



Validation Report

Reference Number: PVR-223
Project Number: 32236
Loan Number: 1840
December 2012

Nepal: Teacher Education Project

Independent Evaluation Department

Asian Development Bank

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	–	Asian Development Bank
MOES	–	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCED	–	National Center for Education Development
PCR	–	project completion report
PTTC	–	primary teacher training center
TA	–	technical assistance
TMIS	–	teacher management information system

NOTES

- (i) In this report, “\$” refers to US dollars.

Key Words

asian development bank, basic education, independent evaluation department, lessons, nepal, performance evaluation, teacher education

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PROJECT BASIC DATA

Project Number:	32236	PCR Circulation Date:	Sep 2011	
Loan Number:	1840	PCR Validation Date:	Dec 2012	
Project Name:	Teacher Education Project			
Country:	Nepal		Approved (\$ million)	Actual (\$ million)
Sector:	Education	Total Project Costs:	25.9	22.7
ADB Financing: (\$ million)	ADF: 19.6	Loan:	19.6	15.5
	OCR:	Borrower:	6.3	7.0
		Beneficiaries:		
		Others:		
Cofinancier:	Danish International Development Agency	Total Cofinancing:		0.2
Approval Date:	24 Sep 2001	Effectiveness Date:	28 Apr 2002	9 May 2002
Signing Date:	28 Jan 2002	Completion Date:	31 Dec 2007	31 Dec 2009
		Closing Date:	30 Jun 2008	9 Dec 2009
Project Officers:	S. Brar J. Sarvi A. Inagaki K. R. Panday	Location:	ADB headquarters ADB headquarters ADB headquarters Nepal Resident Mission	
Validator:	B. Prakash, Consultant	Peer Reviewer:	R. Sabirova, Evaluation Specialist, IED1	
Quality Reviewer:	C. Kim, Principal Evaluation Specialist, IED2	Director:	W. Kolkma, Director, IED1	

ADB = Asian Development Bank, ADF = Asian Development Fund, IED1/2 = Independent Evaluation Department (Division 1/2), OCR = ordinary capital resources, PCR = project completion report.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Rationale

1. The poor quality of teaching-learning in the classroom was one of the key reasons for the overall low efficiency of basic education in Nepal. This was manifested in low student achievements and high dropout and grade repetition rates. The entry-level qualifications for primary teachers were low. Motivation was low and absenteeism high. In addition to weak management capacity, poor teaching stemmed from a lack of emphasis on training of teachers. Except for a few with pre-service training, virtually the entire primary school teaching force was untrained. To improve the quality of primary school education, adequate institutional capacity was necessary for conducting and managing training programs, undertaking curriculum development, and developing teaching-learning materials. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been supporting teachers' education since the early 1990s. Under a previous project, ADB established some training infrastructure in the form of the National Center for Education Development (NCED) and set up nine primary teacher training centers (PTTCs). The Teacher Education Project aimed to build further on this, and establish an effective and sustainable teacher education system for primary education in Nepal.

B. Expected Impact

2. The project aimed to improve the quality of primary education by (i) building capacity for teacher education, including policy making, planning, and managing training programs; (ii) enhancing the professional skills of teachers by developing a training curriculum, creating training materials, and providing training of trainers; and (iii) improving access to basic education for girls and other disadvantaged groups by increasing recruitment of female teachers and supporting fellowships for pre-service training.

C. Objectives or Expected Outcomes

3. The specific objectives were to build institutional capacity for a teacher training system that encompasses pre-service, in-service, and recurrent training of primary school teachers; and improve access of girls and other disadvantaged groups to basic education. To indicate improvements in quality of primary education, the pupil drop-out rate was expected to decline from 13% to 12.6% over the life of project. Likewise, the repetition rate was expected to be reduced from 24.5% to 23.3% during the project.¹

D. Components and Outputs

4. The project had four components:

5. **Building the institutional capacity.** The NCED, PTTCs, and Distance Education Center were tasked to train primary school teachers by developing staff skills and improving facilities. Reforms included administrative reorganization, staff development, and the establishment of a teacher management information system (TMIS). To provide policy support, the project envisaged setting up the Training Management and Coordination Committee. The project also involved private providers in teacher training.

6. **Developing teacher education curriculum and teaching-learning materials.** Focusing on pedagogical skills, the project aimed to develop (i) teacher training curricula; (ii) trainers' guides; (iii) manuals and other resource materials for trainers; and (iv) a material preparation kit. The emphasis was to be on activity-based teacher training that is linked to teaching practice in schools. The 10-month training program developed by ADB technical assistance² was divided into 4 equal parts of 2.5 months each. The first part comprised basic training; the second and third parts were to be delivered together through distance education modality; and the final step, designed as an interactive package, allotted 40% of the time to practice teaching.

7. **Providing training to teachers, educational administrators, and managers.** The project was to provide a basic training package (part 1) to 32,000 teachers, while parts 2 and 3 were to be provided to 41,000 teachers, and part 4 to 34,000 teachers. Another group of 9,700 teachers who had been earlier trained at resource centers for 150 hours were to be given additional training of 180 hours each to bring them at par with those completing part 1. Similarly, 3,200 teachers who had earlier gone through part 2 were to be provided part 3 training through

¹ ADB. 2001. *Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors: Proposed Loan to the Kingdom of Nepal for the Teacher Education Project*. Manila. See para. 88. However, elsewhere in the RRP (para. 92) these figures are slightly different. Dropout rate is expected to decline from 13% to 12.5%, while the repetition rate is expected to decline from 24.5% to 23%. Similar discrepancies are found in the number of teachers in the country, or the number of trainees.

² ADB. 1999. *Technical Assistance to the Kingdom of Nepal for the Basic Education Project*. Manila.

distance education. About 4,300 older teachers (more than 50 years of age and 15 years of service) were to be provided a shortened version of the 2.5-month training. All training activities required 9 years to be completed, i.e., 3 years beyond the envisaged life of the project of six years. Mobile units were to be provided for training in the remote regions. Furthermore, 100 officials and 500 primary school principals were to be trained annually during the 6-year life of the project.

8. Educating teachers to better serve the needs of girls and other disadvantaged groups. The project sought to enhance access and improve the quality of education for females and other disadvantaged groups, aiming to increase their employment in the teaching force. In this context, it identified 12 districts of the country where the disadvantaged constituted as much as 65% of the population. The project sought preference for candidates from these disadvantaged groups to be hired as teachers in these areas.

E. Provision of Inputs

9. At appraisal, total project cost, inclusive of taxes, duties and other charges, was estimated at \$25.9 million equivalent, comprising a foreign exchange cost of \$7.2 million (28%) and a local currency cost of \$18.7 million equivalent (72%). A loan of \$19.6 million was approved for the project from ADB's Asian Development Fund. Provision of teacher training accounted for about two-thirds of the total project cost, with another one-fourth of the project cost going to institutional capacity building. The remaining 8.4% of the project cost was allocated to other activities.

F. Implementation Arrangements

10. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) was designated as the executing agency, and the NCED was identified as the implementing agency. The project was to be implemented by mainstreaming its activities within the administrative setup and regular functions of the NCED. The project was expected to be complementary to the ongoing broader support for basic education under the multi-donor supported Second Basic Primary Education Development Project. The project was designed for implementation under the general guidance of the Program Execution Board of the second primary education development project. In February 2002, an advisory technical assistance (TA) was provided to assist in project implementation.³ The TA sought to improve the knowledge and pedagogical skills of primary school teachers by building the capacity of teacher training institutions. TA implementation was completed by October 2003, which the completion report⁴ assessed as *successful*.

II. EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE AND RATINGS

A. Relevance of Design and Formulation

11. The project completion report (PCR)⁵ assessed the project *highly relevant*. It noted that at appraisal, the project was consistent with the government's development plans, especially the ninth five-year plan (1997–2002) and tenth five-year plan (2002–2007). Furthermore, the project continued to be relevant and was consistent with ADB's country operation strategy (1999–2002),⁶

³ ADB. 2002. *Technical Assistance to the Kingdom of Nepal for Capacity Building for Teacher Education*. Manila.

⁴ ADB. 2004. *Technical Assistance Completion Report: Capacity Building for Teacher Education Project in Nepal*. Manila.

⁵ ADB. 2011. *Completion Report: Teacher Education Project in Nepal*. Manila.

⁶ ADB. 2000. *Country Operation Strategy: Nepal, 1999–2002*. Manila.

which underscored the need for accelerating human resource development in Nepal. ADB's country strategy and program for Nepal (2005–2009)⁷ also supported improvements in education as the basis for generating more inclusive growth in the economy. The PCR noted that the project was adequately designed with the help of a project preparatory technical assistance.

12. The borrower's PCR mentions that a supply-driven teacher training modality, however, "was one of the constraining factors in terms of effective transfer of teaching skills into improving student learning and achievement processes." It also notes that project resources were adequate to undertake only a limited number of "follow-up activities" for trained teachers. While agreeing generally with the varying effectiveness of alternative training modalities (such as demand-driven training), the present validation considers that the project's approach was justified as virtually the entire primary school teaching force was untrained at appraisal. Only 156 teachers out of a total of 90,000 teachers had any pre-service training of 10-months duration. The PCR acknowledges that because of the project, 98% of the permanent teachers have been provided in-service training. The adequacy of "follow-up activities" is linked with the project design's interface with donor coordination. The project design envisaged a continued and an ongoing engagement with the second primary education development project. It was expected that the second primary education development project would continue to organize short-term training and refresher courses for primary school teachers. However, this was not provided in "an effective and coordinated manner."

13. This validation considers that the project design would have benefitted from different coordination arrangements with donors. The project was building further on earlier ADB projects. The project had its own distinct rationale and justification. Yet, the project design tied up implementation arrangements closely with the second primary education development project and left the Program Execution Board to oversee project implementation. The project was independent, and yet not independent of the second primary education development project. This was beneficial in some respects (such as ongoing support and oversight of consultants) but the project design also blurred its accountability. Consequently, it is difficult to attribute outputs and achievements exclusively to the project. The PCR notes that project "improvements reflect the consolidated effects of all interventions in the overall primary education program, including the project's contribution." More importantly, these implementation arrangements as designed led to delinking of the in-service training methodology from the objective of improving teaching-learning process in the classroom. As a result, the impact of the project's efforts could not be assessed fully. For the coordination limitations in design, the present validation downgrades the assessment of the project from *highly relevant* to *relevant*.⁸

B. Effectiveness in Achieving Project Outcomes

14. The PCR assessed the project *effective* in achieving project outcomes that included (i) capacity development across the NCED and other agencies responsible for developing quality teacher training programs, (ii) implementing teacher training programs for primary school teachers, and (iii) attracting more women and other disadvantaged groups in the teaching force through incentives and improved working conditions in the schools. The PCR notes that the professional capacity of the NCED and other agencies associated with public training of primary school teachers has increased. Physical facilities have been improved and additional staff positions have been created. More importantly, skills and knowledge levels for planning and

⁷ ADB. 2004. *Country Strategy and Program: Nepal, 2005–2009*. Manila.

⁸ While agreeing to the design limitations that led to blurring of project accountability, SARD does not agree that training of the private school teachers should have been part of the project design.

conducting training have improved substantially. Some programs including master trainers, and training of trainers were delivered under the project. Overall, more than 114,000 teachers have been trained, reaching about 89% of the project's target. Some training programs supported activities under the second primary education development project, and other associated activities.

15. The PCR noted that teachers were generally satisfied with the effectiveness of teacher training. The impression was that training had raised the standard of knowledge among teachers. It is indeed creditable that under a single project, nearly every teacher was trained, and that the project achieved this objective much ahead of its estimated 9-year cycle. Nevertheless, little is known about training's impact on the quality of teaching. Two benefit monitoring and evaluation reports⁹ mentioned in the PCR observed that there was not much evidence to suggest if teacher training had significantly improved the classroom teaching-learning process. It argued that the effectiveness of training was constrained as the project was confined only to grade-wise training and there was no provision for subject-wise training. However, pupils' dropout and repetition rates have decreased. Similarly, the proportion of students completing the primary school cycle has improved. The project successfully mobilized females and candidates from other disadvantaged groups and inducted them into pre-service training. This has promoted inclusive development and earned widespread approval from the stakeholders. This validation concurs with the PCR's assessment that achievement of project outcomes has been *effective*.

C. Efficiency of Resource Use in Achieving Outcome and Outputs

16. The PCR assessed as *efficient* the project's resource use in achieving outputs and outcomes. It cited the economic rate of return of 24.1% in its support. The project not only yielded more than 12% return, a cut-off in ADB for investments, but also improved on the earlier appraisal estimate of 21.9%. In this sense, the project met the efficiency criterion. In terms of the broader concept of resource efficiency, the project was implemented without major disruptions except for an extension of 1 year. However, it completed the 9-year training program in 7 years. There were no major outstanding compliance issues. The project was expected to improve the quality of primary education in Nepal. The PCR uses some results from studies conducted under the second primary education development project that indicate learning improvements in social studies. Likewise, it draws upon benefit monitoring and evaluation studies noting that an increase in passing rate after grade 5 implies that the quality of the teaching-learning process might have improved.

17. However, the PCR also notes that there were no improvements in learning achievements in subjects like Nepali and mathematics. Lack of progress in these two subjects certainly raises some concerns about the efficacy of the teacher training programs in improving the teaching learning process. There is little evidence to suggest that the training provided under the project has yielded expected improvements in the classroom teaching-learning process. While the rationale of the project design was predicated on achieving such qualitative improvements, no arrangements were made for monitoring progress periodically during the life of the project. The government's PCR notes,¹⁰ "TEP has not been able to institutionalize a system or mechanism that could monitor and measure the translation of project inputs (i.e., teacher training) into improved student learning achievements." This is indeed a missed opportunity. The project should have built a definitive system of periodic monitoring of

⁹ Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, NCED. *Benefit Monitoring and Evaluation Reports*, 2006 and 2009. Cited in ADB. 2011. *Completion Report: Teacher Education Project in Nepal*. Manila.

¹⁰ Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, NCED. 2009. *Completion Report: Teacher Education Project in Nepal*. p. 48, para. 111.

improvement in teaching-learning process and linked it with the methodology of training teachers. The capacity development under the project has facilitated teacher-training related policy deliberation. Furthermore, this improved capability is likely to spill over into other related areas such as curriculum and textbook writing under the jurisdiction of the MOES. If so, the project can rightly be given some credit for promoting general efficiency of the education system. Likewise, greater involvement of females and other disadvantaged groups in the education sector has strengthened inclusive development, and improved the perception of stakeholders about education policy and its long-term partners like ADB. This validation concurs with the PCR rating of *efficient*.

D. Preliminary Assessment of Sustainability

18. The PCR assesses the project *likely sustainable*. It presents a number of arguments in its favor. These include launching a teacher professional development program providing short-term demand-based training courses under the ongoing School Sector Reform Program. The PCR cites that an understanding has been reached with the Higher Secondary Education Board to allow graduates of the project's pre-service and in-service training program to enroll in grade 12 to enable them to top up their qualifications in line with the new rules for teacher recruitment. It is also noted that the new teacher training policy announced in 2011 indicates the sustainability of project benefits. While these developments are important and welcome, it is debatable whether these constitute an evidence of the sustainability of project gains. These are essentially a continuation of more inputs into teacher training. They only point toward a continuing need for more teacher upgrading and maintaining a steadily improving standard of teacher-preparedness. The present validation is not questioning their usefulness. Instead, it does not see them as an evidence of the resilience of net benefits engendered by the project. In comparison, the gains from capacity development and promotion of females and the disadvantaged are expected to last long. Hence, the present validation concurs with the PCR's preliminary assessment of sustainability as *likely sustainable*.

E. Impact

19. While the PCR describes impact of the project on a number of facets, it does not use any descriptor for assessing the overall impact. However, it acknowledges that the project had a significant impact on institutional development. Teacher education policy was adopted in 2005, and the project succeeded in highlighting the need for teacher training to improve the quality of education. A number of measures were undertaken to strengthen institutional infrastructure and capacity development of teacher training institutions, especially the NCED and PTTCs. Thus, the project is rightly credited with introducing policy reforms and initiating their implementation. One could further add public-private partnership to the list as the project had accessed and utilized private providers of teacher training to supplement the public sector capacity. Thus, the project's institutional impact is assessed to be *satisfactory*. Similarly, the project's social impact was reflected in a number of areas.

20. The PCR notes that it played a special role in promoting gender parity in the teaching force. The proportion of female teachers increased from 22.5% in 2000 to 33.2% from 2009.¹¹ Furthermore, the project promoted inclusive development by providing incentives to facilitate greater participation of women and other disadvantaged groups in the pre-service training. It launched communication campaigns for creating a more favorable school environment for women and disadvantaged groups. In this sense, the social impact of the project is regarded

¹¹ ADB. 2011. *Completion Report: Teacher Education Project in Nepal*. Manila. p. 12, para. 41.

satisfactory. The PCR does not identify any environment issues related to the project, although one would conjecture that the training curriculum prepared under the project would have some stance in relation to environment conservation and climatic change policies. This validation assesses the project's overall impact *significant*.

III. OTHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

A. Performance of the Borrower and the Executing Agency

21. The performance of the MOES and NCED is adequately detailed in the PCR, and the description suggests that these agencies performed well in implementing the project. It is indeed creditable that they were able to complete the job in 7 years instead of 9 years, as envisaged earlier. The MOES also conformed to all other stipulations of the project in full and timely manner. The government's PCR provides a fairly detailed account of how the project was implemented and what could have been done differently and better. This feedback is very useful. On the whole, the performance of the borrower and the executing agency is assessed *satisfactory*.

B. Performance of the Asian Development Bank

22. The PCR assessed ADB performance as *satisfactory*. ADB did well in identifying the problem and then designing a solution for it. ADB closely supervised the project. A number of missions were undertaken to assist in project supervision. An advisory TA was provided to enhance the implementation capacity of important associated agencies. ADB collaborated with development partners even when it was formally not a party to the second primary education development project. It entrusted the oversight and guidance of the project to the Program Executing Board of the second primary education development project. This validation concurs with the PCR in assessing ADB's performance as *satisfactory*.

C. Others

23. There were no safeguards, governance, anticorruption or fiduciary issues in relation to the project. The project made a positive and lasting contribution in facilitating gender parity by establishing incentives for women and other disadvantaged groups to undergo pre-service teacher training. This also contributed to more girl pupils especially from disadvantaged groups to join and stay in primary schools. The project made a significant contribution toward inclusive development in Nepal.

IV. OVERALL ASSESSMENT, LESSONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Overall Assessment and Ratings

24. The project addressed an important problem in Nepal's education sector. It was based on a thorough understanding developed by ADB from over more than a decade of involvement in the sector. The project performed well by providing in-service training to nearly all primary school teachers within 7 years instead of the 9 years envisaged at appraisal. More importantly, the project built capacity in the NCED and PTTCs to plan, implement, and monitor teaching education and training programs. The project also strengthened participation of the disadvantaged groups in education and facilitated achievement of gender parity in primary school enrolment in Nepal. ADB coordinated well with donors, especially the Danish International Development Agency, and established the basis for joining the Sector-wide

Approach—School Sector Reform Program. The project built a public–private partnership by involving private training providers, although it did not provide training to teachers in private schools. A major shortcoming was that the project did not establish a link between improvements in the teaching-learning process and the in-service training. Apart from generating evidence about the project's efficacy, it would have also generated cues about the alternative teacher training methodologies. This is an important omission that would need to be compensated soon. Research studies being undertaken under the School Sector Reform Program will hopefully be able to shed some light on this issue. See table for overall ratings.

Overall Ratings

Criteria	PCR	IED Review	Reason for Disagreement and/or Comments
Relevance	Highly relevant	Relevant	There were coordination limitations in design. Project design made it difficult to show which project among the donor-supported projects was accountable for what outputs and outcomes (para. 13).
Effectiveness in achieving outcome	Effective	Effective	
Efficiency in achieving outcome and outputs	Efficient	Efficient	
Preliminary assessment of sustainability	Likely Sustainable	Likely Sustainable	
Overall assessment	Successful	Successful	
Borrower and executing agency	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Performance of ADB	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Impact	Not rated	Significant	Project enabled inclusive development by promoting gender parity at primary school levels, and provided incentives to women and other disadvantaged groups for pre-service teacher training (para. 20).
Quality of PCR		Satisfactory	Refer to para. 29.

ADB = Asian Development Bank, IED = Independent Evaluation Department, PCR = project completion report.
Source: ADB Independent Evaluation Department.

B. Lessons

25. The same project outcomes can often be achieved through a number of alternative training methodologies depending upon the prior qualifications of trainees.

C. Recommendations for Follow-Up

26. To make informed choices about the training methodology, the training outcomes need to be tied explicitly to the different methodologies through empirical research and analysis. Certain methodologies should not be taken as granted.

27. The Government of Nepal could consider the provision of training for private school teachers.

V. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

A. Monitoring and Evaluation Design, Implementation, and Utilization

28. Although the project was prepared before the full-fledged use of design and monitoring framework was adopted in ADB, the project established a TMIS, and linked it with the education management information system. However, it was not explicitly tied with project outcomes; hence, it failed to generate requisite evidence linking teaching-learning outcomes with the training inputs. The midterm review should have identified the lacunae and fixed it.

B. Comments on Project Completion Report Quality

29. The PCR is well written, thorough, and evidence-based. It provides a candid picture of project implementation.

C. Data Sources for Validation

30. This validation used the following documents: report and recommendation of the President, PCR, and files dealing with project preparation, approval, midterm review, and loan review missions.

D. Recommendation for Independent Evaluation Department Follow-Up

31. No follow-up recommendations are suggested.