



Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 17-Sep-2019 | Report No: PIDC26491



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Sao Tome and Principe	Project ID P169222	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Girls Empowerment and Quality Education for All (P169222)
Region AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date Apr 20, 2020	Estimated Board Date Jul 31, 2020	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministerio do Planeamento, Financas e Economia	Implementing Agency Ministerio da Educacao e Ensino Superior	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve learning and school accountability in basic education and to promote girls' retention in secondary school.

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	17.10
Total Financing	17.10
of which IBRD/IDA	15.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

World Bank Group Financing

International Development Association (IDA)	15.00
IDA Grant	15.00

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	2.10
Education for All - Fast Track Initiative	2.10



Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Moderate

Concept Review Decision

Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

- 1. The Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) is a small low-middle-income country which consists of two main islands in the Gulf of Guinea, has a surface area of 1,001 km², and is administratively divided into six districts, in addition to the Autonomous Region of Príncipe (*Região Autónoma do Príncipe, RAP*).** It has a total population of approximately 200,000 people, 42.6 percent of whom are 14 years of age or younger. In 2017, the country's per capita gross national income (GNI) was estimated at US\$3,380 in purchasing power parity (PPP), and its per capita gross domestic product (GDP) was US\$1,921. In addition to a small population and its remote location, there is a high fixed cost of public goods—all factors that affect the country's public capacity, trade, fiscal accounts, and human development outcomes.
- 2. From 2000 to 2010, average annual GDP growth was 5 percent and average annual growth in GDP per capita was 1.9 percent, but growth rates have declined in recent years.** STP experienced a boom during the 2000s explained by increasing capital and productivity growth. However, growth rates have declined from an average of 4.4 percent between 2011-2017 to an estimated 2.7 percent in 2018. The declining growth rates can be attributed to many factors, including a low level of domestic revenue mobilization, and a reduction in government spending given decreasing external grants and loans, which accounts for 95 percent of public investments.
- 3. The sustained economic growth contributed only slightly to a reduction in poverty but led to increased inequality.** The findings of the 2017 Poverty Assessment (*Inquérito aos Orçamentos Familiares - IOF*) show that about two-thirds of the population was living in poverty and nearly half (or 47 percent) of the population was living in extreme poverty.¹ Inequality has increased in recent years as evidenced by the Gini coefficient which increased from 30.8 in 2010 to 56.3 in 2017. The unemployment rate was 9.1 percent in 2017. The majority (68.7 percent) of the population works in the informal sector. According to the Poverty Assessment, 31 percent of the country's labor force was employed in the tertiary sector while 14.2 percent of the labor force was working in agriculture and/or fisheries.
- 4. STP's United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) value has increased from 0.542 to 0.589 between 2010 and 2017, placing it above the average for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (0.537), but below the average for countries in the medium human development level group (0.645).** Strong gains in the country's HDI from 2010 to 2017 are largely attributable to an increase in life expectancy, reduction in infant mortality and increase

¹ Using a poverty line of US\$3.2 PPP per day.



in the years of schooling – life expectancy at birth has increased from 65.9 to 66.8 years, there has been a reduction in infant mortality rates from 33.5 to 25.2 (out of 1,000 live births), and the expected years of schooling has increased from 10.6 to 12.5, as has the mean years of schooling (from 4.9 to 6.3).²

Sectoral and Institutional Context

5. In STP, the structure of the pre-tertiary education sector was recently modified according to the 2018 National Education System Law which mandates 11 years of compulsory education (two years of pre-school and nine years of basic education) divided into three cycles. Some of the changes introduced under this law include: (i) a transfer of the responsibility of daycare responsibilities (for children aged 0-3) from the Ministry of Education (*Ministério da Educação e Ensino Superior – MEES*) to the Ministry of Labor, Solidarity, Family and Vocational Training (*Ministerio do Trabalho, Solidariedade, Família e Formação Profissional - MTSFFP*); (ii) the inclusion of lower secondary education (grades 7 to 9) as the third cycle of basic education; and (iii) defining secondary education as grades 10 to 12. The current education system, therefore, includes: (i) 2 years of pre-school (ages 4-5); (ii) 9 years of basic education divided into three cycles (the first cycle includes grades 1 to 4 (ages 6-9); the second cycle includes grades 5 to 6 (ages 10 -11); and third cycle includes grades 7 to 9 (ages 12-15)), and (iii) 3 years of secondary education which includes grades 10 to 12 (ages 15-17). Under the 2018 Law, enrollment in preschool and basic education are compulsory but remains non-compulsory for secondary education. Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment and teacher qualifications using the latest available data.

Table 1: Number of Schools, Enrolment, and Teachers, 2017/2018

	Preschool		Basic education (first and second cycles)		Basic education (third cycle)		Secondary education	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Schools	104		89		31		19	
Public	88	85	86	97	29	94	17	89
Private	16	15	3	3	2	6	2	11
Enrollment	11846	16	37812	51	15864	22	8224	11
Male	5876	50	19480	52	7673	48	3717	45
Female	5970	50	18332	48	8191	52	4507	55
Public	10540	89	37298	99	15475	98	7903	96
Private	1306	11	514	1	389	2	321	4
Teachers (Public System)	607		1198		788		278	
Male	37	6	544	45	512	65	184	66
Female	570	94	654	55	276	35	94	34
Education degree	12	2	372	31	425	54	*	
Non-education degree	109	18	93	8	260	33	*	
No degree	486	80	733	61	381	48	*	

Source: STP Statistical Annual Report 2017/2018

Notes: * Teacher qualification in secondary education is included in the third cycle of basic education. Education Degree= certificated teachers; Non-education degree = teachers with tertiary education but not in a field of

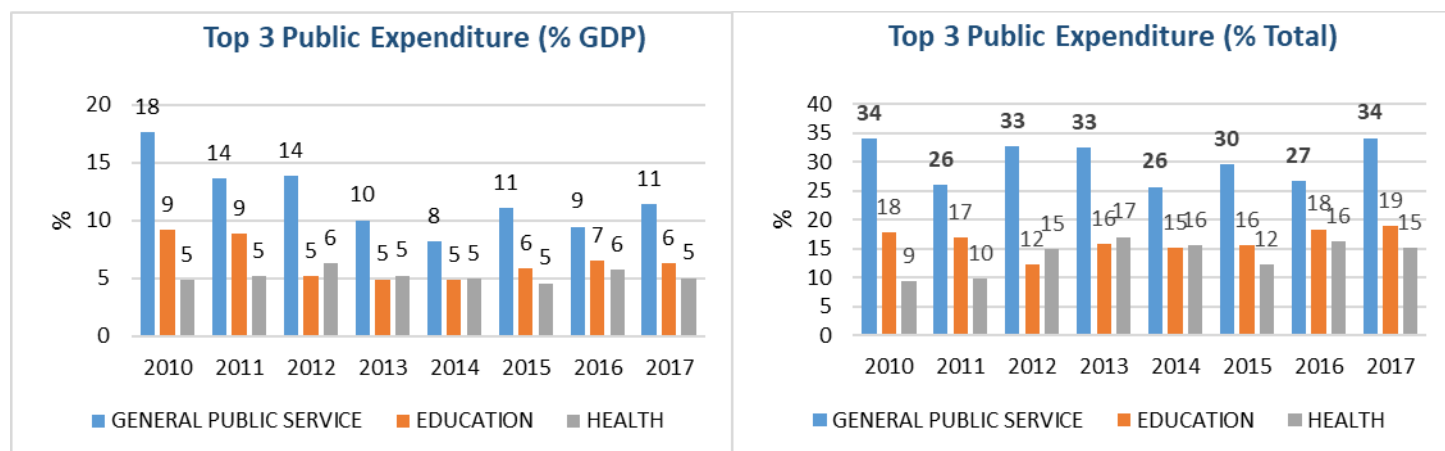
² STP is not yet included in the Human Capital Index of the World Bank because it has not yet developed internationally comparable data on learning outcomes



education (engineers; lawyers; nurses; etc.); no degree = teachers without a tertiary education degree.

- 6. **Most pre-tertiary and secondary schools in the country are public – with private schools accounting for only a small portion of schools.** In 2018, there were 104 preschools (86 public and 16 private), 89 schools providing the first and second cycles of basic education (86 public and 3 private), 31 schools providing the third cycle of basic education (29 public and 2 private), and 19 secondary education schools (17 public and 2 private). Only 5 percent of all students across these levels are enrolled in private schools.
- 7. **Public expenditure on the education sector was 6 percent of GDP in 2017 – making it the sector with the second largest public expenditure, accounting for 19 percent of total public expenditure (see Figure 1).** The expenditure per GDP in education is above the average for SSA but, in terms of share of total public expenditure, is aligned with the average of the SSA. In 2017, expenditure accounted for about 80 percent of public spending on education, of which approximately 70 percent was on staff salaries. The expenditure on teachers’ salaries constitutes the largest share of the wage bill of the public service—accounting for 40 percent in 2017. Since 2013, the overtime payment to teachers has become the main component of the teacher wage bill - accounting for 45 percent of the teacher wage bill. The remaining expenditures included basic remuneration (40 percent) and subsidies and rewards (15 percent). In addition to being financially unsustainable, it limits the system’s ability to ensure the quality of the teaching force which research shows has the most significant impact on learning outcomes.

Figure 1: Public Expenditure on the main sectors (% of GDP and % Total Public Expenditure)



Source: STP Boost data.

Key challenges facing the country’s education sector

- 8. Despite the substantial progress in access to basic education, the country’s education sector faces several major challenges in terms of performance which contribute to low learning outcomes and regional and gender disparities. These include (a) limited access to secondary education, including a large number of out-of-school youth, especially pregnant girls; (b) poor learning outcomes; (c) low internal efficiency; (d) weak management and accountability; and (e) a lack of sustainable financing.

Limited access to secondary education and a large number of out-of-school children, especially pregnant girls



9. **STP achieved universal basic education in 2010, but there is still limited access to secondary education – particularly among rural populations and girls.** According to the 2018 education sector analysis (ESA), enrollment has increased across all levels of education, especially in preschool, the third cycle of basic education, and the secondary level. Between 2007 and 2017, the pre-primary gross enrollment rate (GER) more than tripled from 21.4 percent to 71.4 percent. For the third cycle of basic education, the GER increased from 68 percent to 114 percent while at the secondary level, the GER increased from 20.3 percent to 62.6 percent, representing an annual growth rate of 19.2 percent.
10. **Despite these gains, there are still a number of out-of-school children, especially in rural areas, from poorer households, and among girls.** According to the UNICEF Out-of-School study (2018), among children ages 6 to 14, the overall proportion of those who are out-of-school is higher in rural areas than in urban ones³. One of the key factors behind these out-of-school rates is related to the burden of paying schools fees, especially for poor families. Specific reasons girls are out of school may be related to gender stereotypes, teenage pregnancy (85.7% of pregnant adolescent girls drop out of school after giving birth), school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV), early sexual and co-living relations between girls and boys and early marriage (5.1 percent of girls and 1.4 percent of boys marry before the age of 15). Also, with an insufficient number of secondary education schools in the country, parents are often reluctant to let their girls travel the long distances to school because of concerns for their physical safety and the potential risks of GBV. GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) occur in schools yet there is no specific legislation on sexual harassment in education.
11. **STP has made significant progress on gender equality but this has not translated directly into empowerment of adolescent girls and economic empowerment of women.** There have also been improvements in girls' access to education with achievement of full gender parity in basic and secondary education. Regarding gender equality in the social context, between 1990 and 2012, the country experienced a decline in the overall fertility rate from 5.8 to 3.6 births per woman and a significant drop in infant mortality rates from 69.4 to 25.2. Despite these decreases, the fertility rates among adolescent girls remain high (96 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19 years) which is directly correlated with high dropouts rates among pregnant girls. Most girls are not given the opportunity to continue their education and complete secondary schooling once pregnant. Despite overall improvements in several human development outcomes, many pregnant adolescent girls do not have the opportunity to acquire the education and skills necessary for the labor market. As a consequence, unemployment among women is three times higher than among men (14.5 percent compared to 5 percent) and the unemployment rate among youth is 21.3 percent, much higher than the rate of those 25 to 44 years of age (7.7 percent) and those from 45 to 64 years of age (3.1 percent) (IOF, 2017). Despite the law on domestic violence, gender-based violence (GBV) is relatively common, with alcohol abuse playing a critical role in its occurrence. One out of three girls and women aged 15-49 years experienced intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.

Poor learning outcomes

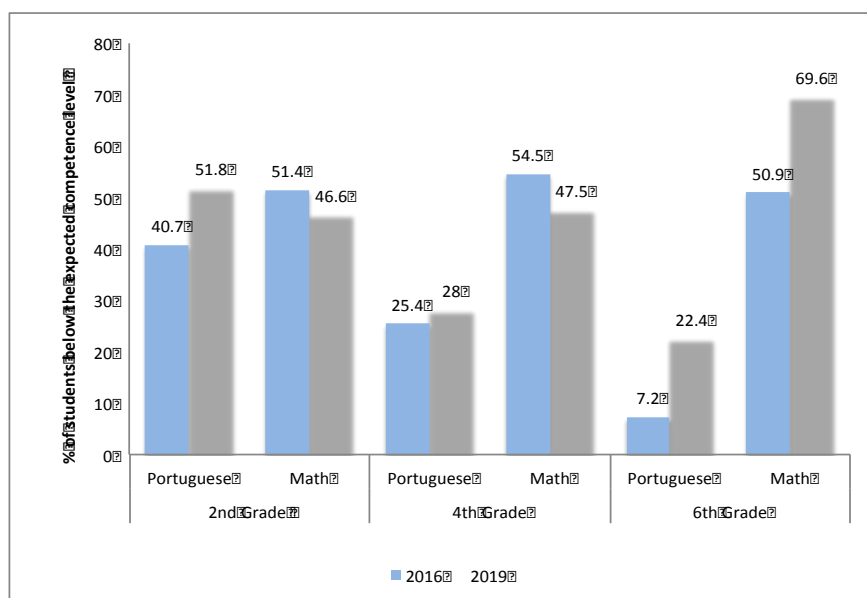
12. **Despite progress made in recent years in increasing access to education, learning outcomes in STP remain low.** Though data on student learning outcomes are limited, available data show low acquisition of basic skills across all

³ Considering that in STP the GER is above 100 percent in basic education, there are out-of-school children because of the high age-grade distortion in the system.



levels of education. The results of a reading assessment conducted in 2014 by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) found that children in grade 1 had not developed primary school readiness skills.⁴ The average score on the readiness scale was only 44 points (out of 100). The Large-Scale Assessment of Basic Education (*Avaliação Aferida de Larga Escala no Ensino Básico - AALEB*) carried out in 2016 under the World Bank-financed STP Quality Education For All (QEFA) Project (P146877) found that two-thirds of grade 2 students did not have the expected competencies in mathematics and Portuguese while fewer than half of the students in grades 4 and 6 had basic Portuguese skills and only 20 percent had the expected math skills. The proportion of grade 2 students with zero scores on the achievement tests were 4.2 percent and 10.4 percent in Portuguese and mathematics, respectively. The 2019 AALEB shows an increase in the percentage of students below the expected competence level, especially in 2nd grade Portuguese and 6th grade math. Figure 2 shows the percentage of grade 2, 4 and 6 students below the expected competence levels in 2016 and 2019.

Figure 2: Percentage of grades 2, 4 and 6 students below the expected competence level – Portuguese and Mathematics – AALEB 2016 and 2019



Source: STP AALEB 2016 and 2019 reports.

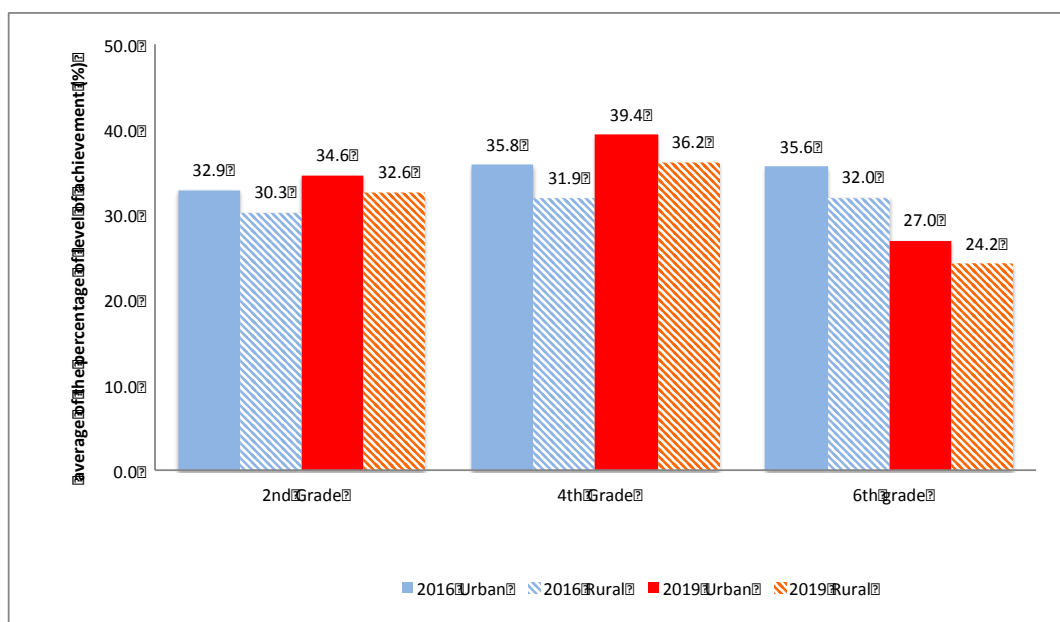
13. At the secondary level, learning outcomes are even lower. According to the findings of the 2019 Large Scale Assessment of Secondary Education (*Avaliação Aferida de Larga Escala no Ensino Secundário - AALES*) supported by the Portuguese Cooperation, 95 percent of grade 9 and 12 students did not have basic competencies in Portuguese and mathematics. Regarding the exams results, the high-stake National Certificate Exam (NCE, *Exame Nacional*) in 2017 showed that 36 percent of grade 9 and 49 percent of the grade 12 students were repeaters (taking the exam for another time) indicating that a large portion of students do not pass the certificate exam the first time. Both the assessment and exam results in secondary education reveal the lack of basic skills among youth in STP.

⁴ The primary school readiness score includes five dimensions of skills (space/time, quantities, rhythm, association, and graphism). The score represents the percent of questions a test taker answered correctly.



14. **Learning outcomes show significant disparities by region and by urban/rural areas.** The findings of the AALEB show that while nationally 51 percent of grade 2 students did not have the minimum competencies in math required for that grade, some regions performed worse than others – particularly regions which are mostly rural, including, for example, *Caue* (63 percent) and *Lobata* (68 percent). The results were similar to those of the 4th and 6th graders, where students in urban regions also outperformed those living in mostly rural regions. The AALEB 2019 shows that disparities did not change by urban/rural areas. Figure 3 shows the average percentage of level of achievement according to location for the 2nd, 4th and 6th graders.

Figure 3: Average of percentage of level of achievement – 2nd, 4th and 6th grades – AALEB 2016 and 2019 – Urban and Rural areas



Source: STP AALEB 2016 and 2019 reports.

15. Some of the factors driving low learning outcomes in basic education include: (a) ineffective teacher management; (b) lack of a well-trained and qualified teaching force; and (c) poor learning conditions. Each of these factors is further described in detail below.

(a) Ineffective teacher management

16. **Ineffective teacher management, recruitment and deployment.** The Government has not established clear protocols or policies for teacher recruitment, deployment and transfers; consequently, new teachers are hired largely on an *ad hoc* basis – not guided by strategy or long-term plans to promote their efficient allocation. Teacher workforce planning is not regularly undertaken to address potential shortages and/or oversupply of teachers, nor is the planning process guided by strategies for reallocating, redeploying and retiring teachers currently in schools. Although a new certification process for teachers has recently been developed, this has yet to be implemented and teacher recruitment is still not merit-based or guided by an objective assessment of applicants’/teachers’ pedagogical skills or competencies. Additionally, the Government continues to hire temporary teachers to address the increase in classrooms size (due to the high rate of repetition). These temporary teachers are often recruited without validating



their qualifications and ensuring they meet basic minimum standards. Moreover, the Government neither offers an induction for new teachers nor a probationary period before teachers are tenured. The Government uses a single salary pay scale for all teachers across the country. This salary pay scale is based on experience, degrees, and working conditions (class size, location) and teachers are not provided additional training and incentives to work in rural areas. As a result of these limitations, the proportion of qualified teachers in rural areas is low – on average only 21 percent of teachers in rural areas are qualified – compared with 79 percent of teachers in urban areas. Further, since only teachers at the secondary level (which usually have larger classes) receive additional payments, there is a significant incentive for teachers to leave basic education to become teachers at the secondary level – which often results in better performing and more qualified teachers leaving basic education to teach at the secondary level.

(b) Lack of a well-trained and qualified teaching force

17. **A large number of teachers do not have adequate qualifications to teach at the level they are teaching.** According to teacher guidelines and recently adopted teacher standards, a teacher must have pedagogical training and completed either secondary education or have a degree in tertiary education in order to teach. However, due to insufficient teacher training programs and unclear recruitment guidelines and lack of enforcement, many teachers still lack these qualifications. For example, at the secondary level, around one-half (48 percent) of teachers do not have a tertiary degree and no training in effective teaching pedagogies. In STP, poorly qualified teachers is one of the driving factors leading to low learning outcomes. Teacher standards and a teacher certification process was developed under the STP QEFA Project but this is still in the early stages of implementation. Enforcing these teacher standards, implementing the certification process, and improving teacher training programs, especially in effective teaching pedagogies is critical moving forward.

(c) Poor conditions of the learning environment

18. **The learning environment is inadequate.** The learning environment is characterized by overcrowding, dilapidated classrooms, and limited equipment and supplementary materials for teachers. Textbooks have not been updated for more than ten years. The MEES does not have a well-defined or financially sustainable textbook procurement and management system. Textbooks are not free, and students are required to pay a fee to photocopy the textbooks, but most students cannot afford to do this. Besides the availability of distance learning centers established under the STP QEFA Project, there is limited support to use digital technologies that hinders the development of digital skills amongst teacher and students.
19. **According to the 2018 ESA, in preschool education, the average classroom size was 39.9 students and the average number of students per toilet was 98.1 at the national level.** The average classroom size varies greatly from district to district. In 2017, the average number of students per classroom varies from 17.8 in the RAP to 69.5 in *Agua Grande*. The district of the autonomous RAP is the best endowed in terms of sanitary toilets with an average of 30.3 students per sanitary toilet, compared to 219.4 in *Agua Grande*. Similarly, while all schools in the district of *Caue* have a canteen, only 9.1 percent have a canteen in *Agua Grande*.
20. **There is an average of 63.5 students per classroom and 177.1 students per toilet in basic education.** There is significant variation in the number of students per classroom across districts with, for example, 74.8 students per classroom in the district of *Agua Grande* and 41.8 students per classroom in the district of *Caue*. Regarding the availability of sanitary facilities in the school, *Caue* District is the best equipped with 49.1 students per toilet compared to 279.6 in the district of *Lobata*. In addition, although relatively few schools in the country are without electricity



(13.8 percent) and without water (6.9 percent), these proportions reach 45.5 percent in the district of *Lobata* and 20 percent in the district of *Cantagalo*.

Low internal efficiency

21. Repetition is high at all levels of education in STP with rates higher than in other SSA countries. In 2017, 14 percent of STP students enrolled in basic education repeated their grades. In SSA, the repetition rate, on average, is 9.9 percent in the first and second cycles of basic education, and 13 percent in the third cycle of basic and secondary education. The percentages of repeaters are significantly higher in the 2nd (23 percent), 4th (17 percent), and 6th (15 percent) grades, when the NCE is mandatory (and determines promotion to the next grade level). The practice of holding children back is more common in higher grades. In 2017, the repetition rate was 26 percent in the third cycle of basic education and 25 percent in secondary education. In the STP education system, teachers have autonomy in deciding whether to retain a child in the same grade or whether to promote them to the next grade – which often results in teachers weighing more heavily factors other than academic performance. For example, teachers may promote a student given his/her observed disruptive behavior or lack of attention. This one-off approach to decision-making with regards to transitioning to the next grade in combination with other factors -- including the low quality of teaching and the lack of an effective policy to support struggling students – contributes to the high repetition rates. Some governments deployed Lenient Grade Promotion Policies to reduce significantly the repetition rates and, consequently, increase internal efficiency. This kind of policy allows the education system to decide about retaining or promoting students based on student factors and the education system parameters. It is a middle ground vis a vis the automatic promotion policy. Lenient Grade Promotion usually creates grades cycles of two, three or four years and eliminates retention within that period. Also, this policy uses national or large-scale exams at the end of the cycles as the main criteria of student promotion. For instance, Mozambique does not allow repetition within the grades of each learning cycle, while the promotion between cycles is based on exams occurring in the 2nd, 5th and 7th grades. In Tanzania, there are classroom assessments at the end of the 1st to the 6th grades to assess the achievement of the students, but they can only be retained if the parents make a formal request to the school. In the 7th grade there is a high-stake national exam that the school can retain the students lagging behind.

22. A large number of children in basic education are over-age. The percentage of over-age enrollment in the first and second cycle of basic education is significant: 48 percent in 4th grade and 70 percent in 6th grade are over-age. This is, in part, due to late entry into the system and high repetition rates. This results in significant overcrowding and a high student-to-teacher ratio (STR) (63.5 to 1 in the first and second cycles of basic education in 2017). There is also significant variation in STR across districts, ranging from 41.8 to 1 in *Caue* to 74.8 to 1 in *Agua Grande*.

Weak management and accountability

(a) Ineffective school leadership and accountability for learning at the school level

23. Selection and hiring of school management staff are based on political appointment. School principals are not selected using a meritocratic process but rather are political appointments. Therefore, many principals have no experience in education and/or are not held accountable for school management and performance, such as student learning outcomes or student flow. Also, there is a significant turnover of principals because of the frequent staff turnover in the MEES.

24. Lack of an adequate supervision system at the school level further drives inadequate teaching and learning in the classroom. There is a central system of school supervision. Although recent efforts have been made to improve



supervision practices, such as hiring pedagogical supervisors, the system still need significant strengthening so supervision practices are more frequent and schools receive useful and timely feedback. This inefficient supervision without a systematized monitoring system results in a rudimentary level of school management and lack of school accountability. At the school level, principals also do not oversee teachers' time on task – which is a critical issue identified in the 2018 ESA with approximately 44 percent of the third cycle basic education school teachers and more than half of secondary school teachers teaching fewer than 14 hours per week

25. **Even though guidelines and directives exist, there is a lack of coordination among the central, district, and school-levels.** Consequently, there is inefficient management of the pedagogical, administrative, financial, material and human resources. As a result of this lack of governance, school managers often establish their own management models (or do not follow one) which can exacerbate disparities between districts. There is also a limited accountability chain which stymies community involvement in school management.

(b) Limited assessment and monitoring and evaluation system

26. **Data from the national student learning assessment is not yet systematically used to improve teaching and to guide education policy decision-making.** While a national assessment system has recently been established, further work is needed to strengthen its ability to provide timely feedback and use this data to guide teaching and for other decision-making purposes. There is no linkage between student learning outcomes and teacher performance which could be used by the MEES to target specific training needs of teachers to improve student learning outcomes. Further, it does not identify low performing teachers. Finally, STP does not participate in any international assessments which impedes the ability to benchmark performance against established international standards.

27. **An Education Management Information System (EMIS) was recently developed under the STP QEFA Project.** While the system has been established, future efforts are needed to enable this system to provide data in a way that it can be used for timely decision-making. Greater quality controls to ensure accuracy of data is required and measures to mitigate when electricity and internet are not available. The EMIS developed uses technological innovations, however the reality of the current context needs to adequately factor in frequent energy shortages nationwide..

Lack of sustainable financing

28. **The lack of sustainable financing for the education sector is hampering the continuation of programs developed in collaboration with development partners (DPs).** Teachers' salaries represent the greatest proportion of the education budget (74.1 percent), followed by subsidies and transfers for tertiary education (19.7 percent). In 2017, the current expenditure accounted for about 80% of public spending on education, of which approximately 70% are expenditure on teacher salaries. Also, 30 percent of education expenditures are used to cover the cost of teachers' overtime for teaching in a different school or for teaching in a crowded classroom (50 students or more). This leaves limited discretionary resources to make investments in inputs that would lead to increase in access and improvements in education quality and to guarantee the continuation of basic educational programs. For instance, in December 2018, the school feeding program was discontinued in most schools because of lack of funds. Even though the government continues to charge fees (including for registration, school feeding, and school uniforms, etc.) the services are not necessarily provided or will not necessarily continue to be provided.

29. **The previous IDA-GPE-financed STP QEFA Project (US\$5.5 million, P146877) closed on June 30, 2019.** A majority of indicators' end-of project targets were achieved or, in some cases, exceeded. With support from the project, a distance learning system for teacher training is now in place and there are more in-service teachers who have received



some formal training and have begun a process to become certified. In relation to the challenges of operating the distance learning centers, besides the structural challenges related to the lack of power supply for schools and the cost of internet access, the digital skills of teachers are extremely limited. In addition, lessons learned have been drawn from this recent project and will be applied to operational challenges such as misprocurement and payment of transportation subsidies.

30. **The Government has developed a comprehensive new Education Sector Plan 2019-2023 (*Carta de Política Educativa - CPE 2023*) which touches on a number of these challenges building on the findings of the 2018 ESA.** The CPE is the result of a participatory and inclusive development process that represents the vision of the Government, DPs, and civil society for the sector for the next four years. The CPE 2023 reflects the changes introduced in the 2018 National Education System Law. The priorities of the CPE are to address the learning crisis facing all levels of education and to improve the efficiency and equality of the country's education system. The proposed Project would support the implementation of the CPE focusing on selected critical issues. The levels of education to be supported under the proposed Project are pre-school, basic education, secondary education, as well as teacher training and management, efficiency management and development of institutional capacity.
31. **The project will coordinate with DPs that are currently operating on the ground to design a tailored project and to avoid overlapping of efforts.** Considering the analytical work and small-scale interventions in the areas of early childhood education, out-of-school children and girls' empowerment, UNICEF would be a key partner involved in support to the proposed Project. The Portuguese Cooperation is another partner with which the Bank would coordinate closely to avoid overlap, mainly related to activities that they are supporting in secondary education and school management. The Project would also promote cooperation with small non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that currently provide support to the education sector in STP.

Relationship to CPF

32. **The proposed Girls Empowerment and Quality Education for All Project is aligned with the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for the period FY14-FY18 and more specifically with the theme "Reducing Vulnerability and Strengthening Human Capacity".** The proposed activities would strongly support the achievement of outcome 9 of the CPS, namely: "Improved training of teachers in primary education". The CPS has recently been broadened and extended by one year (to FY20) with the new Performance Learning Report (PLR). The proposed Project fits under the second pillar of the PLR: "Enhancing the statistical system, reducing vulnerability and strengthening human capacity".
33. **The proposed Project's focus corresponds to the priorities of the World Bank's gender strategy, the Africa Region Strategy update, and the Human Capital Business Plan.** The World Bank's gender strategy (FY16 – FY23) emphasizes the importance of gender equality in achieving the World Bank's twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. One of the four objectives of the strategy is to improve human endowment. The proposed Project design incorporates a gender lens with its results chain taking into account gender issues and aspects, allowing for the Project to identify, address and monitor key gender issues in the education sector. The Project is also aligned with the Bank agenda outlined in the Africa Region Strategy update and the Human Capital Business Plan. Mainly, the goal is to tackle the learning crisis and the development of basic skills that would contribute to the development of human capital in Africa.
34. **The proposed Project also includes a US\$2.1 million Maximum Country Allocation (MCA) from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and its design is consistent with the GPE strategic goals.** In line with the GPE focus



areas, the Project would support investments to improve the quality of basic education while aiming to bring about transformative changes in equity and efficiency of the system. Additional and ongoing programs of DPs would complement progress towards these objectives and the Government budget as identified in the ESP. The Local Education Group (LEG) is collaborating with the design of the proposed Project while ensuring alignment and potential integration with ongoing and future bilateral assistance.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve learning and school accountability in basic education and to promote girls' retention in secondary school.

Key Results (From PCN)

35. Progress towards achievement of the PDO would be measured by the following indicators:

- 1) Percentage of basic education teachers receiving project-supported training demonstrating improved teaching practices in the classroom
- 2) Percentage of basic schools with results agreement with principals implemented
- 3) Repetition rates in the third cycle of basic and secondary education (disaggregated by gender)
- 4) Dropout rates in the third cycle of basic and secondary education (disaggregated by gender)

36. PDO-level indicators are aligned with two GPE pillars of learning (indicator 1) and efficiency (indicator 2).

D. Concept Description

37. **The proposed Project would be financed through a proposed IDA grant in the amount of US\$15 million and a proposed GPE grant in the amount of US\$2.1 million, using an Investment Project Financing (IPF) with a Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs) lending instrument.** The Project aims to address the challenges facing the education system by supporting system-wide activities to tackle poor learning outcomes at all levels and high repetition rates. Also, the Project intends to support a more conducive learning environment for girls' empowerment. The scope of the Project is general education (covering preschool throughout secondary education), but each component would focus on different levels of education to achieve the development objectives. Components 1 and 2 would focus on improving the quality of preschool and basic education and Component 3 would focus on improving efficiency of basic and secondary education.

38. **The proposed Project would also support strategies to promote the empowerment of girls through education.** The Project aims to empower girls and young women by increasing the likelihood that they will enroll in and complete secondary education - which will in turn provide them with additional opportunities of either continuing their education or entering the labor market, thereby improving their life choices. The main actions supported under the proposed Project aim to reduce dropout rates among girls and to facilitate the return of adolescent mothers to school. The Project would also support awareness-raising measures to address gender stereotypes in schools and within communities. These activities intend to complement each other to create a prevention structure whereby girls are empowered to make their own decisions and a protection structure for pregnant girls, so they can continue their schooling. The target audience for these activities is school-age children and the school community.



39. The use of digital technologies and the development of digital skills would be promoted under the proposed Project.

The project design would aim to devise innovative and efficient solutions for accelerated teaching and learning. For example, the Project would promote an adaptive learning program to support teachers and students' use of tablets and energized textbooks to access digital content and the development of digital skills of teachers and students in basic education. The Project would also promote low cost technological solutions, such as open source software, to guarantee the sustainability of the activities.

40. The proposed Project includes four components, each of which is described in further detail below.

Component 1 – Improve the quality of teaching and teacher management

41. The objectives of this component are to improve teaching in preschool and in the first cycle of basic education (literacy and numeracy) and to improve the country's teacher management system.

To achieve these objectives, this component would support the provision of in-service teacher training in Portuguese and mathematics in early grades for low performing teachers, and improvements in the entire teacher management system.

42. Subcomponent 1.1 - Teacher professional development.

The objective of this subcomponent is to improve teaching in basic education by means of upgrading the teacher professional development program. Building on the lessons learned under the QEFA Project, it will support further upgrading of the distance learning program for both preschool and basic school teachers in collaboration with other DPs (such as UNICEF and Portuguese Cooperation). For preschool teachers, the Project will support the development and roll out of a distance learning program and relevant tablet content and teaching materials (teachers' scripted manuals with the new curriculum guidelines). For basic education school teachers (grades 1 to 6), the Project will support the development of structured pedagogical and coaching programs and teaching materials (lesson plans, printed and for tablets) to teach basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The Project will also use technological strategies to overcome the country's capacity and structural constraints such as the electricity shortage and limited connectivity, and promote more exposure to digital content and the development of digital skills for teachers.

43. Subcomponent 1.2 – Teaching and learning materials (TLMS).

The subcomponent objective is to provide TLMS associated with the structured pedagogical teachers training in preschool and basic education. For example, this sub-component will finance the provision of play and learning materials for preschool children and learning materials such as energized books⁵ and supplementary materials for students in basic education schools.

44. Subcomponent 1.3 –Teacher management and accountability.

The objective of this subcomponent is to strengthen teacher management and accountability. It would support the design and implementation of merit- and need-based teacher recruitment and deployment policies and strengthen the capacity of the MEES to monitor and evaluate teacher performance and practices. In the area of teacher management, this could include: (i) revising the MEES human resource policies, implementing entry and qualification requirements (certification) and designing educators' career structure; (ii) developing a code of conduct for teachers and other education personnel; (iii) developing a monetary and/or nonmonetary reward program for basic education teachers; (iv) revising the legislation pertaining to overtime payment for teachers, working conditions, working time requirements, and task profiles; and (v) implementing salary differentiation measures based on classroom observation and teachers' value-added. In the area

⁵ Energized books are books with a QR code printed that make available digital educational contents and tools. This strategy was developed by the Ekstep NGO (www.ekstep.org) and it has been implemented widely across India.



of teacher accountability, this subcomponent would support the development of the system's capacity to monitor and evaluate teaching in the classroom. As such, it will support the MEES to design and implement a systematic approach to evaluate teachers' practices based on classroom observation. This will allow the pedagogical coordinators and principals to provide individualized feedback to teachers, including on the quality of teacher-student interaction. This systematic approach to evaluation will create incentives for the establishment of teacher learning communities within schools to promote the exchange of good practices and lateral accountability among teachers.

Component 2 – Strengthen management and accountability

45. **The objectives of this component are to (i) strengthen the national learning assessment system, and (ii) strengthen school leadership and accountability.** Under this component, the Project will support the upgrading and strengthening of a national assessment strategy as a tool to improve teaching and education policy decision-making. This component will also prepare the groundwork to hold teachers, principals and supervisors accountable for the students' performance.

46. **Subcomponent 2.1 - Strengthen the national learning assessment system.** The objective of this subcomponent is to upgrade and modernize the current learning assessment system. It would include several activities. First, it would support the development of a digital classroom assessment system based on the TEACH classroom observation instrument to provide immediate feedback to support teaching and learning.⁶ Second, it would support the MEES in participating in a regional assessment (e.g., the Programme for the Analysis of Education Systems - PASEC) and in carrying out other student assessments (e.g., Early grade reading/mathematics assessment - EGRA/EGMA). At the pre-school level, the project would support the establishment of an M&E system based on the Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes (MELQO) instrument.

47. **Subcomponent 2.2 – Strengthen school leadership and accountability.** The objective of this subcomponent is to strengthen school leadership and school governance and management. Under this subcomponent, the project would support (i) the development and implementation of a professional leadership training program for school principals, together with the design and implementation of an incentive mechanism which would include results agreements and a school-level bonus pay program; (ii) the design and implementation of a policy governing the meritocratic recruitment and deployment of school principals; and (iii) the establishment of school-management committees. The school principals would be responsible for school management, teachers' pedagogical support, and student learning outcomes which would be detailed in the school principal's results agreement. The MEES would design and implement a school-level bonus pay program to incentivize the achievement of results.

Component 3 – Improve internal efficiency

48. **The objectives of this component are to promote equity in access to quality education and improve the internal efficiency of the system. Specifically, this component will target poor students in rural areas who are lagging behind and reduce repetition and dropout rates in basic and secondary education.** This component would include two subcomponents: (i) targeted interventions to address inequities **with a focus on promoting girls' retention in secondary school**; and (ii) supply-side measures to improve the efficiency of the system. This component would also

⁶ Teach is an open source classroom observation tool that provides a window into one of the less explored and more important aspects of a student's education: what goes on in the classroom. The tool is intended to be used in primary classrooms (grades 1-6) and was designed to help low- and middle-income countries track and improve teaching quality.



support cross-cutting activities to reduce high rates of adolescent childbearing and girls dropping out of secondary school.

49. **Sub-component 3.1 – Targeted interventions to address inequities, with a focus on promoting girls’ retention in secondary school.** The objective of this subcomponent is to design and implement targeted interventions to improve learning among students lagging behind. The targeted interventions could include: (i) the development and implementation of an early warning system⁷ to monitor students with learning difficulties, including their personal identification numbers, stages of socioemotional development, and learning achievement in each subject to predict dropout and identify students who could benefit from remedial interventions; (ii) the development and implementation of a life skills program⁸ with information about the educational returns to the labor market and the value of education; and (iii) the development and implementation of remedial interventions for students at risk of failure and accelerated education programs for over-age students identified by the early warning system. The Project would use technological solutions to support low performing teachers to deliver effective teaching in these targeted remedial interventions.
50. **This sub-component would also support girls’ retention, and completion of secondary education.** Early pregnancy and the lack of completion of formal education are the main factors that contribute to the vulnerability of poorer families, mainly in rural areas. To tackle these problems, the project would support the following activities: (i) incorporating content on boys’ and girls’ socio-emotional skills, girls’ empowerment, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), and positive masculinity, including gender-sensitive instruction in teacher training plans, (ii) raising awareness about the value of education for students, principals, teachers and parents through engagement and behavior change campaigns, including on gender stereotypes in STP, (iii) developing a behavioral intervention to protect girls at risk of early pregnancy from lagging behind and dropping out; and (iv) supporting school health and hygiene programs to reduce girls’ absenteeism. The third action would be coordinated in partnership with the Ministry of Labor, Solidarity, Family and Vocational Training and articulated with the program of conditional cash transfers developed under the IDA-financed Social Protection and Skills Project (PPSDC).
51. **Sub-component 3.2 – Supply-side measure to improve the internal efficiency of the system.** The objective of this subcomponent is to improve internal efficiency by reducing repetition rates in basic and secondary education. The teacher’s decision to retain or promote a student could be based on factors other than academic performance, including student department and lack of family support, resulting in high repetition rates. The subcomponent would support the design, adoption, and implementation of a Lenient Grade Promotion Policy to reduce repetition. The actions would include: (i) the development of a framework for the Lenient Grade Promotion Policy, and (ii) conducting a communications campaign for teachers and parents to provide accurate information about the Lenient Grade Promotion Policy. With a Lenient Grade Promotion Policy in place, the system allows the decision for retaining or promoting a student within cycles to be based on factors associated with the reduction of students’ retention, for example the student commitment to attend remedial classes or parents formal request.

Component 4 – Technical Assistance, Project Monitoring and Management

⁷ An early warning dropout system is an empirically based intervention to predict who will drop out several months to several years before dropout occurs using student-level data (Adelman et al., 2017).

⁸ *Life skills* programs are designed to teach a broad set of social and behavioral skills—also referred to as “soft” or “non-cognitive” skills—that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands of everyday life (World Bank, 2013).



52. This component would finance project coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and research and would include two subcomponents as follows:

(a) **Subcomponent 4.1. Project coordination, monitoring and evaluation.** Under this subcomponent, the Project would support the creation and maintenance of a project coordination unit (PCU) that would be responsible for coordinating project-supported activities and overseeing implementation. The fiduciary activities would be carried out by the fiduciary agency for the Project (*Agência Fiduciária de Administração de Projetos - AFAP*), supported by DPs in STP. Some of the investment and operating costs of the AFAP would be funded by the Project.

(b) **Subcomponent 4.2. Technical assistance for capacity development, research and policy analysis.** Under the Project, several evaluations would be carried out on critical topics: such as: (i) the effectiveness of phonetic and constructivist literacy strategies, (ii) the effects of repetition on socio-emotional skills, and (iii) the impact of programs to change the mindset of teachers about student failure and repetition. Also, the team will propose to evaluate the pilot of two alternative types of preschool service delivery: community and public private partnership.

Project Financing

53. The proposed Project would be financed through a proposed IDA Credit of US\$15 million and a proposed GPE Grant of US\$2.1 million. Components 1, 2, and 3 will use a Results-Based Financing (RBF) modality, with disbursements made against selected (eligible) key budget line items of the MEES's annual budgets (also referred to as Eligible Expenditure Programs, EEPs), up to a capped absolute amount. Disbursements would be conditional on pre-specified results, as measured by Disbursement-Linked Indicators (DLIs), which will be detailed at appraisal. Component 4 would follow a traditional IPF approach; therefore, the funds would be used based on regularly updated procurement and training plans, which would be reviewed by the World Bank.

Cross-cutting areas

54. **Gender inclusion.** Project preparation will ensure that gender disparities and issues identified in the education sector are adequately addressed through the project design. The Project will finance both school- and system-level interventions to improve gender equality in education. The proposed project will seek to support and align with reproductive health and/or nutrition programs. A social impact assessment, including a gender-based violence (GBV) and a social management plan (SMP) assessment will be carried out as part of project preparation.

55. **Citizens' Engagement (CE).** CE will be embedded in the project design through various activities, including consultations, collaboration, school-based development approach and grievance redressal mechanisms (GRMs) that will be deployed at various stages of the project cycle. A Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) will be prepared during project preparation to ensure a high degree of engagement is maintained throughout project implementation.

56. **Digital technology.** The project will use technology and innovative approaches for accelerated learning, to bridging the learning gap and improve classroom practice. For instance, the Project will support the provision of *energized books* for students and digital tablets for teachers where teachers receive tablets loaded with lesson plans, video clips, and other resources.

57. **Inclusive Education.** A large portion of children with disabilities in STP are not enrolled in school due to limited accessibility, lack of services as well as stigma and marginalization. The proposed project will aim to support inclusive



education by supporting capacity building activities of the reduced special education team of the MEES. The following interventions will be discussed with the MEES team during the preparation of the project: inclusion of indicators in the EMIS to capture disability/functioning status; technical assistance to the Government to further strengthen the existing *Development Strategy for Special Education*; and capacity building of personnel working in the Special Education unit in the MEES. The project design will reflect the *World Bank Group’s Commitment on Disability and Inclusive Development* and support the Government’s aim in promoting inclusive education -- ensuring all children have access to a quality education – as described in a recently approved law.

Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

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