



Final Report of the Special Project Facilitator

Project Number: 37175
Loan Number: 2053
October 2011

Tajikistan: Education Sector Reform Project
(Complaint Received: 5 August 2010)

Asian Development Bank

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
CWFM	–	Financial Sector, Public Management and Trade Division of the Central and West Asia Department
DED	–	District Education Department
MOE	–	Ministry of Education
MOF	–	Ministry of Finance
NGO	–	nongovernment organization
OSPF	–	Office of the Special Project Facilitator
PTA	–	parent-teacher association
RAR	–	Review and Assessment Report
TJRM	–	Tajikistan Resident Mission

The original English version of this report was translated by Office of the Special Project Facilitator (OSPF) consultants into Russian and Tajik. In case of discrepancy, the English version will prevail.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Education Sector Reform Project¹ aimed to improve the quality, efficiency, and equity of primary and general secondary education. The Office of the Special Project Facilitator (OSPF) received a complaint concerning the project on 5 August 2010 and acknowledged receipt the following day. The complainants raised concerns about the quality of rehabilitation works for schools and the building of the District Education Department in Roshtkala district. OSPF found the complaint eligible on 1 September 2010, and in October 2010, conducted a review and assessment of it.

The stakeholders included the complainants; several government agencies; the school directors and Parent-Teacher Association heads; the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Financial Sector, Public Management and Trade Division of the Central and West Asia Department; and ADB's Tajikistan Resident Mission, as well as three nongovernment organizations. The issues were the scope of rehabilitation works in five schools and the District Education Department building in Roshtkala, the budget allocation and responsibilities for rehabilitation works, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, and monitoring and information about the rehabilitation. The government formed a working group comprising all stakeholders, which visited the project area and agreed on required rehabilitation works and sources of funding. The review and assessment took this agreement into account and recommended a course of action comprising facilitated meetings, reporting on the progress of works, and a final joint monitoring and evaluation. The rehabilitation works were carried out as agreed, and a final visit and consultation in October 2011 confirmed that stakeholders were satisfied with the outcome.

¹ ADB. 2003. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan to the Republic of Tajikistan for the Education Sector Reform Project*. Manila. Loan 2053-TAJ.

I. BACKGROUND

A. The Project

1. The Education Sector Reform Project¹ aimed to improve the quality, efficiency, and equity of primary and general secondary education. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a loan of \$7.5 million on 17 December 2003. The President's Office was the executing agency, and the Ministry of Education was the implementing agency. ADB's Financial Sector, Public Management and Trade Division (CWFMT) of the Central and West Asia Department was the loan administering division. One of the project outputs was the rehabilitation of schools in five districts including Roshtkala District in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast,² where six schools were rehabilitated. The project has been completed, and a project completion report was issued on 29 December 2010.

B. The Complaint

2. On 5 August 2010, the Office of the Special Project Facilitator (OSPF) received a complaint from Roshtkala District. The complaint was in English, signed by a number of persons, and accompanied by handwritten notes in Russian. The signatories requested confidentiality and nominated three nongovernment organizations (NGOs) as their representatives. OSPF acknowledged receipt and registered the complaint on 6 August 2010. The complainants raised concerns about the quality of the rehabilitation works for schools and the building of the District Education Department (DED) in Roshtkala.

C. Determination of Eligibility

3. OSPF held discussions on the complaint with ADB staff and fielded an eligibility mission to Tajikistan from 23 to 29 August 2010. The mission met staff of ADB's Tajikistan Resident Mission (TJRM), concerned officials, and NGO representatives, and visited several of the schools in Roshtkala District. The mission found that the complaint met OSPF's eligibility requirements and declared it eligible on 1 September 2010.

II. REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

A. Objectives and Methodology

4. The objectives of the review and assessment were to explore the history of the complaint, confirm the key stakeholders, identify the main issues of the complaint, explore the stakeholders' readiness for joint problem solving, and recommend a course of action. The review and assessment included (i) a desk-based review of project documents; (ii) interviews with concerned ADB staff, the project director, the chief engineer, the district engineer from Roshtkala, and a monitoring engineer; (iii) a meeting with the local NGO, Kalam; (iv) a field-based assessment consisting of site visits; (v) individual interviews and small group discussions with the school directors, the parent-teacher association (PTA) heads of the six schools, heads of school trade unions, the DED head, and the deputy chairman of the district *hukumat*³ in Roshtkala; and (vi) two high-level meetings convened at the central level. The review and

¹ ADB. 2003. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan to the Republic of Tajikistan for the Education Sector Reform Project*. Manila. Loan 2053-TAJ.

² An *oblast* is the administrative unit below the national level in Tajikistan and corresponds to a region.

³ District administration responsible, among other things, for the management of education.

assessment also took into consideration the results of a preliminary assessment mission fielded by TJRM and including an independent engineer. A working group comprising members of the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Finance (MOF), regional and district officials, school directors and PTA heads, members of the Project Implementation Unit, former contractors, TJRM, a representative from Kalam, and the OSPF consultant as observer went to the project area immediately after OSPF's review and assessment mission. The working group assessed in detail each school and the DED building, and allocated funding responsibilities to contractors (where the problem was the fault of the contractors), to the school budget and PTA-generated funds (where the problem stemmed from poor maintenance and climatic conditions), and to the state and regional budgets (for items not within the original scope of the project). The results of this assessment were taken into consideration in the Review and Assessment Report (RAR). Thus, a process to resolve the issues had already been initiated, including identification of funding sources, and the RAR was intended to facilitate the smooth implementation of the actions agreed on by the stakeholders.

B. Identification of Stakeholders

5. The RAR identified the stakeholders as the complainants; several government agencies (including MOF, MOE, the Office of the President, and district officials); the school directors and PTA heads; and, from ADB, CWFM and TJRM. The RAR also considered three NGOs to be stakeholders, including a regional NGO; an NGO based in the capital city; and Kalam, which is based in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast regional capital of Khorog.

C. Findings and Recommendations

6. The RAR identified the issues as (i) the scope of rehabilitation works in five schools⁴ and the DED building in Roshtkala, (ii) the budget allocation and responsibilities for rehabilitation works, (iii) participation (roles and responsibilities) of stakeholders in planning and implementing rehabilitation works, (iv) monitoring of rehabilitation works, and (v) regular information about rehabilitation works. The scope and budget allocations for the rehabilitation works had already been agreed upon, but further agreement was needed on stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, monitoring, and information. The RAR recommended that the collaborative and consultative process that had started with the working group's joint fact-finding mission be continued in good faith, as it provided an opportunity for all key stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogue and problem solving around the issues raised in the complaint. The RAR further recommended that independent facilitators, specifically the OSPF consultant and OSPF staff, be use for a final consultation once all rehabilitation works had been completed.

D. Proposed Course of Action

7. The proposed course of action was based on the agreements that had already been signed and merely supplemented them, taking into consideration the concerns and suggestions made by stakeholders and not yet covered in agreements. The RAR proposed (i) facilitated meetings to discuss and agree on participatory monitoring of the rehabilitation work, information exchange, and fund allocations; (ii) reporting on the progress of works in November 2010 and January 2011; and (iii) in September 2011, a final joint monitoring and evaluation visit to all the schools, interviews with school directors and PTAs, and a feedback consultation.

⁴ The complaint mentioned six schools, but the review and assessment confirmed that one school had no outstanding issues related to the previous rehabilitation work.

8. OSPF was to monitor the implementation of the individual agreements and the conclusion as part of the course of action, and facilitate the proposed meetings. OSPF was also to organize and facilitate the joint monitoring and feedback or any other meeting proposed by the parties.

III. COURSE OF ACTION

9. OSPF provided the RAR to the complainants, the government, CWF, and TJRM, and OSPF's consultant visited Roshtkala in November 2011 to explain the report and assist the complainants in understanding it with the help of a local expert, who instructed them in a methodology called "Critical Thinking." On this basis, the complainants discussed the report thoroughly, decided to proceed with the consultation, and provided their comments on the RAR. The agreement reached by the working group, which was mentioned in the RAR, formed the basis for repairing the schools and the DED building. Repairs funded by the contractors, by the schools themselves, and by additional allocations from MOF channeled through the region and district to the schools were undertaken as agreed upon, with necessary suspension of works during the harsh winter months. The working group (including TJRM; OSPF's consultant; and the local NGO, Kalam), which had visited the area in October 2010 to assess the needs and agree on works to be done, went there again in June 2011 and finally in October 2011. The Special Project Facilitator participated in the final joint monitoring and evaluation mission in October 2011 and visited the five schools, interviewed the school directors and PTA heads, and took part in the feedback consultation in Roshtkala. An independent engineer also participated in the final evaluation and consultation. All parties confirmed that the agreed upon repair works had been completed satisfactorily, and the school directors and PTA heads were appreciative of OSPF's facilitation efforts and the additional funds provided by MOF.

10. Several important outcomes have resulted from this complaint. The school repairs have been accomplished, and a safe and conducive environment has been created for the education of children in the district. A number of classrooms that had been out of service due to poor construction and water damage are now being actively used. Double-paned windows have been added to conserve heat and permit teaching during the winter, electrical wiring has been upgraded, and foundations have been protected from water infiltration, among other improvements. There have also been benefits beyond these physical outcomes. ADB and the concerned government ministries have developed a mutual understanding and working relationship with regard to safeguard issues and dealing with complaints. Respect has developed on all sides for the views of affected people, and people in the project area have gained confidence in their ability to speak out and raise issues openly when things are not going well. The stakeholders have come to appreciate the constructive role that a local NGO can play and the positive outcomes that can be achieved through cooperative efforts.