as in the case of the Bank team as key implementors of the project.</p> <p>-Overall, the quality of the report is great. Moreover, it corroborates with the government implementation completion report in many areas.</p>



ANNEX 6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Documents

Aide Memoires

- Aide Memoire for Implementation Support Mission (July 30 – August 17, 2018)
- Aide Memoire for Implementation Support Mission (November 30 – December 7, 2020)
- Aide Memoire for Implementation Support Mission (May 24-28, 2021)
- Aide Memoire for Implementation Support Mission (May 2-4, 2022)
- Aide Memoire for Implementation Support Mission (April 24-25, 2023)

Implementation Status and Results Reports

- ISR #1 (October 3, 2018)
- ISR #2 (January 17, 2020)
- ISR #3 (June 28, 2022)

Project Documents

- World Bank. 2018. Project Appraisal Document on a Global Partnership for Education Grant
- World Bank. 2018. Poverty and Equity Data Portal. <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/LBR>
- United Nations Development Program. 2016. Human Development Report.

Restructurings

- Project Restructuring Paper (May 27, 2022)

Reports

Project Reports

- Global Partnership for Education. 2019. Liberia Getting to Best in Education Project P162089 Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant Progress Report.
- Global Partnership for Education. 2022. Mission of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Secretariat to Liberia Mission Summary Report.
- Institute of Education & Research: University of Dhaka, 2022. Formative and Summative Assessment and Remedial Learning at Primary Level.
- Liberian Educational Action for Development (LEAD). 2021. Final Report.
- Ministry of Education. 2023. Education Statistic Report 2021-2022.
- Ministry of Education. 2023. ECE School Grant Compliance, Monitoring and Focus Group Discussion Report.
- Ministry of Education. 2023. Final Monitoring Report Getting to Best in Education.
- UNICEF, 2022. Develop Integrated Remote Learning Content and Disseminate to Prevent Learning Loss: Final



Report.

- WE CARE. 2022. Final Narrative Report. SQA School Visit Follow-Up Progress Report.
- Zorzor Rural Teacher Training Institute. 2021. Zorzor Rural Teacher Training Institute: 2nd Residential Training Report.
- Webbo Rural Teacher Training Institute. 2022. Webbo Rural Teacher Training Institute: 2nd Residential Training Report.

Strategies

- Ministry of Education. 2016. Getting to Best in Education Sector Plan 2017–2021.
- Ministry of Education. 2016. Education Sector Analysis of 2016.
- Ministry of Education. 2022. Education Sector Analysis of 2022.
- Ministry of Education. 2022. Education Sector Plan 2022/23-2026/27.
- Ministry of Education. 2011. The Liberian Education Reform Act of 2011, section 4.4.1.
- Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs Government of Liberia, 2013. The Agenda for Transformation. Liberia
- World Bank. 2018. County Partnership Framework for the Republic of Liberia for the Period FY19-FY24
- World Bank Group, 2013. *Liberia - Country partnership strategy for the period FY2013-2017: chair summary*, World Bank Group. United States of America. Retrieved from <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1519431/liberia-country-partnership-strategy-for-the-period-fy2013-2017/2199582/> on 28 Sep 2023. CID: 20.500.12592/gbp2h3.

Academic Sources

Articles

- Emmanuel, Bruce. 2021. "Education System in Liberia". Center for West African Studies of UESTC.
- Kalama, Alphanso G. 2022. "Education Ministry Improves on Handling School Leadership, Management." *New Public Trust*.
- Kalama, Alphanso G. 2021. Why Did Scores of Teachers, Education Administrators Boycott Education Min. Workshop?". *New Public Trust*.
- Aito, Mika. 2022. "Four Things to Know on How Liberia Is Reforming Its Economy Amid COVID 19." *International Monetary Fund*.
- World Bank. 2018. World Development Report, Learning to Realize Education's Promise. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2018>.
- World Bank. 2021. "Nearly 350 Million Children Lack Quality Childcare in the World." <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/earlychildhooddevelopment#2>.



References

- Araujo, M. Caridad, Pedro Carneiro, Yyannú Cruz-Aguayo, and Norbert Schady. "Teacher Quality and Learning Outcomes in Kindergarten." *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 131, no. 3 (August 1, 2016): 1415–53. doi:10.1093/qje/qjw016.
- Baum, Donny, Jacobus Cilliers, David Jeffrey, Gloria Olisenukwu, Rachel Outhred, and Yvonne Capehart Weah. "Evaluation of a Pilot Programme to Promote Child-centered Early Childhood Education and Reduce Over-age Enrollment in Liberia." *Oxford Policy Management*, (December 2021).
- Bailey, Martha J., Shuqiao Sun, and Brenden Timpe. "Prep School for poor kids: The long-run impacts of Head Start on Human capital and economic self-sufficiency." *American Economic Review* 111.12 (2021): 3963-4001.
- Bloom, N., Lemos, R., Sadun, R., & Van Reenen, J. (2015). Does management matter in schools? *The Economic Journal*, 125(584), 647-674.
- Bruns, Barbara, and Javier Luque. *Great Teachers: How to Raise Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean*. World Bank Publications, 2014. doi:10.1016/j.jdeveco.2006.07.004
- Chetty, Raj, John N. Friedman, and Jonah E. Rockoff. "Measuring the Impacts of Teachers I: Evaluating Bias in Teacher Value-Added Estimates." *American Economic Review* 104, no. 9 (September 2014a): 2593–2632. doi:10.1257/aer.104.9.2593.
- . "Measuring the Impacts of Teachers II: Teacher Value-Added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood." *American Economic Review* 104, no. 9 (September 2014b): 2633–79. doi:10.1257/aer.104.9.2633.
- Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel. "Cost-effective Approaches to Improve Global Learning." GEEAP, (May 2023).
- Hanushek, Eric A. "The Economic Value of Higher Teacher Quality." *Economics of Education Review* 30, no. 3 (June 2011): 466–79. doi:10.1016/j.econedurev.2010.12.006.
- Heckman, J. J., S. H. Moon, R. Pinto, P. A. Savalyev, and A. Yavitz. 2009. "The Rate of Return to the High/Scope Perry Preschool Program." Working Paper 200936, Geary Institute, University College Dublin, Dublin. <http://www.ucd.ie/geary/static/publications/workingpapers/gearywp200936.pdf>.
- IDinsight. "FasterReading Impact Evaluation: Endline Report for Overage ECE Student Learning Outcomes following an Accelerated Learning Program." IDinsight, (September 2022).
- Kraft, M. A., D. Blazar, and D. Hogan. "The Effect of Teacher Coaching on Instruction and Achievement: A Meta-Analysis of the Causal Evidence." Brown University Working Paper, November 2016.
- Lemos, R., Muralidharan, K., & Scur, D. (2021). Personnel management and school productivity: Evidence from India (No. w28336). National Bureau of Economic Research.
- Luminos. "Second Change Liberia Endline Evaluation Report." Luminos, (October 2019).



- Montenegro, Claudio E., and Harry A. Patrinos. "Comparable Estimates of Returns to Schooling around the World." World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, no. 7020 (2014). http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2491933.
- Naudeau, Sophie, Naoko Kataoka, Alexandria Valerio, Michelle Neuman, and Leslie Elder. 2010 "Investing in Young Children: An ECD Guide for Policy Dialogue and Project Preparation." World Bank, Washington, DC.
- Republic of Liberia. "National Learning Assessment System Pilot Report: Liberia." Government of Liberia, (June 2021).
- Republic of Liberia. "Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant Completion Report." Republic of Liberia: Ministry of Education, (June 2023).
- Rivkin, Steven G., Eric A. Hanushek, and John F. Kain. "Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement." *Econometrica* 73, no. 2 (2005): 417–458. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0262.2005.00584.x.
- Rolnick, A. J., and R. Grunewald. 2007. "The Economics of Early Childhood Development as Seen by Two Fed Economists." *Community Investments* 19 (2): 13–14, 30.
- USAID. "Read Liberia Activity: Kindergarten Impact Evaluation: Endline Report." USAID Liberia, (June 2021).
- Yoon, Kwang Suk, Teresa Duncan, Silvia Wen-Yu Lee, Beth Scarloss, and Kathy L. Shapley. "Reviewing the Evidence on How Teacher Professional Development Affects Student Achievement. Issues & Answers. REL 2007-No. 033." Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest (NJ1), 2007. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED498548>