

## SUMMARY POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

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| Country:                    | Kyrgyz Republic            | Project Title:        | Strengthening the Education System Sector Development Program                                |
| Lending/Financing Modality: | Sector Development Program | Department/ Division: | Central and West Asia Department/<br>Public Management, Financial Sector, and Trade Division |

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| <b>I. POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY</b>   |
| Poverty targeting: General intervention  |
| <b>A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth Strategy and Country Partnership Strategy</b>   |
| <p>With an estimated per capita gross domestic product of \$990 in 2012, the Kyrgyz Republic is one of the poorest economies in Central Asia. The current government's two key strategy frameworks for development and poverty reduction—the Comprehensive Development Framework and the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), 2013–2017—aim to raise living standards through inclusive economic growth, as well as improvements in education, health care, and social protection. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will support the government through the proposed Strengthening the Education Sector System Development Program to improve the quality of school education, in line with the priorities in the Education Development Strategy, 2012–2020 and the NSDS launched in 2013. The program is in line with ADB's country partnership strategy for the Kyrgyz Republic and aims to develop the human resources needed to meet the rising demand for skilled and semiskilled workers, while increasing labor productivity as part of pro-poor economic growth.</p>  |
| <b>B. Results from the Poverty and Social Analysis</b>   |
| <p><b>1. Key poverty and social issues.</b> Declining education standards and funding constraints on schools are key issues in the Kyrgyz Republic, as is the relevance of education to the labor market. Enrollment in basic, compulsory education (up to grade 9) is high, and the transition from primary to lower secondary education (from grade 4 to grade 5) is also high. In 2011, enrolment in grades 10–11 was about 54%, as many young people choose to enroll in vocational education institutions after grade 9. Access is high, and male and female enrollment at the primary level is not significantly different. However, the gender disparity in favor of females grows starting at grade 7. One of the key challenges in the country is low learning outcomes: the gap in reading literacy between 15-year-old students in the Kyrgyz Republic and the average for Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) members in OECD's 2009 Program of International Student Achievement corresponded to 4.5 years of formal schooling. School location and the socioeconomic background of students also affect performance levels. Geographic disparities (rural–urban) in education quality and variation in learning outcomes by language of instruction are also observed. According to the latest available official statistics, about 38% of the population in the Kyrgyz Republic lived below the poverty line in 2012. Poverty has a significant impact on school attendance, school quality, and on children's educational outcomes. Schools in rural areas tend to have teacher shortages or less qualified teachers, lack of textbooks, and poor school infrastructure. The government is committed to addressing rural-urban disparities in education and the lack of access to science and mathematics by improving quality of education nationwide and by creating innovative schools as learning sites for math and sciences. The program aims to support the government in its efforts to improve the education quality, relevance and access.</p> <p><b>2. Beneficiaries.</b> The beneficiaries will include students, teachers, school principals, deputy principals, and local communities. Higher-quality learning and teaching materials (LTMs), modern curricula, and improved teaching standards and learning environments will produce better educational outcomes, enhanced life skills, and employability. Teachers will have greater access to appropriate training and career progression, increasing their motivation and incentives. The innovative schools supported by the program will be selected primarily in poor and remote parts of the country, where educational services are limited. School boards of trustees will benefit through training and increased involvement in school management. The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) will also benefit by acquiring greater capacity in planning skills, policy analysis, and monitoring and evaluation systems.</p> <p><b>3. Impact channels.</b> Disadvantaged groups will benefit directly from the improvements in innovative schools and indirectly from other reforms that increase educational quality. Improved learning environments, enhanced provision of textbooks and better-trained teachers will help increase school attendance and retention. The program aims to ensure that the benefits of education are translated into economic development and growth for the country.</p> <p><b>4. Other social and poverty issues.</b> Although textbooks are nominally free, resource constraints mean many are obsolete or not universally provided. The textbook rental scheme (TRS) to be implemented under the program will ensure that textbooks will become available and affordable; the government will provide free textbook rentals for the 15% of students who are considered poor and disadvantaged.</p> <p><b>5. Design features.</b> The principal components of the program are (i) ensuring the quality of the curriculum and availability of textbooks and LTMs for all students; (ii) improving the quality of teaching and in-service teacher training by reintroducing teacher incentive systems and career progression, which will make such training more flexible and responsive to teacher needs; (iii) creating innovative schools as catalysts to raise education standards, especially in</p> |

poorer and more remote areas of the country; and rehabilitating schools, including providing access to renovated school buildings for students with physical disabilities; (iv) ensuring that the selected innovative schools include schools with minority language of instruction; (v) strengthening school boards of trustees; (vi) conducting policy studies on school attendance and retention, and total costs of universal education, and developing an action plan for increasing operation and maintenance budgets for schools; and (vii) improving the management of the education sector, including planning, monitoring and evaluation, and performance management.

### C. Poverty Impact Analysis for Policy-Based Lending

1. **Impact channels of the policy reforms.** Improving education quality and attainment in the Kyrgyz Republic will contribute to poverty reduction and improved employment outcomes of graduates. The phased implementation of the TRS, combined with textbook cost-reduction strategies, will reduce the costs of textbook provision, ensuring that a sufficient number of textbooks in all languages of instruction will be made available. The TRS will provide direct government support to the poorest 15% of students through free textbook rentals. The introduction of an improved curriculum review process will aim to ensure that students of all abilities benefit through better support to teachers with the introduction of new, student-centered classroom approaches. Reforms to develop, assess, train, and reward teachers will further professionalize the teaching profession, decrease disparity in test scores between students living rural and urban areas, and make the education sector more sustainable in the next 10 years. Selecting innovative schools in remote and poor areas will increase opportunities for poor and ethnic minority children, as well as those living in remote communities, to receive quality instruction at school. Greater involvement of school boards of trustees in school management will improve school accountability and performance.

2. **Impacts of policy reforms on vulnerable groups.** An affordability analysis on the TRS indicates that textbook rental expenditures would represent less than 1% of annual household income for households in the second-lowest decile (assuming three school-aged children per household). The TRS will be introduced in one or two oblasts at first and then gradually scaled up.

3. **Systemic changes expected from policy reforms.** Better access to quality human resources allows an optimal realization of the socioeconomic development of the country.

## II. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING THE POOR

1. **Participatory approaches and project activities.** Consultative meetings were undertaken with the following: national and local government, village schools (teachers, students, and members of communities), education institutions including the Kyrgyz Academy of Education, teacher training institutes, and textbook publishers. Fieldwork was carried out in several oblasts and included school visits, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, tracer studies, and classroom observations.

2. **Civil society organization.** A civil society organization will be engaged to work with communities on communication activities, including on awareness-raising activities related to the TRS.

3. The following forms of civil society organization participation are envisaged during project implementation, rated as high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA):

Information gathering and sharing (M)  Consultation (M)  Collaboration (M)  Partnership (M)

4. Participation plan.

Yes.  No. Regular consultation will take place throughout the program with local stakeholders, focusing a particularly on increasing the effectiveness of school boards representing parents and communities, including monitoring by the boards of educational performance and outcomes.

## III. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender mainstreaming category: Effective gender mainstreaming

**A. Key issues.** Key gender issues addressed by the program include (i) the need to remove gender bias in the curriculum, textbooks, and LTMs; (ii) imbalance of male teachers; and (iii) improvements in access to training for female school administrators. There is a lack of gender-sensitive and locally relevant teaching and learning curricula and materials that promote positive images of women in non-traditional employment. The teaching workforce in the Kyrgyz Republic is overwhelmingly women (more than 98% of primary school teachers and 84% of secondary school teachers). The small percentage of male teachers means a lack of role models for boys, a situation exacerbated by many men living away from the family home as migrant workers. There is a need to improve the management capacity of female school administrators.

### B. Key actions:

Gender action plan  Other actions or measures  No action or measure

The gender action plan includes the following targets and gender-responsive design features: (i) removing gender bias in the curriculum, textbooks, and LTMs; and promoting positive images of women in higher-status occupations; (ii) increasing the number of appropriately trained female administrators; (iii) increasing the prestige of teaching and raising the number of male teachers to provide role models for boys; (iv) conducting advocacy campaigns to encourage girls and boys to improve school attendance and continue to grades 10–11; (v) ensuring women's representation in decision-making roles on school boards; and (vi) building capacity in the MES for gender-aware sector planning based on gender-disaggregated data.

| <b>IV. ADDRESSING SOCIAL SAFEGUARD ISSUES</b>  |  |
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| <b>A. Involuntary Resettlement</b>   | <b>Safeguard Category:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> FI |
| <p><b>1. Key impacts:</b> None. Program implementation does not involve land acquisition or resettlement.</p> <p><b>2. Strategy to address the impacts:</b> Not applicable</p> <p><b>3. Plan or other Actions.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Resettlement plan <span style="margin-left: 200px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement and indigenous peoples plan</span></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Resettlement framework <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement framework and indigenous peoples</span></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and social management system arrangement <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> planning framework</span></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No action <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Social impact matrix</span></p>   |  |
| <b>B. Indigenous Peoples</b>   | <b>Safeguard Category:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> FI |
| <p><b>1. Key impacts.</b> The education reforms will generally benefit all students, including those from ethnic minority groups. Consultations with ethnic minorities were carried out and results of consultations indicate that they support the proposed program interventions. The selected innovative schools will include schools with minority language of instruction. The program will support the government to ensure that school boards of trustees will reflect the communities they serve.</p> <p>Is broad community support triggered? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> No</span></p> <p><b>2. Strategy to address the impacts.</b> Not applicable</p> <p><b>3. Plan or other actions.</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples plan <span style="margin-left: 200px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement plan and indigenous peoples plan</span></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples planning framework <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Combined resettlement framework and indigenous peoples planning framework</span></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Environmental and social management system arrangement <span style="margin-left: 100px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous peoples plan elements integrated in project with a summary</span></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Social impact matrix</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No action</p> |  |
| <b>V. ADDRESSING OTHER SOCIAL RISKS</b>  |  |
| <b>A. Risks in the Labor Market</b>  |  |
| <p><b>1. Relevance.</b> The project's relevance to the country's or region's or sector's labor market, indicated as high (H), medium (M), and low or not significant (L).</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unemployment (H) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> underemployment(L) <input type="checkbox"/> retrenchment (L) <input type="checkbox"/> core labor standards (L)</p> <p><b>2. Labor market impact.</b> Higher-quality education and greater alignment with labor market requirements will improve people's prospects of employment, enhance productivity, and accelerate the country's economic growth. Limited temporary employment opportunities will be available for local people during the project's school rehabilitation works.</p>  |  |
| <b>B. Affordability.</b> Reform of textbook provision should lead to affordable textbooks (free for 15% of the poor) in the next 10–15 years. An affordability analysis of the TRS indicates that textbook rental expenditures would represent less than 1% of annual household income for households in the second-lowest decile.   |  |
| <b>C. Communicable Diseases and Other Social Risks</b>   |  |
| <p>1. The impact of the following risks are rated high (H), medium (M), low (L), or not applicable (NA):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Communicable diseases (NA) <input type="checkbox"/> Human trafficking (NA)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Others (please specify) _____</p> <p><b>2. Risks to people in project area:</b> None.</p>  |  |
| <b>VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>   |  |
| <p><b>1. Targets and indicators.</b> Social inclusion and gender targets include reducing gender bias, strengthening local community participation in school affairs, and improving textbook provision. The data sources are based on post-event monitoring, stakeholder consultations, the project performance management system, and progress reports. Accountability for achieving the targets rests with the MES via the program implementation unit.</p> <p><b>2. Required human resources.</b> The gender action plan will require 6 months of national consulting support. The project implementation unit and local school administrative staff will be involved in data collection, recording keeping, and reporting.</p> <p><b>3. Information in the project administration manual.</b> This includes action plans for designing, implementing, and monitoring social- and gender-related targets, as well as the required reporting arrangements.</p> <p><b>4. Monitoring tools.</b> The gender and communication plans will track changes in awareness and the effectiveness of outputs among users. They will also solicit timely feedback from stakeholders. Quarterly progress reports, in addition to the midterm and final program completion report, will have sections for reporting progress related to the social, gender, and communications activities and plans.</p>   |  |

<sup>a</sup> ADB. 2013. *Country Operations Business Plan: Kyrgyz Republic, 2014–2016*. Manila.

<sup>b</sup> ADB. 2013. *Kyrgyz Republic: Country Partnership Strategy, 2013–2017*. Manila.