

MAKING A LASTING IMPACT The Quality Learning Project Sustainability Framework (A Case Study)

Creative Associates International | May 2015



About the Author

Semere Solomon, a Senior Associate at Creative Associates International since 2003, has more than 30 years of experience in education and civil society programs, with an emphasis on education policy and systems development. He has been involved in different capacities in seven USAID-supported education projects (Nigeria, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan). He currently oversees Creative's education programs in Nigeria, Pakistan and Zambia.

Semere's experience in systems development includes more than seven years of successfully directing the formulation of education policy, human resource development, teacher training, research, planning and Education Management Information Systems as a Director General of Planning and Development in the Ministry of Education in his native Eritrea. He has also served as a Senior Education Planner for UNESCO-Iraq and the United Nations Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq, where he led educational assessments, data collection/syntheses, and multi-sector policy formulation for vulnerable families.

Semere has a Graduate Diploma in Educational Planning and Administration from the UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning in France, and a master's in Sustainable Development and Diplomacy from EUCLID University's School of Business and Economics and School of Diplomacy and International Affairs. He is a native speaker of Tigrigna, fluent in English, and has working knowledge of French, Italian, Amharic and Arabic. Semere is also the recipient of Creative's Senior Employee of the Year award in 2009. Two of the projects he managed in Nigeria received "Project of the Year" awards in 2007 and 2013, respectively.

SemereS@creativedc.com

Photos by David Snyder Photography

Creative Associates International provides outstanding, on-the-ground development services and forges partnerships to deliver sustainable solutions to global challenges. Founded in 1977, Creative's experts focus on education, economic growth, youth, workforce development, governance and elections, among other key areas. Today, Creative has a staff of more than 1,100 people around the world who are committed to working with officials, non-governmental organizations and community members to realize the positive change they seek.

Creative Associates International 5301 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 700 Washington, D.C. 20015 202.966.5804 www.CreativeAssociatesInternational.com

Creative Associates International® is a registered trademark. All content in this publication is copyright® and cannot be reproduced without prior written permission.

Table of Contents

Acronyms	
Abstract	4
Background	
Defining Sustainability	
Sustainability in the Context of the Usaid-Funded Quality Learning Project (QLP)	12
A. Generating Demand	
B. Developing the Policy Framework	
C. Building Human Capacity	
D. Institutional Arrangements (Capacity, Roles and Responsibilities)	
E. Conducting Outreach and Advocacy	16
F. Promoting Strategic Collaboration	16
G. Accountability (External and Internal Monitoring)	
Key Challenges and Risks to Sustainability	
Conclusions	
Annex	
Tajikistan: QIp Products Approved by Related Education Sector Agencies	
Kyrgyzstan: List of Approved Qlp-Supported Materials by August 5, 2011	
End Notes	23
Works Cited	



Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CAR	Central Asian Republic
EFWG	Education Financing Working Group
EU	European Union
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ITTI	In-Service Teacher Training Institute
JASU	Jalalabad State University
KAE	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
KTSU	Kurgon Teppe State University
KG	Kyrgyzstan
LGP	Local Government Partners
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOES	Ministry of Education and Science

- MOF Ministry of Finance
- NGO Non-Governmental Organization
- OSU Osh State University
- PCF Per Capita Financing
- PTTI Pre-service Teacher Training Institute
- PTA Parent Teacher Association
- QLP Quality Learning Project
- RayOO Rayon Education Department
- RMTC Republican Methodology and Teaching Centre (Tajikistan)
- RTTI Republican In-Service Teacher Training Institute
- RITTI Regional Information Technology Training Institutes
- SIR Sub-Intermediate Result
- TAE Tajik Academy of Education
- TJ Tajikistan
- TM Turkmenistan
- TWG Technical Working Group
- USAID United States Agency for International Development



Abstract

Creative Associates International recently implemented the Quality Learning Project, a five-year project (2007-2012) supported by the United States Agency for International Development aimed at expanding access to quality primary and secondary education in the three Central Asian Republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. This project focused on critical factors that can impact education quality, such as teacher support, management and leadership, and school budget reforms. Interventions addressed training needs, material development and-where necessary-policy support. The interventions were coordinated at different levels to support better teacher delivery, thereby enhancing student learning performance.

More specifically, the Quality Learning Project provided technical support to teacher training institutes to incorporate child-centered pedagogy into their curricula, including the use of formative assessment techniques and the identification of supplementary classroom materials needed to ensure improved student outcomes. It succeeded in building the capacity of pre-service and in-service teacher training systems to help students develop higher-order thinking skills such as application, synthesis, critical thinking and problem solving-all crucial skills for preparing students to compete in emerging market-driven economies and to fulfill roles as active citizens in a participatory democracy. The project also supported education financing reforms by providing technical assistance to per capita financing of education in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

This paper examines sustainability as a primary focus in Creative Associates International's design and implementation of the Quality Learning Project in the three Central Asian Republics. Following a brief background of the region's educational systems, the paper provides a set of definitions of sustainability as perceived by a number of actors in the development arena. It then discusses some important attributes of sustainability (sustainability factors) and how these manifest in real-world project settings in general and the Quality Learning Project experience in particular. In conclusion, the paper highlights some lessons learned and challenges encountered during implementation. This paper focuses primarily on the sustainability of Creative's programs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Education systems in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan struggled in the post-Soviet period. дониш чароги ақл аст.

Background

In the early 1990s, three ancient, predominantly Islamic cultures—Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan emerged after the fall of the Soviet Union as new countries. Together they form a large portion of Central Asia, a vast region that also includes Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

The post-Soviet period in the region has been tumultuous and uncertain. The collapse of the Soviet Union dealt shocks to the educational systems of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, leaving them with inadequate standards of education to prepare a generation of children for the 21st century's global economy. Despite registering impressive records in educational coverage at the basic and secondary school levels (Central Asia: Primary GER 98.57, Secondary GER

99.4), these three countries' education systems struggled over the last twenty-plus years to adjust to the economic and social realities of the new world and to advance systematic restructuring that would provide a strong foundation for students, as well as their own developing economies.

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are now in the midst of reforming their education systems, which are generally characterized by i) limited access to up-to-date teacher training, ii) the use of assessment methods that reward students for memorizing large volumes of facts, iii) overburdened national curricula that focus on factual knowledge rather than applied skills, and iv) school finance mechanisms that lack incentives for schools to spend efficiently and effectively.

The United States Agency for International Development is a key player in supporting these reforms and, in collaboration with other international organizations, provided significant support for teacher training, curriculum, student assessment and education financing reforms. This support has led to pilot projects like the Quality Learning Project (and other preceding projects) in the three Central Asian Republics that move away from the tradition of rote learning and memorization and instead incorporate student-centered learning approaches that develop critical thinking and analytical skills. Ensuring sustainability is critical to these reform processes, and it was with this goal in mind that the Quality Learning Project was implemented.

Teachers are encouraged to use innovative approaches to engage and inspire students.

nar.

Defining Sustainability

Designing projects that provide long-lasting benefits has been a primary concern of all development partners. Hence, project architects often make conscious efforts to ensure the continuity of their interventions once projects come to an end. However, despite much goodwill and sincere intentions, sustainability remains generally an elusive goal. Much has to do with how some projects are designed from the outset. Some do not address sustainability concerns during project identification and design stages. If there is one, the approach applied might not be the right one or is missing the relevant tools to be instituted. In some cases. sufficient stakeholder commitment is lacking, or cultural or societal considerations are not fully addressed in the sustainability package. Furthermore, projects aimed at bringing about social transformation require a substantial amount of time-along with

strategic interventions and smart investments—but often this time factor is not seriously considered.

Sustainability can be described as the process of ensuring that project activities or products are continued by providing the required support to the host government, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and communities. This support usually takes the form of policy and institutional aid to ensure all the necessarv resources (financial and capacity) are available within host governments or other beneficiaries to enable them to sustain project activities without external assistance. In other words, activities and services initially supported by a development partner are incorporated into the host country's budget and processes and ultimately integrated into their developmental priorities and strategies.

The point is that projects

should not be one-off affairs: Whether they have a short life span or long, are small or large, or are oriented toward service delivery or system strengthening (or a combination of both), projects should be designed to respond to the community's needs over the longer term and impact inhabitants' lives for the better. How to go about it is the issue.

Sustainability necessitates using various strategies to promote and maintain factors that will help ensure continuity of project activities after projects end. Sustainability is a dynamic process-a strategy can change depending on its phase in the project cycle, the lengths taken to bring about the changes, and the desired goals. The process presupposes that crucial program elements that produced encouraging results are preserved and promoted, and even scaled up to positively af-



fect more lives. It necessitates that partners (development partners, host-government counterparts, communities, civic society organizations, etc.) work on an equal footing to develop a shared vision, goals, strategies and modalities that can translate into action or concrete deliverables.

Sustainability requires accompanying support at different phases of the project cycle. This support includes the enabling environment, the human and financial resource requirements, the institutional mandates to support the service, the technical skills to carry out the tasks, and the political will and public demand to ensure these activities are funded and monitored. In "Project Sustainability Manual: How to Incorporate Sustainability into the Project Cycle ... ", Marcus D. Ingle maintains that it is during project identification and design that the importance of sustainability needs to be impressed, that making changes will not be easy once

the design has a particular orientation. He contends that a key element of this orientation is developing a strategic perspective.

Strategic planning with a much broader stakeholder group can help integrate project goals and activities into community development initiatives and obtain buy-in from policymakers or legislators. The strategic plan, sometimes called exit strategy, addresses how the project will hand over leadership to the government or local community without jeopardizing its development goals and how it will ensure future progress after projects come to a draw. Exit strategies should also identify clear indicators to determine if key outcomes that demonstrate progress toward sustainability have been achieved. In sum, exit strategies are intended to create a conducive atmosphere for desired outcomes to materialize and be integrated into the systems.

A number of factors need to

"[Sustainability is] the continuation or maintenance of structures or initiatives created, or benefits of inputs distributed, beyond the lifetime of the project and is key to whether a project will achieve a wider and longer-term impact."

> -ActionContre la Faim (ACF) International Network (2007)

"[Sustainability is the process of] ensuring that the institutions supported through projects and the benefits realized are maintained and continue after the end of the project."

-The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Strategic Framework (2007-2010)

"[A service is sustainable when] it functions and is being used, is able to deliver an appropriate level of benefits, continues over a prolonged period of time, its management is institutionalized, its operation and maintenance, administrative, and replacement costs are covered at local level, and can be operated and maintained at local level with limited but feasible, external support."

–F. Brikké

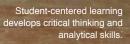
be considered if a project is to be sustained, many of which have been outlined by the International Finance Corporation. These assumptions include engaging in effective community consultations, building trust, managing expectations by clearly defining roles and responsibilities, developing appropriate capacity, mobilizing core competencies, setting measurable goals and

reporting on progress, forging strategic partnerships, and planning for sustainability. Implicit in the spelling out of these assumptions is that there must be a longer-term view beyond the traditional life of the projectxi—that projects should be designed in such a way that impacts are felt long after they come to a draw and that empower communities to take over.xii



The Quality Learning Project identified opportunities to enhance local governments' and communities' understanding and ownership of the project.





T

ICS DPC

11 | The Quality Learning Project Sustainability Framework (A Case Study)

Sustainability in the Context of the USAID-Funded Quality Learning Project (QLP)

The Quality Learning Project worked on all fronts to develop a sustainability framework from the very outset, which tenets comprised i) reinforcing existing systems and local education institutions; ii) engaging ministries, academies of education and teacher training institution experts in every project initiative through technical working groups; iii) strengthening local partners' capacity to sustain interventions at the community and school levels; and iv) working with local government partners to identify and mitigate policy constraints and bottlenecks that impede project interventions. The framework factored in certain sustainability variables in particular, such as demand, policy framework, capacity, institutional arrangements, outreach and advocacy, strategic collaborations and accountability. Each factor is individually addressed below:

a. Generating demand

Any program is more likely to succeed if local partners can generate the required demand for implementation. Demand creates the requisite favorable political environment for a program intervention to be continued and be integrated into an existing system. Thus, at the early stage of implementation, the Quality Learning Project exercised tremendous efforts to obtain buy-in and generate the desired demand from government counterparts. Key to generating this demand was effective community consultation (as advocated by the International Finance Corporation). This consultation involved a series of meetings aimed at introducing the project to local

counterparts, signing of the Memoranda of Understanding at different levels (at the Ministry of Education and Academies of Education level), setting up technical working groups (defining the composition and terms of reference), and engaging experts from the ministries and academies in the prioritization, conceptualization, design and implementation of the project interventions. By familiarizing local government partners with project goals and clarifying modalities of implementation, rules of engagement, and roles and responsibilities of each party, consultation fostered a team approach and an atmosphere of trust and confidence from the very beginning. Consultation helped create a shared vision, a strategy towards pursuing that vision, and the tools towards achieving it - which ultimately increased the program's chance for success.

This process, albeit slow, resulted not only in generating demand for substantive collaboration between the Quality Learning Project and local government partners, it also created an enabling environment for the project to expedite reforms already underway in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. These reform elements included the use of formative assessment in the teaching learning process; development and application of curriculum standards and learning outcomes for different subjects; introduction of pedagogical leadership, mentoring, and monitoring; and implementation of per capita financing in schools.

In addition, the technical working groups set up in collaboration with host-government ministries proved to be effective mechanisms for enhancing professional dialogue and promoting partnerships between influential professionals and policy champions of education reform, further galvanizing the reform process.

b. Developing the policy framework

The Quality Learning Project was designed to support host governments' existing education-sector roadmaps and to strengthen the countries' capacity to deliver basic education services by addressing the management, sustainability and oversight inadequacies of the education system. The project's success lay in its ability to influence ongoing education reforms responsive to the scientific, technological and skilled-labor needs of the 21st century. By working within the existing system, the project catalyzed the educational reform processes in each country and helped to obtain buy-in by high-level policymaking bodies for its innovations to become critical pedagogical elements of the education system and everyday classroom practices.

The Quality Learning Project leveraged the host governments' existing centralized systems and hierarchy to advance the reform agenda. Regulations and directives, once enacted, are strictly enforced in the Central Asian Republics—rendering them powerful tools for sustaining project activities. As such, the project made sure that certain procedural aspects (regulations, acts, etc.) were put in place to support implementation. These incisive, proactive measures enabled the Quality Learning Project to influence the systems to deliver



better services through broadening their horizon and enhancing their capacity.

In Kyrgyzstan, there is now an enabling environment providing policy support to those interventions proven to influence education reform. The Kyrgyz Academy of Education and regional in-service teacher training institutes have endorsed the modified training modules, standards and curricula. Training manuals and courses were accredited by the academies of education, and regulations were enacted to ensure accountability. Also, the approved government decrees helped scale up per capita financing to all oblasts.

Furthermore, the Quality Learning Project introduced formative assessment approaches in the teaching-learning process to enable teachers to assess student learning outcomes and adjust their teaching methods to promote greater learning achievement. In collaboration with host-government structures, it developed updated education standards in each country. These standards defined student learning objectives for each syllabus topic and ultimately established clear linkages between the standards, the curricula, and teachers' goals for classroom achievement. Furthermore, the project was instrumental in developing a range of supplementary

materials and teacher support materials that encourage and motivate teachers to use innovative approaches.

The new systems of labor remuneration with teacher incentives for quality work approved by the governments have boosted teachers' morale and will hopefully continue to impact teacher motivation and minimize attrition rate.

Over the life of the project, the Quality Learning Project was pivotal in shaping and disseminating the following government regulations that supported the implementation of project activities:

Tajikistan

- 1. Regulation #441 of Government of Tajikistan: "Transition of Schools of Kulob, Yovon, Khujand, Khorugh and Vahdat Districts to New Forms of Management and Financing" (dated Nov. 1, 2004)
- 2. Order #452 of KulobHukumat: "Transition of Kulob Schools to New Forms of Management and Financing" (dated Dec. 28, 2004)
- 3. Regulation #350 of Government of Tajikistan: "Transition of Schools of Tajikistan to New Forms of Management and Financing" (dated June 30, 2007)
- 4. Regulation #505 of Government of Tajikistan: "Adoption of Rules of Per Capita Financing in Schools of Tajikistan" (dated Oct. 1,2007)
- Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance's instruction on "Per Capita Financing" (dated Dec. 27, 2007)
- 6. Order #401 of Ministry of Education of Tajikistan: "Establishment of the Education Financing Working Group" (dated April 7, 2008)
- 7. Order #701 of VakhshHukumat: "Transition of Vakhsh Schools to New Forms of Management and Financing" (dated Oct. 11, 2009)
- 8. Order #606 of VakhshHukumat: "Restructuring of Five Schools in Vakhsh District" (dated Oct. 29, 2010)
- 9. Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance's new instruction on "Per Capita Financing" (dated Nov. 29, 2010)

Kyrgyzstan

- 1. Regulations on mentoring of the in-service teacher training institutes, Kyrgyz Academy of Education
- 2. Regulations on student practicum for Arabaev KSU's target departments, Academic Councils of Arabaev KSU
- 3. Regulations on student practicum for Osh State University's target departments, Academic Councils of Osh State University
- 4. New payment system guidance, Ministries of Education



"Building human capital enables host governments to improve organizational culture and ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability. It also boosts motivation, enhances staff morale and inspires change."

c. Building human capacity

Building the necessary human technical capital is also critical to sustainability. Projects need to provide highly targeted, capacity-building packages to ensure that the appropriate technical skills and knowledge required are at the disposal of the government, local NGOs and communities and are optimally used by host-country experts. Capacity building is multidimensional and can include technical assistance, training and mentoring, and information communication technology support to help process data for policy and decision-making applications. Building human capital enables host governments to improve organizational culture and ensure efficiency, transparency and accountability. It also

boosts motivation, enhances staff morale and inspires change. Moreover, it is also critical to furthering leadership, promoting participation and creating opportunities for innovation.

The Quality Learning Project took a "learning-by-doing" approach to capacity building to sustain project initiatives. Project players engaged local government partners' staff in every project activity in a manner that supported their leadership as they acquired and applied the know-how and tools to adapt project interventions to their specific situations and objectives; they also trained them on how to collect assessment data and to use this data to improve learner performance. The project strengthened local government partners' capacity at all levels to forge partnerships with communities to support schools, teachers and learners in the longer term. The Quality Learning Project and local government counterparts designed and reviewed annual activities together.

The project succeeded in ensuring local ownership by providing technical support to build the capacities of different government agencies and higher-learning institutions by creating a cadre of master trainers and material developers in each country. This initiative strengthened the technical and managerial capacity of school administrators, heads of methodological units, and Rayon Education Department specialists in pedagogical leadership, mentoring and monitoring. More specifically, the Quality Learning Project introduced in-service teacher training systems to

help teachers i) acquire and practice modern pedagogy that is focused on students' learning needs, ii) define student learning objectives, and iii) promote higher-order thinking skills among students. These interventions improved teachers' and education specialists' performance overall and were eventually adopted by and integrated into host governments' systems by the respective Academies of Education in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The Quality Learning Project also helped to create a platform for enhanced collaboration among pedagogical leaders and teacher training specialists at five pre-service teacher training institutes in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan by advocating the use of information communication technology for sharing professional development ex-



pertise and expanding access to vital resources.

d. Institutional arrangements (capacity, roles and responsibilities)

Institutional arrangements that empower project beneficiaries to assume roles and responsibilities to roll out project activities are also important. Whether existing or newly created (by law) as a result of program interventions, clearly defined structures that are context specific and appropriate to host-government ministries, agencies or NGOs are critical to sustaining project activities. Institutional arrangements enable host governments to incorporate project activities into their short-, medium- and long-term sector strategies, allocate resources for their implementation, and devise tools to monitor them. It also ensures integration of project activities into the mainstream. Institutionalization can also be instrumental in retaining the

elements of project activities responsible for positive outcomes.

In the context of the Quality Learning Project, local government partners and project players worked jointly to articulate project objectives and expectations to support structures and systems that would ultimately sustain these objectives. Together they planned for government replication and rollout addressing possible extended costs, responding to local needs, and making certain that

targets are realistic and sustainable. Moreover, they collaborated to design a feasible exit strategy-replete with specific baselines, milestones and timelines-to track the progress in attaining sustainability. There were a number of opportunities the Quality Learning Project drew on to ensure that priority interventions are sustained after project closeout. That the project could lean on these resources was due to its history of working within the education systems and being supportive



and responsive to national policies and priorities from the outset.

Materials, formative assessment guides, curricula and educational standards developed by the project in cooperation with the ministries of education, the academies of education and the teacher training institutes were fully endorsed by the respective government agencies and have been enthusiastically implemented into the system. Handbooks and manuals were disseminated across the country and are now easily accessible to school teachers and in-service teacher training institute instructors, most of whom are currently using these materials in their regular courses. The modified courses helped improve the instructors' classroom management skills, making the lessons more practical and interesting-as well as easier. (Please refer to the Annex for a list of guidelines, toolkits, training handbooks and manuals, curriculum standards and syllabus guides that were approved during the life of the project.)

Pedagogical leadership, mentoring and monitoring themes were also incorporated into in-service regular courses for school administrations at the Kyrgyz Academy of Education and in-service teacher training institutes. Better relationships among all education institutions (e.g., schools, in-service teacher training institutes, Rayon Education Departments, Kyrgyz Academy of Education) enabled the project interventions to access schools. The project also succeeded in establishing linkages between universities and schools.

e. Conducting outreach and advocacy

The Quality Learning Project's outreach plan was instrumental in identifying

possibilities for enhancing local governments' and communities' understanding and ownership of the project. Outreach activities highlighted project-related important conferences, certificate award ceremonies, professional journal articles, and local and national newspaper stories to promote project awareness among teachers and other education professionals, as well as the general public; venues such as television, radio and the internet were also utilized. In addition, teachers and education practitioners were encouraged to write articles on lesson plans, mentoring, the advantages of formative assessment and other exemplary teaching practices; other topics included per capita financing and financial management trainings, labor remuneration and school budget hearings, and state budget transparency.

f. Promoting strategic collaboration

Collaboration among development partners can contribute to capacity building, greater public awareness, additional funding, and even encourage changes in public policy. Smart, well-coordinated efforts by development partners are more likely to attract the attention of policymakers and civic society – who in turn can influence policy – and thus should be a heavily weighted as a consideration when planning for sustainability.

There were several donorfunded interventions in the area of education in addition to the Quality Learning Project. To prevent competition and duplicated efforts, our project made active use of the coordination forum set up earlier by the World Bank's Fast Track Initiative. The Coordination Forum included representatives from Fast Track Initiative, Quality Learning Project, Aga Khan Foundation, Soros Foundation, United Nations Children's Fund. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, Asian Development Bank, European Union and others. This forum created an enabling environment for donors to exchange information, define their strategies to support the governments, and to express their concerns (policy-related and sometimes operational) to the government in unison when deemed necessary.

g. Accountability (external and internal monitoring)

To ensure accountability, the Quality Learning Project incorporated tools and mechanisms that could hold host government agencies answerable to certain standards, norms and targets. Joint monitoring was a continuous process and enabled the project to measure progress against realistic indicators.



Key Challenges and Risks to Sustainability

The Quality Learning Project faces many constraints and challenges ahead on its path toward sustainability, including the following:

• Political instability, ongoing government restructuring, bureaucratic red tape, lack of personnel motivation and deteriorating economic situation

• Limited coordination among donors and government institutions; limited coordination at different administration levels (central, district, and school levels); and limited district capacity to implement changes

• Frequent staff turnover (due to core personnel's transfer to other institutions and across different levels) often results in project activities being interrupted and losing momentum, thus draining the technical skills and human resource capital built during the life of the project.

• Ministries' lack of strategy to manage change—and their organizational culture's

deep-seated reluctance toward it—affect the willingness of counterpart agencies to adjust their practices and implement reforms.

• The technical working group structures set up to help coordinate the projects' initiatives are at risk of being dismantled if the ministries deem them unnecessary.

• Donor withdrawal of funds and government delay in releasing funds to implement activities (frequently cited by counterparts as one of the most frustrating roadblocks) can affect the pace of the changes introduced by the Quality Learning Project.

• Limited utilization of external actors and mechanisms for accountability, monitoring and implementation, such as PTAs and other community structures

The Quality Learning Project succeeded in ensuring local ownership by creating a cadre of master trainers and material developers in each country.

Conclusions

The Quality Learning Project influenced the three Central Asian Republics' ongoing education reforms aimed at responding to 21st scientific, technological and skilled-labor needs. Key to this success was enacting a strategy closely aligned with the precepts of USAID Forward, a developmental concept that promotes local ownership and leadership. However, for social transformation of this scale to take place, a degree of outside influence in terms of technical assistance is crucial. As such, the Quality Learning Project positioned

itself as a provider of technical support to the host governments to help them achieve their developmental goals. Project players assumed the role of troubleshooters, presenting evidence-based contemporary perspectives on education for real-world development for better teacher-delivery services and improved student learning.

Premised on USAID Forward's belief that internal dynamics dictate the nature and pace of social transformation, the education reform process required from the outset that

the Quality Learning Project and local government partners jointly set the tone for the life of the project, frame a shared vision (and articulate a strategy to actualize that vision), agree on modalities for institutional collaboration, clearly delineate roles and responsibilities, and establish a sound, cordial working relationship in the spirit of partnership. As invested stakeholders and fellow pioneers of a difficult venture, both partners shared ups and downs but never lost, for one second, their sense of purpose on their path towards sustainability.

Annex

Tajikistan: QLP Products Approved by Related Education Sector Agencies

	Title	Subject	Format	Language	Approved by	Further Approval
1	Teacher In-Service Training Program for Primary Teachers	Primary	Syllabi	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Ministry of Education Collegiums Nov, 2011
2	Teacher In-Service Training Program for Secondary Math Teachers	Math	Syllabi	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Ministry of Education Collegiums Nov, 2011
3	Teacher In-Service Training Program for Secondary Tajik Language and Literature Teachers	Tajik Language and Literature	Syllabi	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Ministry of Education Collegiums Nov, 2011
4	School Principal In-Service Training Program	Management and Pedagogical Leadership	Syllabi	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Ministry of Education Collegiums Nov, 2011
5	Mentor's Handbook for Math Specialists	Math	Handbook	Tajik	*RMTC Scientific Board in 2011	Approval not required
6	Mentor's Handbook for Primary Specialists	Primary	Handbook	Tajik	*RMTC Scientific Board in 2011	Approval not required
7	Mentor's Handbook for Tajik Language Specialists	Tajik Language and Literature	Handbook	Tajik	*RMTC Scientific Board in 2011	Approval not required
8	Tajik Language Teacher Training Module – General Pedagogy	Tajik Language and Literature	Training Module	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Approval not required
9	Tajik Language Teacher Training Module – Subject Methodology	Tajik Language and Literature	Training Module	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Approval not required
10	Math Teacher Training Module – General Pedagogy	Math	Training Module	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Approval not required
11	Math Teacher Training Module – Subject Methodology	Math	Training Module	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Approval not required
12	Teaching Tajik Language in Primary Grades	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Approval not required
13	Teaching Math in Primary Grades	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Approval not required
14	Teaching Arts and Crafts in Primary Grades	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Approval not required
15	Teaching Music and Movement in Primary Grades	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Approval not required
16	Teaching Nature in Primary Grades	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Approval not required

*EFWG—Education Financing Working Group; *RMTC—Republican Methodology and Teaching Center (Tajikistan); *RTTI—Republican In-Service Teacher Training Institute

	Title	Subject	Format	Language	Approved by	Further Approval
17	Developing Primary Teachers' Pedagogical Skills	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Approval not required
18	Education Policy in the RT	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Approval not required
19	Primary Education Standards	Primary	Standards	Tajik	Ministry of Education Collegiums in 2009	Approval not required
20	Finance Management for School Principals and Trainer's Guide	Financial Management	Training Module	Tajik	*RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	Ministry of Education Collegiums
21	Practical Accounting for School Accountants and Trainer's Guide	Accounting	Training Module	Tajik	*EFWG in 2011	Ministry of Education Collegiums
22	"Involvement of PTAs to Increase Transparency and Accountability for School Resources" and Trainer's Guide	Increased Community Involvement in School Management	Training Module	Tajik	*EFWG in 2011	Ministry of Education Collegiums
23	Practical Manual for PTA Establishment	PTA Establishment and Strengthening	Manual	Tajik	Approval not required	Approval not required
24	The Automated Expenditure Tracking System (graphic module)	Database System		Tajik	*EFWG in 2011	Approval not required

Kyrgyzstan: List of Approved QLP-Supported Materials by August 5, 2011

Title

1	Work programs from three specialties developed in Arabaev KSU*	Academic Councils of Arabaev KSU*
2	Work programs from three specialties developed in OSU*	Academic Councils of OSU*
3	Work programs from three specialties developed in JASU*	Academic Councils of JASU*
4	Toolkit on Pedagogical Leadership, Mentoring, and Monitoring	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
5	Training Module on Pedagogical Leadership, Mentoring, and Monitoring	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
6	Handbook on Formative Assessment in Target Subjects; Kyrgyz language	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
7	Handbook on Formative Assessment in Target Subjects; Mathematics	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
8	Handbook on Formative Assessment in Target Subjects; Primary Grades	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
9	General Guide on Formative Assessment	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
10	Syllabus Guides on Mathematics; 1 – 4 Grades	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
11	Syllabus Guides on Mathematics; 5 – 9 Grades	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
12	Syllabus Guides on Kyrgyz language; 1 – 4 Grades	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
13	Syllabus Guides on Kyrgyz language; 5 – 9 Grades	Kyrgyz Academy of Education
14	Syllabus Guide on Motherland; 1 – 4 Grades	Kyrgyz Academy of Education

* KSU - Kyrgyz State University; OSU - Osh State University; JASU - Jalalabad State University

Approved by

End Notes

- **i** Open Society Institute Education Support Program, "Education Development in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan: Challenges and Ways Forward," 2002.
- ii The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics, http://data. uis.unesco.org/index.as px?queryid=142&lang=en. Accessed Oct. 6, 2014.
- Tango International, "Sustainability of Rural Development Projects: Best Practices and Lessons Learned by the International Fund for Agricultural Development in Asia," 2009: 8.
- F. Brikké, "Operation and Maintenance of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Systems: A Training

Package for Managers and Planners," IRC International Water & Sanitation Centre, World Health Organization, Water Supply & Collaborative Council, and Operation & Maintenance Network, 2000.

- Action Contre la Faim International Network, "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Policy with Additional Modifications," 2007: 6.
- Marcus D. Ingle, "Project Sustainability Manual: How to Incorporate Sustainability onto the Project Cycle...," Executive Leadership Institute, Mark O. Hatfield School of Government: Portland State University, Portland, Oregon; July 2005 (Revised).
- **VII** http://sshs.promotepre vent.org/implementing/

leading-systems-change/ strategic-planning

- International Fund for Agricultural Development, "Sustainability of Rural Development Projects: Best Practices and Lessons Learned by the International Fund for Agricultural Development in Asia (Philippines Case Study)," Tango International, 2000: 13. Accessed Dec. 15, 2011.
- **X** Ibid., 14.
- X International Finance Corporation, "Investing in People: Sustaining Communities Through Improved Business Practice: A Community Development Resource Guide for Companies," December 2000: VII, VIII http://www.ifc.org/ ifcext/enviro.nsf/Attach-

mentsByTitle/p_comdev/\$-FILE/CommunityGuide.pdf Accessed Dec. 11, 2011.

- X Marcus D. Ingle, "Project Sustainability Manual: How to Incorporate Sustainability onto the Project Cycle...," Executive Leadership Institute, Mark O. Hatfield School of Government: Portland State University, Portland, Oregon; July 2005 (Revised): 2-1.
- XII International Finance Corporation, "Investing in People: Sustaining Communities Through Improved Business Practice: A Community Development Resource Guide for Companies," December 2000: VII, VIII http://www.ifc.org/ ifcext/enviro.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/p_comdev/\$-FILE/CommunityGuide.pdf Accessed Dec. 11, 2011.

Works Cited

- 1. Action Contre la Faim International Network, "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Policy with Additional Modifications," accessed Dec. 14, 2011.
- Brikké, F, "Operation and Maintenance of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Systems: A Training Package for Managers and Planners," IRC International Water & Sanitation Centre, World Health Organization, Water Supply & Collaborative Council, Operation & Maintenance Network, 2000; accessed Dec. 16, 2011.
- 3. Creative Associates International, "Nigeria Northern Education Initiative Outreach Plan," Creative Associates International, April 2010.

- Creative Associates International, "Quality Learning Project: Final Report," October 2012.
- 5. http://sshs.promoteprevent.org/implementing/ leading-systems-change/ strategic-planning Accessed Dec. 14, 2011.
- 6. http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/ enviro.nsf/Attachments-ByTitle/p_comdev/\$FILE/ CommunityGuide.pdf Accessed Dec. 14, 2011.
- Ingle, Marcus D., "Project Sustainability Manual: How to Incorporate Sustainability onto the Project Cycle...," Executive Leadership Institute, Mark O. Hatfield School of Government: Portland State University, Portland, Oregon; July 2005 (Revised); accessed Dec. 13, 2011.
- International Finance Corporation, "Investing in People: Sustaining Communities Through Improved Business Practice: A Community Development Resource Guide for Companies," December 2000; accessed Dec. 11, 2011.
- 9. International Fund for Agricultural Development, "Sustainability of Rural Development Projects: Best Practices and Lessons Learned by the International Fund for Agricultural Development in Asia (Philippines Case Study)," Tango International, 2000; accessed Dec. 15, 2011.
- **10.** Tango International, "Sustainability of Rural Development Projects: Best Practices and Lessons

Learned by the International Fund for Agricultural Development in Asia," Tango International, 2009; accessed Dec. 14, 2011.

 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics, http://data.uis. unesco.org/index.aspx-?queryid=142&lang=en Accessed Oct. 6, 2014.

