

Sustainability Framework: Quality Learning Project (QLP)

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Sustainability Framework: Quality Learning Project (QLP)

1. Abstract

Creative Associates International is implementing the Quality Learning Project in three Central Asian countries of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. Recently, the project took an initiative to develop a sustainability framework in view of sustaining program activities that were instrumental in producing positive outcomes. The exercise which was conducted in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan brought together all QLP experts in a forum to discuss and develop potential sustainability scenarios with certain universal criteria in mind. These will be discussed later in the paper.

This paper examines some aspects of sustainability in the context of project design and implementation. First, it provides a definition of sustainability and clarifies why sustainability and institutionalization are sometimes interchangeably used. It later discusses some important attributes of sustainability (sustainability factors) and how these manifest themselves in real project settings. The experience of QLP is presented as a case study. The sustainability framework matrices (see Annexes 1 and 2) that were developed during a series of work planning sessions were finally incorporated in Year Five Work Plan. This was found to be an appropriate forum to demonstrate where the project focus should be in Year 5 of the project. The exercise also identified key challenges to sustainability in the context of the QLP in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

2. Introduction

Designing projects that provide long lasting benefits has been a primary concern in the development arena. Hence, projects often make conscious and deliberate efforts to

ensure that continuity is achieved after projects close out. Despite a great deal of good will and sincere intentions, however, sustainability remains generally an elusive goal. There are several reasons for this. A lot has to do with the way some projects are designed right from the very outset. Some do not integrate sustainability concerns into strategic planning and project concept. Others do not address sustainability problems and needs during the project identification and design stage. There are also projects that do not have a built-in mechanism such as institutional capacity building to ensure continuity. If there is one, the approach might not be the right one or some relevant tools are missing to institute it. In some cases sufficient stakeholder commitment is lacking. Also cultural or societal considerations are not seen to be fully addressed in the sustainability package. Furthermore, nobody can dispute the fact that projects aimed at bringing about social transformation require a substantial amount of time along with strategic interventions and smart investments. At times, the time factor is not being seriously considered.

3. Definition

Sustainability can be described as the process of ensuring the continuation of project activities or products by providing the required support to the host government, NGOs, communities etc. This support usually takes the form of policy and institutional support on the one hand, and on the other hand that of ensuring all the necessary resources (financial and capacity) are available within host governments or other beneficiaries to enable them to continue to carry out project activities without external assistance. It means that activities and products/services initially supported by a donor are being incorporated in the ongoing budgets of host governments or other stakeholders

operations and processes and ultimately be part of their developmental priorities and strategies.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Strategic Framework 2007-2010 defines sustainability as “ensuring that the institutions supported through projects and the benefits realized are maintained and continue after the end of the project “.ⁱ Brikké F. claims that 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.”ⁱⁱ. ActionContre la Faim (ACF) International Network refers it as “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.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The bottom line is that projects should not be one-off affairs. Whether they have a short life span or long, whether their orientation is service delivery or system strengthening or a combination of both, whether they are small or large, they should be designed to respond to or address the needs of the community or communities over the longer term, and make an impact on their lives and of course for the better. How one goes about it is the issue.

4. Sustainability as a dynamic process

Sustainability necessitates using various strategies to promote and maintain factors that will contribute towards ensuring continuity of project activities following the close out of projects. Sustainability is a dynamic process. The strategy can change,

depending on in what phase it is in a project cycle, how far one goes in terms of bringing about the changes, and which goals one might want to set and attain. It presupposes that the crucial elements of the program that contributed to bringing about encouraging results are preserved and promoted and even scaled up to positively affect the lives of more people. It necessitates that partners (development partners and host government counterparts, communities, and civic society organizations) *work on an equal footing to develop shared vision, goal, strategies, and modalities that can translate into action or something concrete.*

Sustainability requires accompanying support at different phases of the project cycle. These include: 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 sustainability can be made to be felt. He argues that making changes is not going to be easy once the design has a particular orientation. He contends that a key element of this orientation is that of developing a strategic perspective.^{iv}

Strategic planning with a much broader stakeholder group can also facilitate project goals and activities to become part and parcel of community development initiatives and obtain buy-in from policymakers or legislators.^v The strategic plan addresses the issue of how the project will hand over leadership to the government or a local community without jeopardizing the attainment of its development goals and

ensuring further progress after the project comes to a draw. This is sometime called exit strategy.^{vi}

Exit strategies are supposed to identify clear indicators to determine if key outcomes that demonstrate progress toward sustainability have been achieved.^{vii} There are meant to create conducive atmosphere for the outcomes to materialize and becomes part and parcel of the systems.

5. Sustainability factors

There a number of factors that need to be considered if a project is to succeed in ensuring continuity. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) spells out the following important assumptions which 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.^{viii}

The IFC stresses the need for effective consultation which is culturally appropriate and that is capable of considering and responding to community needs. It emphasizes the importance of forging trust between local stakeholders and project funders. It underscores the significance of transparency as a communication behavior in building that trust. It underlines the value of defining and articulating projects' commitments without raising community expectations. Furthermore, it stresses the advantages of building the appropriate local (individuals and NGOs) capacity to support the development process and push it towards attaining the desired results.^{ix}

IFC advocates the need for conscious and deliberate efforts to ensure the transfer of know-how and expertise (core competencies) to local counterparts, setting measurable and achievable (modest) goals, and bringing together a set of partners in one forum and encouraging them to work for a common end. This helps the project and its stakeholders to monitor progress on a regular basis and to pre-empt any undesired results. It also encourages both parties to foster trust between each other. These include both local and international partners, the public and the private sector, NGOs, research and educational institutes etc. Projects should be designed in such a way that impacts are felt long after they come to a draw and are aimed at empowering communities to take over.^x

Sustainability needs to factor in variables such as demand, policy or political will, capacity (human, technical and financial), institutionalization (capacity, roles and responsibilities), accountability (external and internal monitoring) as part of the entire process. What these factors imply is that there must be a longer-term view, beyond the traditional life of project.^{xi} Let's us these factors one by one.

a. Demand

Any program intervention is likely to succeed if it has been able to generate the required demand for its implementation on the part of the local partners. These could be host government institutions or NGOs, or communities. Purposeful and deliberate consultation should precede the implementation phase of any project. Consultation should aim at creating an awareness of the project's goal and objectives, clarifying modalities of implementation, and defining the roles and responsibilities of each party. Consultation helps to create a shared vision, a strategy towards pursuing that vision, and the tools to achieving it. It defines the rules of engagement, manages expectations on both

parties, and ultimately increases the rate of success. Properly defining program areas lays a solid foundation of a successful development program. Consultation establishes an atmosphere of trust and confidence.^{xii}

Involving communities, local government, NGO and service providers in project design and start-up helps foster a team approach and commitment from the very beginning.^{xiii} Partners in development are expected to set certain rules during consultations. *They should see themselves as equals and not as a donor and a recipient.* They should perceive themselves as complementing each other and not competing. They should be willing to reciprocate each other's good will. Consultation, if conducted in the spirit of reciprocity, equality, and complementarity, can result in creating a critical mass of mutual trust. And above all, it can generate demand.

Demand creates the requisite favorable political environment for a program intervention to continue and to become an integral part of an existing system. It contributes to the development of the necessary policy framework for a project activity to be appreciated and implemented and to be scaled up nationwide if necessary. Furthermore, demand ensures buy-in and ownership of the program by the host government, other agencies, or communities.

b. Policy Framework

Projects are not meant to be implemented in a vacuum. They should be able to support host governments and other relevant institutions' existing policies that respond to their developmental needs and strategies. It is, therefore, important that projects align their objectives and activities with the host government's sector strategy and provide

support towards its achievement. Furthermore, projects should encourage that targets are estimated for government replication and roll out.

Regulations and/or directives are very powerful tools and also a step forward in the actualization of policy guidelines. These can hold host government counterparts legally accountable to certain government-endorsed development options. They can create an enabling environment for program efforts to be sustained. For example, in highly centralized government structures such as those of Central Asia Republics, regulations/acts are very important. Government bodies at different levels tend to take them seriously and implement them to the last letter once they are enacted. It is therefore incumbent upon a donor funded project to consider working under host government policy framework and be proactive in ensuring that certain procedural aspects (regulations, acts, etc.) are put in place to support the implementation.

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 has several dimensions. These include technical support, training and mentoring, and the provision of ICT support to facilitate the processing of data and information for policy and decision making process. Human capital formation enables host governments to improve organizational culture and ensure efficiency, transparency, and accountability. It also boosts motivation, enhances staff morale, and inspires change. Building human

capacity is also critical to furthering leadership, promoting participation, and creating opportunities for innovation.

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, the existence of defined structures with relevant or appropriate terms of reference within host government ministries, agencies or NGOs are critical to sustaining project activities. Institutional arrangements enable host governments to incorporate project activities in their short, medium, and long term sector strategies, allocate resources for their implementation, and devise tools/instruments to monitor them. It also ensures integration of project activities in the mainstream. Institutionalization can be instrumental in retaining the elements of project activities responsible for positive outcomes as well.

e. Accountability (external and internal monitoring)

Accountability lies at the heart of the sustaining a program intervention. One should consider incorporating tools and mechanisms that could hold host government agencies accountable to certain standards, norms, and targets. Monitoring should be seen as a continuous process. Program progress should be measurable; hence, the need for articulating a monitoring framework.

The monitoring framework should be able to ensure that progress is assessed against certain realistic and measurable social indicators. Tools should be available to measure the attainment of these indicators.

f. Outreach and advocacy

An outreach plan is capable of identifying possibilities for increasing local governments and communities' understanding and ownership of donor funded projects. Outreach efforts will improve visibility and understanding of project achievements to garner support and buy-in for project activities. They can promote awareness of a project's impact, publicize and celebrate the successes of communities and other stakeholders, enhance the visibility of the project activities, and respond to requirements and requests of host government counterparts for information through regular reporting, production of communications materials, photos and videos, and event planning.^{xiv}

An outreach or advocacy strategy will be critical to obtaining host governments and other stakeholders' buy-in. It helps bring about the necessary policy reform or change the project is seeking. This will enable project activities that have been responsible for positive outcomes to be sustained. As such, it is of critical importance that projects put in place an effective advocacy strategy that could rally influential members of the host government towards supporting programs that need to be sustained. This strategy should consider defining its target population.

g. Forging strategic collaborations

If planned meticulously, collaboration among development partners often results in bringing about the desired policy reforms and changes. Collaboration can contribute to capacity building, greater public awareness, additional funding, and can even encourage changes in public policy. These are the elements critical in sustaining change. Projects can make concerted and coordinated efforts to support host governments' efforts to achieve their sector and broader development goals. Thus, project implementers must

garner the necessary support from other development partners (including the private sector) to ensure synergy and sustainability. The more coordinated development partners' efforts are, the more they attract the attention of policy makers and civic society and the more they can influence policy.

h. Budget

Last but not least the basis and source of budget and funding provisions should be made available by the host government if program activities are to be sustained. As such, projects in collaboration with the host governments should make arrangements to address budgetary issues.

6. Quality Learning Project (QLP): a case study for sustaining project activities

a. Overview

The Quality Learning Project is a five-year (2007 – 2012) project aimed at expanding access to quality primary and secondary education in Kyrgyzstan (KG), Tajikistan (TJ), and Turkmenistan (TM). The project aims at improving student learning outcomes through the application of modern teaching and student assessment methodologies; the introduction of formative assessment techniques into in-service and pre-service training programs to improve student learning; the promotion of teachers' active participation in curriculum reform, and the set up of transparent and efficient school financing and management systems (Per Capita Financing).

The project aims to build the capacity of pre-service and in-service teacher training systems in order for students to achieve higher order thinking such as application, synthesis, problem solving and critical thinking. These skills are needed for

students to be prepared for and compete in emerging market-driven economies, as well as to fulfill roles as active citizens in a participatory democracy. The project targets in-service and pre-service teacher training curricula to incorporate more child-centered pedagogy, including the use of formative assessment techniques. It also examines what supplementary materials teachers need in the classroom to ensure improved student outcomes.

The project also supports reform of education financing by providing technical assistance to per-capita financing of education in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

b. Sustainability efforts

i. Demand

Early on in the project cycle, the focus was on how to obtain buy-in from government counterparts. This initiative 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 and academy of education levels), setting up technical working groups and defining their TOR, and engaging experts from the ministries and academies in the prioritization, conceptualization, design, and implementation of the different interventions. The process could have been slow at the very beginning, but it was worth it since consensus building was at the heart of the entire process. No sooner had consensus been reached on an overall technical approach and the modus operandi hashed out than one noticed the project had taken off.

The end result of the process was that the project was able to generate demand for more technical input by the project (QLP) to expedite the reform process that the two

governments were undergoing. The demands included but were not limited to the application and inclusion of formative assessment in the teaching learning process, the development and application of curriculum standards for different subjects, the introduction of pedagogical leadership, mentoring, and monitoring, and the implementation of Per Capita Financing (PCF) in schools.

ii. Addressing policy and strategy issues

The project supported governments' efforts to implement their national education strategies. The project's success lied in its ability to influence ongoing education reform aimed at responding to the scientific, technological, and skilled labor needs of the 21st century. By working within the existing system, the project became a catalyst for the ongoing reform processes in the education sector in each country and obtained buy-in by high level policymaking bodies for QLP's innovations to become critical pedagogical elements of the education system and everyday classroom practices. These ground-breaking interventions enabled QLP to influence the systems to deliver better services through broadening their horizon and enhancing their capacity. In its life span, the project has been instrumental in facilitating the formulation and dissemination of 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 1st November 2004
2. Order #452 of KulobHukumat "Transition of Kulob schools to new forms of management and financing", dated 28th December 2004

3. Regulation #350 of Government of Tajikistan “On stages of transition of schools of Tajikistan to new forms of forms of management and financing”, dated 30th June 2007
4. Regulation #505 of Government of Tajikistan “Adoption of rules of per capita financing in schools of Tajikistan”, dated 1st October 2007
5. MOE and MOF instruction on “Per capita financing”, dated 27th December 2007
6. Order #401 of Ministry of Education of Tajikistan on establishment of the Education Financing Working Group (EFWG), dated 7th April 2008
7. Order #701 of VakhshHukumat “Transition of Vakhsh schools to new forms of management and financing“, dated 11th October 2009
8. Order #606 of VakhshHukumat “Restructuring of 5 schools in Vakhsh district“, dated 29th October 2010
9. MOE and MFF new instruction on “Per capita financing”, dated 29th November 2010

Kyrgyzstan

1. Regulations on Mentoring of ITTI system, KAE
2. Regulations on Student practicum for Arabaev KSU target Departments, Academic Councils of Arabaev KSU
3. Regulations on Student practicum for OSU target Departments, Academic Councils of OSU
4. New payment system Guidance, MOES

iii. Building human capacity

QLP succeeded in ensuring local ownership by providing technical support (e.g. mentoring local education specialists who work in the system) to build the capacities of

different government agencies and institutions of higher learning by creating a cadre of master-trainers and materials developers in each country. Program interventions were adopted by and integrated into host governments' systems by the respective Academies of Education (KAE and TAE). Initiatives such as capacity building, development of curricula areas, programs, and/or courses, formulation of standards and policies, introduction of new pedagogical approaches have sown the seeds of sustainability. The project's name - *SappatuBilim* - has become a household commodity in Kyrgyzstan.

QLP introduced in-service teacher training systems that helped teachers to (1) acquire and practice modern pedagogy that is highly focused on students' learning needs during the teaching-learning process; (2) define student learning objectives; and (3) promote higher order thinking skills among students.

QLP introduced formative assessment approaches in the teaching-learning process to enable teachers assess learning outcomes and to adjust their teaching methods to support and promote greater learning achievement. In collaboration with host government structures, it developed updated educational 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 what teachers should aim to achieve in the classroom. 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 strengthened technical and managerial capacity of school administrators, Heads of Methodological Units, and RayOO specialists in pedagogical leadership, mentoring, and monitoring improved their performance overall. Also QLP trained a

pool of master trainers that can be used for future professional development interventions.

iv. Institutional arrangements

There are a number of opportunities the project can draw upon to ensure the sustainability of priority interventions after project close out. Key to this is the fact that QLP has been working within the education systems and structures and has supported and been responsive to national policies and priorities. The project's success was its ability to influence ongoing education reform aimed at responding to 21st scientific, technological, and skilled labor needs.

In Kyrgyzstan, there is now an enabling environment that provides policy support to QLP's interventions that can influence reform within the education sector. The Kyrgyz Academy of Education (KAE) and Regional ITTIs have endorsed the modified training modules, standards, and curriculum areas. Training manuals and courses were accredited by the academies of education and regulations were enacted to ensure accountability. Approved government decrees helped scale up Per Capita Financing (PCF) to all oblasts.

The KAE and TAE instructors are receptive to the changes that were instituted in the systems and were enthusiastic to implement the materials into existing standard programs. The modified courses also helped improve the instructors' classroom management skills which in turn helped make the instructions interesting, practical, and easier. Handbooks and manuals were been disseminated across the country and have become easily accessible to instructors and ITTIs.

Pedagogical leadership, mentoring, and monitoring themes were incorporated into in-service regular courses for school administration (KAE and ITTI). Better relationships

among all education institutions (schools-RayOOs- ITTI- KAE) have also enabled the project interventions to access schools. The project has also succeeded in establishing linkages between universities and schools.

New System of Labor Remuneration with teachers’ incentives for quality work approved by Government has boosted teachers’ morale and will continue to have an impact on teacher motivation and minimizing attrition rate.

Programs and guides on Formative Assessment approved by academic councils or equivalent structures were introduced to the ITTI system and are fully functional. Instructors of all ITTI departments are currently using materials developed by QLP in their regular courses.

Materials, curriculum areas, standard developed by the project in close collaboration with the MOE, MOES, the academies of education, and the TTIs were endorsed by the respective government agencies and have become part of the system.

The following guideline, toolkits, training handbooks and manuals, curriculum standards, syllabus guides were approved in the life span of the project.

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

#	Title	Component	Approved by
1	Work programs from three specialties developed in Arabaev KSU	SIR 1.2	Academic Councils of Arabaev KSU
2	Work programs from three specialties developed in OSU	SIR 1.2	Academic Councils of OSU
3	Work programs from three specialties developed in JASU	SIR 1.2	Academic Councils of JASU
4	Toolkit on Pedagogical Leadership, Mentoring, and Monitoring	SIR 1.3	KAE
5	Training Module on Pedagogical Leadership, Mentoring, and Monitoring	SIR 1.3	KAE
6	Handbook on Formative Assessment in target subjects; Kyrgyz language	IR 2	KAE
7	Handbook on Formative Assessment in target subjects; Mathematics	IR 2	KAE

8	Handbook on Formative Assessment in target subjects; Primary grades	IR 2	KAE
9	General Guide on Formative Assessment	IR 2	KAE
10	Syllabus Guides on Mathematics; 1 – 4 grades	IR 3	KAE
11	Syllabus Guides on Mathematics; 5 – 9 grades	IR 3	KAE
12	Syllabus Guides on Kyrgyz language; 1 – 4 grades	IR 3	KAE
13	Syllabus Guides on Kyrgyz language; 5 – 9 grades	IR 3	KAE
14	Syllabus Guide on Motherland 1 – 4 grades	IR 3	KAE

Tajikistan: QLP Products Approved by Related Education Sector Agencies

N o.	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	MOE Collegiums Nov, 2011
2	Teacher In-service Training Program for Secondary Math Teachers	Math	Syllabi	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	MOE 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	MOE Collegiums Nov, 2011
4	School Principal In-service Training Program	Management and Pedagogical Leadership	Syllabi	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	MOE Collegiums Nov, 2011
5	Mentor's Handbook for Math Specialists	Math	Handbook	Tajik	RMTC Scientific Board in 2011	No need
6	Mentor's Handbook for Primary Specialists	Primary	Handbook	Tajik	RMTC Scientific Board in 2011	No need
7	Mentor's Handbook for Tajik Language Specialists	Tajik Language and Literature	Handbook	Tajik	RMTC Scientific Board in 2011	No need
8	Tajik Language Teacher Training Module –	Tajik Language	Training Module	Tajik	RTTI Scientific	No need

	General Pedagogy	and Literature			Board in 2010	
9	Tajik Language Teacher Training Module – Subject Methodology	Tajik Language and Literature	Training Module	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	No need
10	Math Teacher Training Module – General Pedagogy	Math	Training Module	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	No need
11	Math Teacher Training Module – Subject Methodology	Math	Training Module	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	No need
12	Teaching Tajik Language in Primary Grades	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	No need
13	Teaching Math in Primary Grades	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	No need
14	Teaching Art and Craft in Primary Grades	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	No need
15	Teaching Music and Movement in Primary Grades	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	No need
16	Teaching Nature in Primary Grades	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	No need
17	Developing Primary Teachers’ pedagogical Skills	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	No need
18	Education Policy in the RT	Primary	Training Module	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	No need
19	Primary Education Standards	Primary	Standards	Tajik	MOE Collegiums 2009	No need
20	Finance Management for School Principals and Trainer’s Guide	Financial Management	Training Module	Tajik	RTTI Scientific Board in 2010	MOE Collegiums Nov, 2011
21	Practical Accounting	Accounting	Training	Tajik	EFWG in	MOE

	for School Accountants and Trainer's Guide		Module		2011	Collegiums Nov, 2011
22	"Involvement of PTAs to increase transparency and accountability for school resources" and Trainer's Guide	Increase community involvement in school management	Training Module	Tajik	EFWG in 2011	MOE Collegiums Nov, 2011
23	Practical Manual for PTA establishment	PTA establishment and strengthening	Manual	Tajik	No need	No need
24	The Automated Expenditure Tracking System (graphic module)	Database system	— — — —	Tajik	EFWG in 2011	No need

v. Forging strategic collaborations

There have a number of donor funded interventions in the area of education in addition to that of QLP. It was thus necessary to put a mechanism in place where the interventions complemented each other and where competition and duplication of efforts were avoided to the extent possible. QLP understood the dynamic of operating in such an atmosphere and made sure that it made an active member of the coordination forum that was set up earlier by the World Bank's Fast Track Initiative. Members of the Coordination Forum included FTI, QLP, Aga Khan Foundation, Soros Foundation, UNICEF, GTZ, ADB, EU and others. This created an enabling environment for donors to exchange information, define their strategies to support the governments, complement each other rather than stepping on the toes of each other, and also to express their concerns (policy related and sometimes operational) to the government in unison when it deemed necessary.

vi. Outreach

The Quality Learning Project outreach activities included featuring important events such as conferences and certificate award ceremonies, professional articles, and stories in newspapers that have local and national coverage. Some of the articles were featured in professional journals. TV and radio channels as well as websites were also used. These targeted teacher and other professionals in the education sector, government functionaries, and the general public in general. Teachers and other education practitioners were encouraged to write articles on lesson plans, mentoring, the advantage of formative assessment, and other exemplary teaching practices. Other articles covered Per Capita Financing (PCF) and financial management trainings, labor remuneration and school budget hearings, and state budget transparency.

c. Key Challenges

Key challenges to sustainability in the context of QLP included political instability, ongoing government restructuring, bureaucratic red tape, lack of personnel motivation, limited donor coordination, deteriorating economic situation, limited coordination amongst government institutions, limited coordination at different levels of the administration (central, district, school levels), and limited capacity of district to implement changes.

The transfer of core personnel to other institutions and the impact of these transfers in terms of maintaining the skills and knowledge acquired through the project can be a major challenge. Frequent staff turnover at different levels may also result in the interruption of project activities and contribute to the deceleration of the momentum

generated. These could result in draining of technical skills and human resource capacity developed during the life of the project.

Institutional inertia and organizational culture are key constraints in getting counterpart agencies to change their practices and implement reforms. This could be better explained by lack of strategy on the part of MOEs to manage change. Deep-seated aspects of the Ministry's organizational culture such as reluctance to change could also hamper the momentum accumulated over the life of the project and reduce the potential for sustainability. .

The Technical Working Group (TWG) structures set up to serve to coordinate the projects' initiatives might not last long because the ministries might not find them as relevant bodies to maintain.

Most of the changes brought about by the project have been donor-driven. The immediate withdrawal of this funding might create funding gaps. In addition, the delayed release of funds by the government to implement the activities is frequently cited by counterparts as one of the most frustrating roadblocks. Delays in fund release could also affect the pace of the changes introduced by QLP.

Last but not least, the limited utilization of external actors and mechanisms for accountability, monitoring and implementation such as the PTAs and other community structures could also be a hindrance.

7. End Notes

ⁱ Tango International, *Sustainability of rural development projects: Best practices and lessons learned by IFAD in Asia, 2009*.8

ⁱⁱ F. Brikké, *Operation and Maintenance of Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Systems, A training package for managers and planners*, IRC International Water & Sanitation Centre, WHO, Water Supply & Collaborative Council, Operation & Maintenance Network, 2000

ⁱⁱⁱ ACF International Network, *Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Policy d with additional modifications*, ICF International Network, 2007, 6

^{iv} Marcus D. Ingle, *Project Sustainability Manual: Hoe to incorporate Sustainability onto the Project Cycle...*, Executive Leadership Institute (ELI), Mark O. Hatfield School of Government Portland State University, Portland, Oregon July 2005 (Revised)

^v <http://sshs.promoteprevent.org/implementing/leading-systems-change/strategic-planning>

^{vi} IFAD, *Sustainability of rural development projects: Best practices and lessons learned by IFAD Asia, Philippines Case Study*, (Tango International, 2000) 13. (accessed on Dec. 15, 2011)

^{vii} Ibid. 14.

^{viii} International Finance Corporation (IFC), *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](http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/enviro.nsf/AttachmentsByTitle/p_comdev/$FILE/CommunityGuide.pdf) (accessed on Dec. 11, 2011)

^{ix} *ibid.*

^x *Ibid.*

^{xi} Marcus D. Ingle, *Project Sustainability Manual: How to Incorporate Sustainability onto the Project Cycle...*, Executive Leadership Institute (ELI), Mark O. Hatfield School of Government Portland State University, Portland, Oregon July 2005 (Revised) 2-1

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