



# Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 27-Jul-2020 | Report No: PIDC29960



## The World Bank

Strengthening Education and Skills Training Systems to Support Human Capital Development in ESwatini (P173151)

### BASIC INFORMATION

#### A. Basic Project Data

Country Eswatini	Project ID P173151	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Strengthening Education and Skills Training Systems to Support Human Capital Development in ESwatini (P173151)
Region AFRICA EAST	Estimated Appraisal Date Jan 11, 2021	Estimated Board Date Apr 14, 2021	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Finance	Implementing Agency Ministry of Education and Training	

#### Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve access, completion and the quality of basic education (including Early Childhood Development and Education), skills training and support services for girls, boys and youth in ESwatini.

### PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

#### SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	35.00
Total Financing	35.00
of which IBRD/IDA	35.00
Financing Gap	0.00

#### DETAILS

##### World Bank Group Financing

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)	35.00
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Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Concept Review Decision



Moderate

Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

Other Decision (as needed)

## B. Introduction and Context

### Country Context

1. **ESwatini is a small landlocked country in Southern Africa, bordering South Africa and Mozambique, with a population of approximately 1.1 million<sup>1</sup>.** About 12 percent of the population are under the age of five<sup>2</sup>, and with a median age of 21.7 years and 56 percent of the population below 25 years of age<sup>3</sup>, ESwatini is one of the youngest countries in the world.
2. **Although classified as a lower middle-income country (with GNI per capita US\$3,930 in 2018), high poverty, especially in rural areas, regional disparities in poverty, food insecurity and income inequality (Gini coefficient of 54.6<sup>4</sup>) challenge ESwatini's economic and human development potential.<sup>5</sup>** The national poverty rate fell only modestly between 2010 and 2017 (from 63 percent to 58.9 percent), and the poverty incidence is very high, especially in rural areas (at 70 percent), and particularly so in two regions i.e. Lubombo and Shiselweni at 71.5 percent and 67.3 percent respectively. Poverty affects all aspects of life, with potentially life-long effects. Almost two-thirds of the population are food insecure<sup>6</sup> which has detrimental effects on pregnant women and children.
3. **Economic growth has been slow and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, growth projections reflect a further deceleration.** The annual GDP growth rate declined from a 3.2 percent in 2016 to 1.9 percent in 2017 and 0.2 percent in 2018. The **economy** grew by 1.4 percent in 2019 and outlook projections indicated a potential 2.6 percent growth in 2020<sup>7</sup>. However, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, growth projections have been muted to below 1 percent for 2020.
4. **The Human Capital Index (HCI) for ESwatini is 0.41, ranking 124 out of 157 countries on the HCI, lower than the average for its income group.<sup>8</sup>** This implies that a child born in ESwatini will only be 41 percent as productive when (s)he grows up as (s)he could have been if (s)he were to attain good health and complete education by the age of 18. The HCI is a composite measure of survival of children under the age of five, educational attainment, stunting and the adult survival rate (Figure 1). The low HCI score in ESwatini is driven by a low adult survival rate, mainly **due** to HIV/AIDS, and by low levels of school **completion**. An examination of the individual components of HCI show that 95 of 100 children born in ESwatini survive to age 5. Children who start school at age 4 can expect to complete 8.2 years of school by age 18. However, when years of schooling are adjusted for quality of learning,

<sup>1</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/country/SZ> last accessed 14 June 2020

<sup>2</sup> ESwatini Population Census, 2017

<sup>3</sup> The Kingdom of ESwatini (forthcoming), Towards Equal Opportunity: Accelerating Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in ESwatini, Systematic Country Diagnostic

<sup>4</sup> Most recent year: 2016

<sup>5</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/country/ESwatini> Atlas Method, last accessed: 22 June 2020

<sup>6</sup> EHIES 2017; Word Bank 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Budget Speech, Ministry of Finance, Government of ESwatini, 14 February 2020.

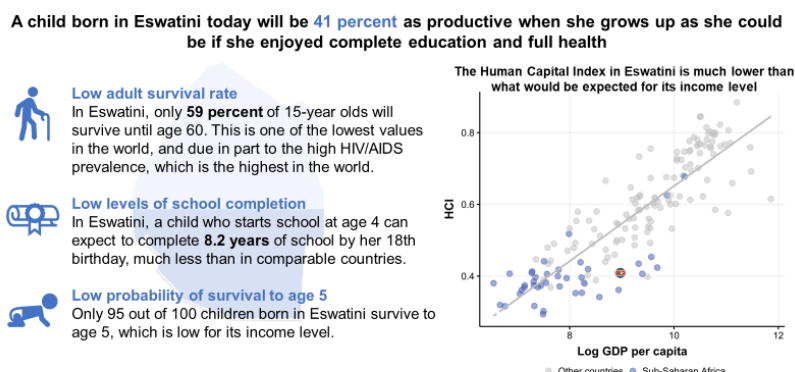
<sup>8</sup> World Bank. 2018 b. Human Capital Index ESwatini Brief. October 2018. [https://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/hci/HCI\\_2pager\\_SWZ.pdf](https://databank.worldbank.org/data/download/hci/HCI_2pager_SWZ.pdf)



the 8.2 years become equivalent to only 5.7 years. Fifty-nine percent of 15-year-olds will survive until age 60 and approximately 26 of 100 children are stunted.

5. **ESwatini has the highest rate of HIV infections in the world, with more than a quarter (27 percent) of its reproductive age population living with HIV.** Females are particularly at risk - 35 percent of women and adolescent girls between the ages of 15 and 49 years are HIV-positive, compared to 19 percent of boys and men in the same age group<sup>9</sup>. Largely, due the impact of HIV/AIDS, in 2017, about 86,000 children (or 16 percent of the total number of 0-17-year-olds in the country) were considered single **or** double orphans.<sup>10</sup> Compounding this crisis is the large number of children who are considered vulnerable due to illnesses experienced by parents, are abandoned by a parent or are living in extreme poverty resulting in a staggering 58 percent of the country's children being orphans and/or vulnerable children (OVCs)<sup>11</sup>.
6. **Overall, low levels of human capital are attributable to poor education and health outcomes, particularly relative to spending, due to challenges around efficient and equitable delivery of education and health services.** Education accounted for the highest share of total public spending in 2018/19 at 15.2 percent or 5.3 percent of GDP. In 2018/19, 10.1 percent of total public expenditure (3.4 percent of GDP) went to health. Government spending on social protection programs, however, is low at approximately 1 percent of GDP. Given ESwatini's sluggish economic growth and unpredictable external support for human development sectors, the Government will need to think about innovative financing mechanisms and more efficient and integrated ways to deliver social services to the population.

**Figure 1: Human Capital Index in ESwatini**



Source: World Bank, adapted from Human Capital Project. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/human-capital#Viz>

7. **The National Development Strategy, Vision 2022, aspires to position ESwatini among the 'top 10 percent of the medium human development group of countries', founded on sustainable development, social justice, and political stability.** Progress to achieve this vision has been hampered by slow implementation, the 2010-11 fiscal

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF 2019

<sup>10</sup> EHIES 2017

<sup>11</sup> <https://insight.wfp.org/in-the-country-of-orphans-fc8c369dfc4f>



crisis, 2015-16 drought, volatile transfers from the **Southern** African Customs Union (SACU), and more recently, by the COVID-19 pandemic.

8. **Upon taking office in 2019, the current Government committed to a ‘turnaround strategy’ to attain macro-fiscal stability and growth, accompanied by improvements in human capital development<sup>12</sup>.** Recognizing the importance of human capital as a contributor to economic growth, in March 2019, the Government joined the group of countries as the ‘early adopters’ of the **Human** Capital Project (HCP). This also responds to Outcome 3 of the National Development Plan (2019/20-2021/22): Towards Economic Recovery, which focuses on enhanced social and human capital development.

#### Sectoral and Institutional Context

9. **Strengthening human capital outcomes requires a holistic response to the multiple and varying needs of individuals.** That means enhancing the coordination of services towards a more individual-centered service delivery model, which is more flexible and harmonized across different sectors. It requires a change in the mindset and delivery of services in a manner that reflects the ‘whole of government approach’ by harnessing cross-sectoral synergies. This can entail, for example, coordinated planning, the use of common targeting criteria and tools to reach vulnerable populations, sharing digital platforms and **developing** interoperable systems to more effectively and efficiently manage and trace social service delivery. This individual-centered and holistic service delivery approach should focus on three stages of an individual’s **life cycle**: (i) Early Childhood; (ii) School Age; and (iii) Youth to Adulthood (see Figure 2). The focus should be on ensuring that all children are entitled to, and should receive, a comprehensive package of services to ensure they are able to reach their full potential. A description of this approach as well as some of the challenges which need to be addressed at each of the stages are highlighted below.

**Figure 2: Life cycle approach to Human Development in ESwatini**



#### **a) Early Childhood Development (from conception to 5-years-old)**

<sup>12</sup> Kingdom of ESwatini Strategic Road Map (2019-22).



10. ***ESwatini performs better in terms of child survival compared to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) but does not do as well as other lower-middle income countries.*** The under-five **mortality** rate in ESwatini was 53.9/1000 live births in 2017, while it was 78/1000 live births in SSA and 49/1000 live births in other lower-middle income countries. Diarrhea is currently the most significant cause of death of children under 5 years in ESwatini, accounting for nearly 20 percent of all deaths of children under 5 years. This can be attributed to malnutrition, poor hygiene and sanitation, and unsafe water sources. The percentage of children who are stunted below the age of five in ESwatini is 25.5 percent, lower than the average for SSA (34 percent) and lower-middle income countries (31.5 percent), but it is still high since 1 out of 4 children are stunted. As stunting compromises overall child development, in the long run, it reduces their potential to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. Neonatal mortality, which accounts for a third of total under-five deaths, is related to problems with pre-natal maternal health and nutrition status, the quality of antenatal care services (ANC), access to quality skilled delivery, postnatal care services (PNC), and challenges to manage the health of mothers and babies through the continuum of care. Infant mortality (0-24 months) is largely related to low birth weight, poor nutrition in the first 1,000 days of life, as well as the quality of integrated management of childhood illnesses (IMCI), both in hospitals and in the communities.
11. ***Up to 30 percent of all pregnancies in ESwatini are among adolescents.*** Teenage pregnancies are also a significant factor in poor outcomes and for human capital accumulation. While the adolescent fertility rate has declined in recent decades in ESwatini, at 77 births per 1,000 girls (2017), it remains very high and more than double the rate observed in South Asia. In addition to its negative impact on girls' education and the consequent risk of HIV, teenage pregnancy significantly contributes to maternal and child morbidity and mortality and to vicious intergenerational cycles of poor health and poverty.
12. ***The situation faced by children in ESwatini is nothing short of a crisis- in 2017, about 57 percent of children aged 0-17 years old were multidimensionally poor.*** Child deprivation is measured along the dimensions of well-being including child protection, health, nutrition, vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, child development, access to education, clothing, water and sanitation, housing and ICT. A UNICEF **study**<sup>13</sup>, using household survey data, found that about 57 percent of children in ESwatini were deprived in four or more of these dimensions of well-being. About 42 percent of ESwatini's population in were children under the age of 18 and targeting support to improve their well-being is of utmost importance for the future of the country.
13. ***The Government has taken several steps to improve access to Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) services, but much more needs to be done and at a faster pace.*** In 2002, the Government established Neighbourhood Care Points (NCPs) NCPs to support families dealing with the HIV/AIDS crisis, as well as orphans and vulnerable children. Today, there are 1800 NCP centres located at the community level providing nutrition services for children under the age of 8. In 2019, the World Food Programme (WFP) provided feeding for 52,300 children between the ages of 2-8 years old in about 1,700 of these sites, while the Government of Taiwan supported feeding programs for children in another 30 NCPs. There are also 'KaGoGo centres' (translated to 'Grandmothers' house) that were built and managed by communities, providing nutrition services for young children with support from the National Emergency Response Council to HIV/AIDS (NERCHA). In addition to these community centres, there are 224 Primary Health Care facilities in ESwatini that provide health and nutrition **services** to all children and a large cadre of Rural Health Motivators (RHM) that provide similar services to mothers and young children in their homes. Lastly, there are numerous community pre-schools and day-care centres in ESwatini that provide care and education services for children under the age of 7. These pre-schools and centres are privately financed and managed but need register with, and report to, the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), though this is not happening consistently. Separately, and financed through the Government's education

13 UNICEF, 2017, Quantitative Assessment of the Social Assistance System in the Kingdom of ESwatini



budget, the MoET is currently piloting one year of pre-school (Grade 0 classrooms) in 80 primary schools located in poor communities throughout the country.

14. ***The Government of ESwatini needs to first understand the scale and scope of services that are provided to children and associated outcomes in their early years to be able to strategically address access and quality concerns.*** In 2014, the reported coverage of ECDE services in ESwatini was about 29 percent<sup>14</sup>, which is low compared to the average across lower-middle income countries at 37.5 percent in 2018<sup>15</sup>. The issue in Eswatini, though, is that there isn't a consolidated and complete list of ECDE service providers nor the type of services offered to children. Across the fore-mentioned ECDE service providers, there is insufficient information on where these programs are located, what specific services are offered- and at what frequency- information about the care and learning environment, teacher qualifications/caregiver information, availability of learning materials such as books and play areas, costs of service provision, and early learning and development outcomes for children. In addition, many of the service providers fall under different Ministries (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Tinkhundla (Local Government), and coordination and monitoring of services is not systematized. Recently, the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO) has been assigned to coordinate these services across ministries and other implementing entities through an Inter-Ministerial committee/task team, which is in the process of being re-invigorated.

#### ***b) School-aged children (5 to 18-year-olds)***

15. This section focuses on two of the most pressing issues in education in ESwatini, namely, access to education and learning levels. There is a **cross**-cutting concern of equity in both access and learning.
16. ***Access to primary education is almost universal in ESwatini.*** The official starting age for children in primary school is six. Primary education is seven years, followed by three years of junior secondary and two years of senior secondary school (a total of 12 years). The table below shows some basic statistics of the education system in ESwatini as at 2017. Very little data is available **on** pre-primary education or Technical Vocational and Education Training (TVET) from the Annual Education Census.

***Table 1: Basic education statistics, 2017***

Indicators	Primary	Secondary
Number of Schools	624	285
Numbers of Students	237,500	74,000
Number of Teachers	8900	7000
Number of Students with Special Needs	7660	5220
Repetition Rate	13%	11%
Gross Enrolment Rate	131%	89%
Net Enrolment Rate	94%	46%

Source: MoET Annual Education Census Report, 2017

17. ***While access to the first year of primary school is almost universal in ESwatini, children start to drop out of school in junior secondary, particularly in Form 2 (Grade 9).*** The figure below shows that only 67 percent of those who start school in Grade 1 complete junior secondary education and only 44 percent complete senior secondary education. The high rates of student's dropping out of school before completing basic education, i.e. at latest 10 years of schooling, means significant resources are 'wasted' and the education system is inefficient in ESwatini.

<sup>14</sup> MICS 2014

<sup>15</sup> ECD data from UNICEF, 2019



## **The World Bank**

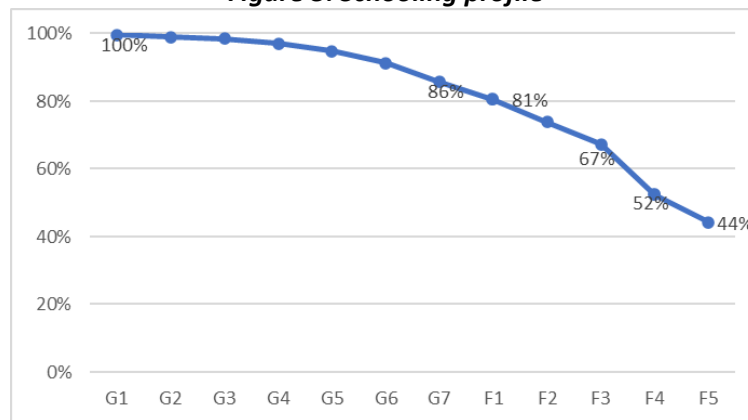
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Figure 3: Schooling profile

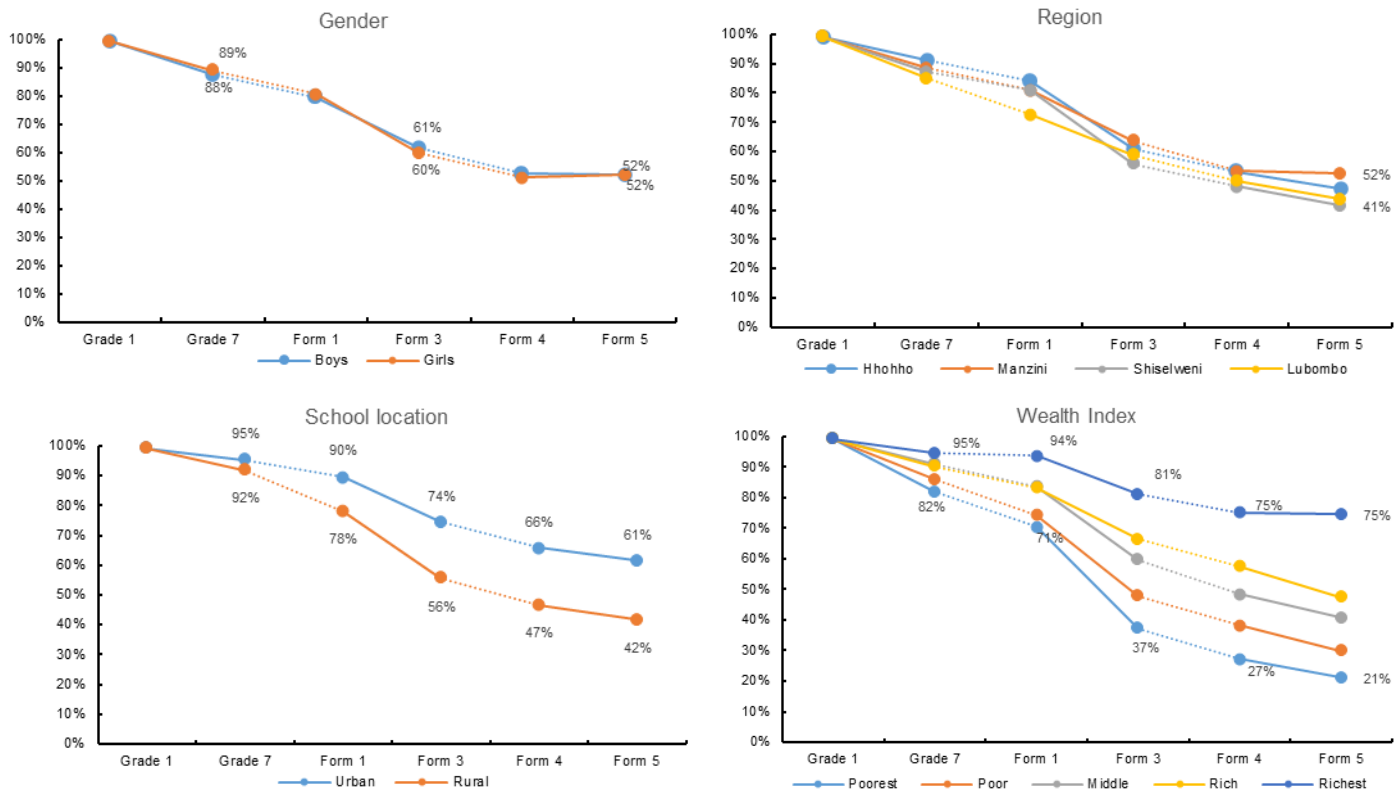


Source: World Bank, Forthcoming education sector analysis, based on MICS, 2014 data

18. **Retention of students is at its lowest in junior secondary education and there are gender, region, location, and income differences in access which need to be addressed (Figure 4).** The figure on the top left shows that there are no disparities in access between boys and girls in Eswatini. About half of both boys and girls who start primary school complete secondary education. There are disparities by region with fewer students in the Shiselweni region completing senior secondary education compared to students in the Manzini region. However, disparities based on where a student is located (rural versus urban school), are larger than regional disparities with only 42 percent of students attending schools in rural areas completing senior **secondary** education compared to 61 percent of students attending urban schools. The largest factor driving disparities in access to education is the wealth of a household. About 21 percent of students from the poorest households completes senior secondary education compared to over 70 percent of students from the richest households. Combining these factors, there is almost a 55-percentage point difference in the secondary school completion rates between the most advantaged group, i.e. boys in urban areas (75 percent) and the most disadvantaged group, i.e. girls in rural areas (21 percent).



**Figure 4: Disparities in access to school by various factors**

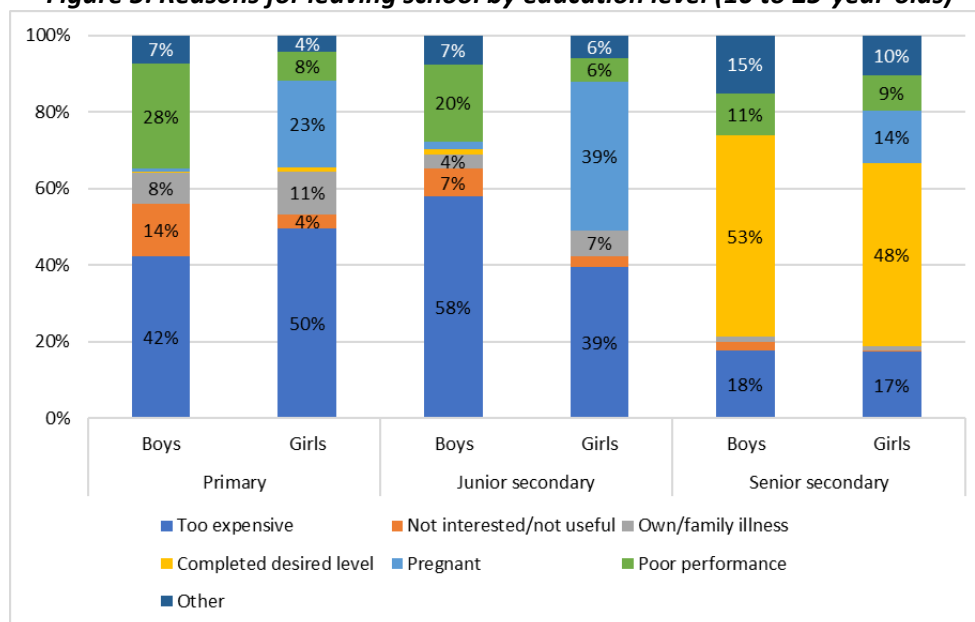


Source: World Bank, Forthcoming education sector analysis, using data from SHIES, 2017

19. ***The high costs of junior secondary education and pregnancy are the main reasons why students drop out of junior secondary school in ESwatini (see Figure 5 below).*** Almost 60 percent of boys and 40 percent of girls who dropped out of junior secondary education in 2017 did so because of the high cost associated with this level of education. For girls, a further 40 percent of those who dropped out did so because they were pregnant. Many of the reasons given for dropping out of school are interlinked. For example, poor performance may be linked to ‘not being interested’ or school being ‘not useful’, and the issue of costs relates to the benefits and perceived value of education by students and parents/caregivers and possibly, to pregnancy. Addressing the issue of retention is complex and requires a clear understanding of the key factors preventing a student from attending school and an appreciation that these factors are dynamic.



**Figure 5: Reasons for leaving school by education level (10 to 25-year-olds)**



Source: World Bank, Forthcoming education sector analysis, using data from SHIES, 2017

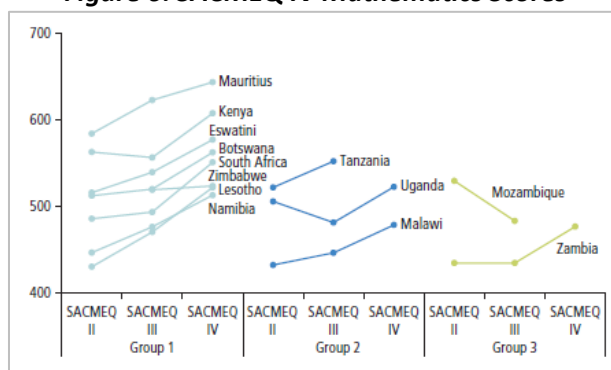
20. **The cost of schooling is clearly an issue preventing students from attending primary and lower secondary education.** While primary education free in ESwatini, there are indirect costs such as uniforms, transportation, and textbooks that may prohibit **access** to schooling for children from poor households. There is also the opportunity cost of lost income by sending children to school, and this is more of an issue in junior secondary education. To address this, the Government of ESwatini is implementing a program called Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Education Grant. The program is providing grants paid out to government secondary schools to defray tuition and exam fees of beneficiary orphans and vulnerable children. It covers about 50,000 children. In 2016/17, the program reached about 11 percent of all households. In terms of potential concerns, a share of program beneficiaries continues to pay tuition and examination fees and the program does not cover other, nontrivial costs of schooling such as transportation to school and uniforms. There is also some evidence that the OVC grant is not adequately targeted (the eligibility criteria being somewhat vague) and do not reach enough vulnerable children. Addressing these concerns can help strengthen the education impacts of the program on orphans and vulnerable children.
21. **Pregnancy, as early as primary education, is a significant factor for girls leaving the education system.** Girls and boys are equally likely to drop out of junior secondary education. The lower levels of education, particularly for girls in ESwatini translates into fewer opportunities for employment and is confirmed by the lower female employment rate (58 percent). The situation for girls **and** women in ESwatini is fragile with a 2018 national study<sup>16</sup> finding that just under half (48 percent) of girls and women between the ages of 13 to 24 reported having experienced some form of sexual violence, with 1 in 3 girls experiencing some form of sexual violence before the age of 18.

<sup>16</sup> [www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(09\)60247-6/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(09)60247-6/fulltext)



22. **Difficult family circumstances that lead many boys and girls to drop out of school<sup>17</sup>.** The study found that family structures in the sample of households **visited** in ESwatini took many forms (children living by themselves unsupervised, with siblings, in single-parent households, with grandmothers), and two-parent households were often the exception, rather than the norm. Family structures were seen to be unstable and lacking positive role models to support them to socialise appropriately in the community. The theme of “children raising and socialising themselves” came out strongly. Substance abuse in the form of marijuana, both its use and sale, was widespread and seen as a challenge for boys. Intergenerational relationships were widely mentioned as a vulnerability created by poverty, and which leaves adolescent boys and girls open to sexual exploitation. Severe corporal punishment remained an issue in many schools. For children that did have the support of a parent, many expressed that parents were unable to communicate to them (or vice-versa) about issues related to sexual and reproductive health (SRH). The study pointed to both the church and traditional leaders as forces that could be mobilised to communicate issues of SRH and to encourage parents/guardians to ensure that students complete at least junior secondary education.
23. **Another reason for the low enrolment levels in secondary education may be the distance students have to travel to get to school, which has an impact on the cost of schooling.** As shown in Table 1, while there are over 600 primary schools in ESwatini, there are only 285 secondary schools in the country pointing to a dearth in access to secondary schools. Secondary schools are largely **based** in urban centres of the country and travel to school may be a burden for children, and their parents, who live in rural areas. Assessing the adequacy of supply of secondary schools in ESwatini is a priority for the MoET.
24. **In terms of learning, ESwatini does better than many of its neighbors in Southern Africa and performance has been improving over the years (Figure 6).** The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality - SACMEQ IV- results reveal that learners in ESwatini achieved a mean reading score of 570.1, which is higher than the SACMEQ IV average of 513.3. In the figure below, ESwatini is classified as a “Group 1” country: this group is comprised of most of the SSA region’s middle-income countries where population growth rates are relatively low. These countries have almost universal primary enrollments and have made major strides towards universal lower-secondary enrollments. In addition, **countries** in this group also participate in regional and/or international assessments, reflecting their growing interest in student learning and building the knowledge capital required for economic competitiveness.

Figure 6: SACMEQ IV Mathematics Scores

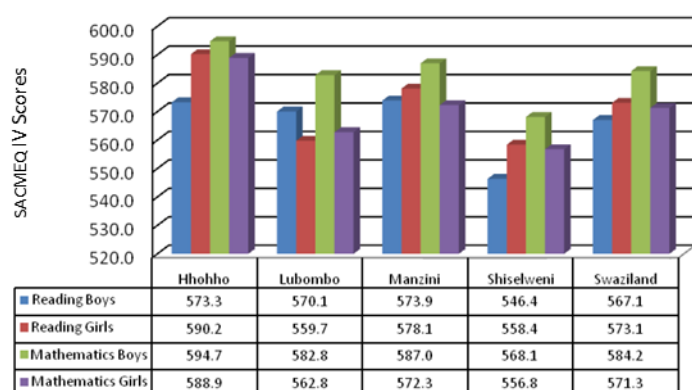


Source: Bashir et al, 2019

<sup>17</sup> MIET, 2020



Figure 7: SACMEQ Reading and Mathematics Scores by Gender and Region



differences in performance of students by socio-economic status (about 20 points higher for students from the highest quartile compared to the lowest quartile), this difference was much lower than the SACMEQ results of 2000, possibly signaling better allocation of resources since the introduction of Free Primary Education in 2010.

25. **The SACMEQ results highlighted inequities in learning performance.** There were only minor differences in learning performance between boys and girls, but the difference in learning between regions in ESwatini was stark with the highest scoring region (Hhohho) scoring about 30 points **higher** in Reading and Mathematics compared to the lowest scoring region (Shiselweni) – see Figure 7. There were also significant differences in performance between the students attending schools in urban areas (40 points higher on average in Mathematics and 30 points higher on average for Reading) compared to rural areas. While there were
26. **The SACMEQ results show that students' performance in Reading is lower than their performance in Mathematics.** This points to challenges in foundational literacy where the policy in ESwatini is that the first three years are supposed to be taught in a child's mother tongue, i.e. Siswati, and transition to English as the language of instruction in Grade 4. The Government has expressed concern with the quality of existing reading programs and the need to strengthen these in early grades. To address this issue, the MoET is rolling out a new curriculum at the primary school level that is promising in its approach to teaching reading, but the MoET requires additional support to: (i) ensure teachers are effectively trained in early grade reading pedagogy; (ii) develop and widely distribute supplementary reading materials in Siswati and English, particularly to students in rural areas; and (iii) assess students' reading fluency and comprehension abilities in early grades on a regular basis.
27. **In addition, far too few students are qualifying to enter Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)-related courses after graduating from senior secondary school.** In 2019, only 1 out of 5 secondary school graduates opted for either Mathematics, Physical Science or Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as an examination subject in senior secondary. Out of these, 29 percent scored a mark above a C, which is usually the minimum score required to enter higher education, meaning that less than 10 percent of the 2019 senior secondary education cohort would qualify for higher education in STEM-related fields. STEM education is important, not only for fulfilling the needs of the future workforce that will require critical thinkers who are receptive to technological advances, but also for producing researchers and innovators who can help to solve challenges in the economy. The reasons for this low uptake and performance in Mathematics, Physical Science **and** ICT are varied and could be a results of a lack of trained teachers who can deliver this content to students in a way that is exciting and understandable; a lack of facilities and materials to conduct certain classes (e.g. about 45 percent of students in junior secondary do not have access to computers at the school and about 40 percent of the secondary schools do not have internet connectivity; 51 percent of primary and secondary schools have science laboratories but many do not have sufficient operational budget to purchase supplies to conduct experiments in class).



### Box 1: The education response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Eswatini

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected learning and accentuated the digital divide between the rich and the poor in ESwatini. All schools/institutions of higher learning were closed on 20 March 2020 as the country instituted lockdown measures. MoET responded by offering distance learning where possible. Access to the internet is relatively low in Eswatini, at 47 percent in 2017<sup>18</sup>, and only some schools were able to continue teaching by using available technologies to deliver lessons through various e-learning platforms such as Google classroom, Microsoft teams, WhatsApp student portal, Zoom, YouTube, Telegram, and blackboard amongst many others. The majority of students, though, were only able to access learning programs through television, radio and print media, which the MoET had up and running within weeks of schools closing. Specifically, MoET has been able to undertake the following actions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Developed and broadcast multimedia modules for learners – the MoET prioritized completing grades (Grade 7, Form 3 and Form 5) for the first phase followed by other grades;
- Engaged national radio, television stations and print media houses for broadcasting/publishing of daily lessons – this was achieved with the support from the Ministry of ICT;
- Engaged mobile service providers to zero rate certain education websites; and
- Broadcast a weekly mental health and psychosocial program for learners. The focus is on fear-management, spreading accurate information about the crisis, dispelling myths, urging caution, and diffusing panic.

While the MoET has been able to swiftly respond to the crisis, the effectiveness of these alternative teaching methods are yet to be assessed. One thing that is becoming clearer is that TV, radio and print media learning programs that do not have sufficient feedback mechanisms from learners to teachers and vice versa are not as effective as online learning programs that offer greater interaction between teachers and learners (and parents). **Expanding access to online learning is even more urgent now in the face of future localized closures due to the COVID pandemic and the project will support this effort in secondary education.**

### c) Youth to Adulthood

28. **About 37 percent of the population in ESwatini are youth of working age (15 - 35 years)**<sup>19</sup>. As described earlier, many of these young people drop out of school before completing junior or senior secondary education. For those that enter the labor force, about 19 percent are unemployed. Of those who are out of the labor force, almost 40 percent are not in education/training (Figure 8).

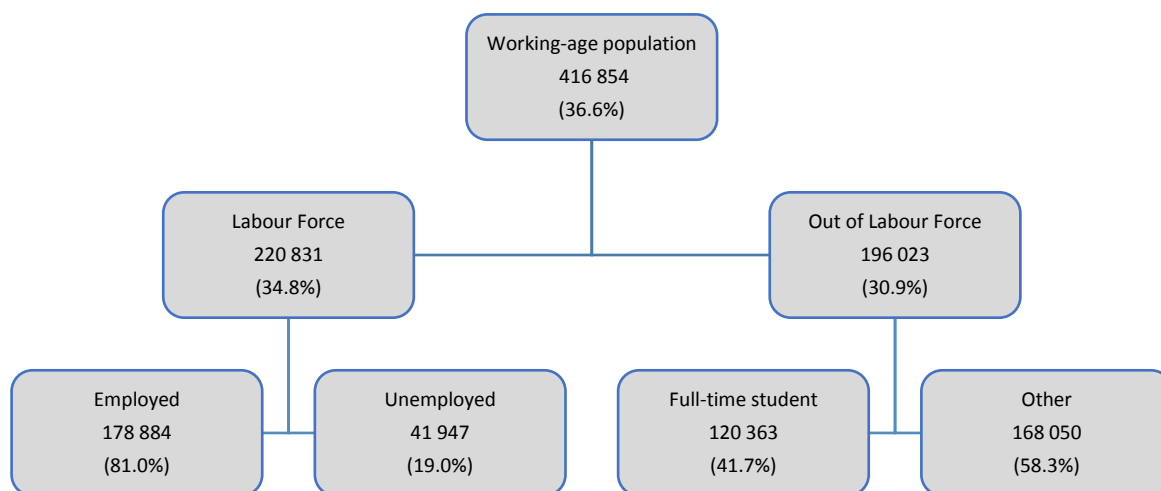
29. **However, the youth of ESwatini continue to face a variety of challenges, such as limited access to post-secondary education and high youth unemployment.** The high level of youth unemployment is a major concern for ESwatini if the country is to harness the demographic dividend. If measures are not taken swiftly, the country will face challenges associated with a growing and unemployed cadre of young people as the population bulge moves upward in the future. Besides the issue of unemployment, the youth is also faced with challenges threatening their health and development, such as high rates of poverty, a decline in the strength of family structures, high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, low access to family planning and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, drug and alcohol use, gender inequality, violence, and crime.

<sup>18</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?locations=SZ>

<sup>19</sup> Labour Force Survey, 2016.



**Figure 8: Status of working age youth population (15-35), 2016**



Source: Labor Force Survey, 2016

30. **The Gross Enrollment Ratio for tertiary education in ESwatini is very low at about 7 percent in 2013 and is mainly accessed by individuals who are from wealthier households.** Aside from tertiary education, the options for youth to acquire skills are two-fold: (i) through Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET); and (ii) training through Youth Support Centers. Three Ministries are responsible for TVET delivery in Eswatini - Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade with the MoET playing a coordinating and leading role in TVET. A rapid assessment of TVET providers in 2013<sup>20</sup> found a total of 70 TVET institutions in ESwatini (of which 27 were public), offering about 415 training programs in 60 areas ranging from vocational programs such as sewing, farming, carpentry, etc. to highly technical and professional programs such as business management, computer programming, education and others. The institutions employed 767 trainers and enrolled 6,881 trainees (of whom 56 percent were females). The general completion rate was around 80 percent.
31. **TVET, and post-primary skills training more broadly, is a largely unregulated sector which lacks sufficient coordination in ESwatini.** The skills training sector is not adequately informed by the needs of the labor market and there is an absence of structures at the system level to facilitate linkages between the training providers and employers. Further, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which aims to integrate and coordinate national qualification subsystems and improve the transparency, access, progression and quality of qualifications in relation to the labor market and civil society, is not completed and approved. The absence of an NQF makes it difficult to align TVET provision with current regional and national priorities and offer career pathways for trainees in the education and training system.

<sup>20</sup> World Bank, 2014, Assessing Eswatini's Technical and Vocational Education and Training System to Improve Economic Growth





## Relationship to CPF

32. The proposed project comes at a critical time when the Government has committed to a 'turnaround strategy' to attain macro-fiscal stabilization and growth. One focus area of ESwatini's Strategic Road Map (2019-23) is to improve the delivery of services and foster a culture of excellence (improved efficiency and effectiveness of the public sector and technological innovation). It also responds to Outcome 3 of the National Development Plan (2019/20-2021/22): Towards Economic Recovery, which focuses on enhanced social and human capital development. The specific sectoral outcomes include improved access to quality health and health services; improved access to quality, relevant and inclusive education, and lifelong learning opportunities; reduced poverty rates; the youth and other vulnerable groups empowered with adequate skills and opportunities; and improve and coordinated research and development and innovation systems for evidence-based planning and policy formulation. In addition, the country's long-term Education Sector Strategic Plan (2010 – 2022) includes broad activities from Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) to higher education and takes cognizance of cross-cutting issues such HIV/AIDS, gender, and inclusiveness. It emphasizes the improvement of quality education at all levels with the main goal being the production of adequate skills to support economic growth and improved standards of living for the entire Swazi nation. These strategies and plans are also aligned to the National Development Strategy Vision 2022 (1999) which articulates that "By the Year 2022, the Kingdom of Swaziland will be in the top 10% of the medium human development group of countries founded on sustainable economic development, social justice and political stability".
33. The National Education and Training Improvement Plan (NETIP) II (2018/19 – 2020/21) defines the strategic objectives, priorities, strategies, and key activities to be achieved in the education sector over a three-year period. These are defined for Early Childhood Care and Education, primary and secondary education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, teacher education, higher education, and non-formal adult education and life-long learning. The document guides the programming, financing, and monitoring, of key sector interventions from 2018-2020.
34. The project is also aligned with World Bank Group (WBG) strategic priorities, particularly the WBG's mission to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity, by supporting the development of human capital. The proposed project is aligned with the adjusted Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) FY2015-2018 (Report No. 892010-SZ);<sup>21</sup> the draft Systematic Country Diagnostics (SCD);<sup>22</sup> the draft Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA); and the Human Capital agenda. The proposed project will contribute to Pillar II (Strengthening State Capabilities) of the CPS, primarily through Objective 2 (Improved Social Services Delivery). It will coordinate with the other lending operations,<sup>23</sup> including health, water and sanitation, and energy to harness cross-sectoral synergies. Further, it connects to two ongoing Analytical and Advisory Services (ASA) tasks, which focus on supporting human development in ESwatini: the education sector analysis/review for ESwatini and the adolescent human capital challenges (P172420).

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<sup>21</sup> World Bank 2018. The Performance and Learning Review (PLR – Report No. 126205-SZ) extended the CPS by two years to FY2020.

<sup>22</sup> World Bank. 2019. The Kingdom of ESwatini. Toward Equal Opportunity: Accelerating Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in ESwatini.

<sup>23</sup> Health System Strengthening for Human Capital Development (P168564), Network Reinforcement and Access Project (P166170); Water Supply and Sanitation Access Project (P166697);





### C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

**Note to Task Teams:** The PDO has been pre-populated from the datasheet for the first time for your convenience. Please keep it up to date whenever it is changed in the datasheet. ***Please delete this note when finalizing the document.***

35. To improve access, completion and the quality of basic education (including Early Childhood Development and Education), skills training and support services for girls, boys and youth in ESwatini.

#### Key Results (From PCN)

- Improved quality of ECDE services for 3 to 6-year-old children
- Improved reading and mathematics scores of children in Grade 3 as measured by Early Grade Reading and Numeracy Assessments (disaggregated by gender)
- Reduction in the drop-out rate of students in junior secondary schools (disaggregated by gender)
- Increased enrollment in Mathematics and Physical Science in senior secondary schools (disaggregated by gender)
- Trainees in targeted courses at TVET institutions are undergoing on-the-job training (disaggregated by gender)

### D. Concept Description

36. **Improving human capital development outcomes requires a focus on improving social and economic outcomes for individuals from birth through to adulthood.** The proposed project aims to take a life-cycle approach to developing human capital with a focus on three components, namely, Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE), Basic Education, and support for youth to improve their chances for a better life and opportunities in the future (Table 2). The components were chosen based on: (i) government priorities and commitment for reform in specific areas; (ii) coordination with other development partners (a full list of what other partners are doing is in Annex 2); and (iii) addressing immediate priorities arising from COVID-19 to start building a digital learning system. The details of these components will be refined by the Government during project preparation.

**Table 2: Project Components and Sub-Components**

<b>Component 1: Strengthening coordination and regulation of ECDE and improving access to quality ECDE services</b>	<b>1.1. Strengthen coordination and management through improved governance of the system</b>
	1.2. Development of policies/guidelines to support overall ECDE system strengthening
	1.3. Strengthen the quality of service delivery for ECDE service providers
<b>Component 2: Improving internal efficiency and quality in Basic Education</b>	2.1. Improve literacy and numeracy in the early grades
	2.2. Improve retention in junior secondary education
	2.3. Support ICT enabled teaching in Mathematics and Science in junior secondary
<b>Component 3: Improving employment prospects and support services for youth</b>	3.1. Strengthen technical and vocational training for youth in selected economic sectors
	3.2. Provide support services to youth through established youth centers
<b>Component 4: Project management, capacity building and technical assistance</b>	4.1. Capacity building and technical assistance

37. The focus will be on ensuring that all children are entitled to, and should receive, a comprehensive package of services so that that they are able to reach their full potential. Within these components, there are four cross-cutting issues: gender, inclusion, digital skills, and sustainability of interventions. Some elements of the project



will also address the issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, such as access to online learning opportunities for the poorest children, retaining students in school, and access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene in schools. The project will also focus on strengthening coordination and regulation at all levels of education, more specifically for ECDE and TVET.

**Component 1: Strengthening coordination and regulation of Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) services and improving access to quality ECDE services**

38. Experience from other countries shows that a well-integrated multi-sectoral ECDE system has the following elements: (i) a strong ECDE system and enabling environment with commitment and budget from the Government; (ii) policies in place for early childhood development; (iii) a multi-sectoral ECDE strategy and implementation plan; (iv) multi-sectoral coordination between Ministries and stakeholders; (v) monitoring and evaluation; and (vi) standards in place for teacher training, the curriculum, learning environment, and a minimum package of multi-sectoral interventions for specific age groups i.e. 0 to 3-year-olds, 3 to 5-year-olds, and 5 to 8-year-olds. To support the Government of ESwatini to strengthen these elements, the project will focus on the following three sub-components:

***1.1. Strengthen coordination and management of ECDE services through improved governance of the system***

39. The coordination of ECDE services has been identified as a major challenge in ESwatini. The objective is to achieve coherence and effectiveness in the delivery of services to children through a well-coordinated and managed national ECDE system. This sub-component will be led by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO), and the project will support the DPMO to coordinate the various implementing entities by strengthening Ministerial and Regional coordination structures, for example, inter-Ministerial committees, a national coordination authority, multi-sectoral working group etc. This coordination will be supported by strengthening the governance and management structures for better coordination and collaboration of stakeholders; to support improved ECDE service delivery; as well as improve the monitoring and evaluation system for ECDE services.

40. As first step in strengthening coordination in the ECDE sub-sector, the project will support the relevant implementing agencies to conduct a mapping exercise in the country to identify and document information on existing ECDE service providers that will be consolidated into a comprehensive database that can be accessed by relevant Ministries. This activity will be led by the MoET ECDE department, supported by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office (DPMO) and Ministry of Tinkhundla. The mapping will focus on what ECDE services are available in ESwatini and where these services exist. It will seek to collect information on, but not limited to, the location, number of children by age category, number of practitioners/ caregivers/ teachers, some details on the learning environment and the types of services offered. As a starting point, the task team will collate existing information on ECDE services from the MoET Education Management Information System (EMIS), World Food Programme (WFP), National Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS (NERCHA), Ministry of Tinkhundla, and the DPMO. Using the consolidated list, a survey firm will verify if these ECDE service providers exist and collect data as described above. The survey firm will also locate and collect information from currently undocumented centres in order to generate a consolidated directory of ECDE service providers in ESwatini. Once there is a clear understanding of the overall system, the project will support a survey of a sample of different types of service providers (e.g. Grade 0 classrooms in primary schools, NCPs, KaGogo centers, community pre-schools etc.) to assess child level outcomes including height to weight measures, gross and fine motor development, emergent literacy and numeracy, and social and emotional development. This mapping exercise will not only necessitate the close collaboration between various implementing entities, but the information arising from it will help create



a better understanding of the existing ECDE system and how it can be supported to increase access to quality services for children.

### ***1.2. Development of policies/guidelines to support overall ECDE system strengthening***

41. The information collected through the mapping exercise will support the implementing agencies to develop and where necessary, revise the system-level strengthening policies and guidelines for the holistic development of children of ESwatini. This includes reviewing and finalizing draft Norms and Standards for ECDE service provision in ESwatini; a review of the Early Identification and Interventions Strategy for children with special needs and developing an action plan for implementation; implementation of the existing Integrated National ECDE Framework (which includes a financing framework); development of in-service ECDE training manuals for caregivers and teachers to be adopted by in-service teacher training institutions working with NGOs; strengthening regulatory and quality assurance functions; the development of registration guidelines and structures for the accreditation of the range of ECDE service providers; and support the implementation of a financing strategy for the expansion of ECDE services in ESwatini. The lead implementing unit will be the ECDE unit in the MoET, supported by the DPMO, the National Curriculum Centre (NCC), In-service Teacher Education and Training (INSET), Regional education Officers, and universities/colleges/NGOs responsible for teacher and caregiver training.

### ***1.3. Strengthening access to quality service delivery for ECDE service providers***

42. This sub-component will be led by the ECDE unit in the MoET and will be supported by the Ministry of Tinkhundla and the Rural Health Motivators under the Ministry of Health (MoH). The focus will be on improving access to and strengthening of holistic services for children while meeting the necessary approved norms and standards. The project will support the development and implementation of a standard curriculum for 3 to 5-year-old children and provide support for implementation of the Grade 0 curriculum for 5 to 6-year-old children through the training of teachers/caregivers. It will also contribute towards achieving equity amongst beneficiaries (including children with special needs) through the procurement of ECDE teaching and learning materials based on the needs in targeted ECDE centers. The project will focus on improving infrastructure and facilities at a selected number of ECDE centers, including water, sanitation, play areas, ensuring adequate space for children etc., as well as demonstrating in these centers and respective communities how different stakeholders are able to collaborate to provide holistic services for children to ensure they are healthy and well-nourished; in a safe and nurturing environment at school and at home; able to interact positively with families, teachers and peers; and ready to learn throughout primary school.

## **Component 2: Improving internal efficiency and quality in Basic Education**

43. There are two major issues that the project will address during the period when children are in school in ESwatini. First, improving the overall quality of education so that students leave the education system with strong foundational skills and higher levels of cognitive and non-cognitive/transversal skills. Second, improving the retention of children through the end of junior secondary education.

### ***2.1. Improving literacy and numeracy in the early grades by strengthening Early Grade Reading, Mathematics, and Assessment***

44. The project will support the rollout of an early grade reading (in English and siSwati) and mathematics program for children in Grades 1 to 3. This will be done through a phased approach to ensure learners achieve the required competencies at the end of the foundation phase (Grade 3). The project will focus on three (3) grades starting



with Grade 1 in year 2 of the project, Grade 2 in year 3 of the project, and so forth. Implementing entities include the NCC, INSET, Primary and Secondary Education Departments, and the Examinations Council of ESwatini (ECESWA). The existing teaching and learning materials for English, siSwati and Mathematics in the early grades are aligned to the new competency-based curriculum. Textbooks/workbooks for students are procured through the regular MoET budget, and the project will support the procurement of supplementary materials, for example, additional graded/leveled readers in English and siSwati, and materials for children with visual and hearing impairments, such as braille and other materials. The project will also support the development of structured lesson plans/teaching guides for English, siSwati and Mathematics teachers in the early grades to promote systematic teaching practices based on sound pedagogical theory.

45. The project will also support the strengthening of in-service teacher training. This will include a review of existing in-service teacher training programs and revise/develop teacher training programs for English, siSwati, and Mathematics for Grades 1 to 3. This will be undertaken by the National Curriculum Center (NCC) and the In-Service Teacher Training unit (INSET) with support from an external technical expert. These in-service training programs would be year-long training programs (per grade) and would include face-to-face training, in-classroom coaching, and support supervision. The project will also support the procurement of training materials for teachers, training of trainers which will be followed by teacher training and coaching, and strengthening the capacity of school leadership and management to undertake support supervision. The sub-component will also support teachers to identify learners with special needs in early grades for their effective participation in education and address learning gaps.
46. The project will support the development and implementation of regular early grade reading and numeracy assessments, as well as a school readiness assessment for 5 to 6-year-olds at the beginning of primary education. The early grade reading assessments may also involve the development of reading fluency benchmarks, especially in siSwati.
47. The interventions under this sub-component will ensure that a strong foundation for learning is established and that children acquire key competences/skills to progress to the next level in education as articulated in the National Curriculum Framework.

## **2.2. Improving retention in secondary education**

48. The objective of this sub-component is to strengthen and scale-up access to specific services and programs and ensure that both girls and boys stay in school. The project will address some of the barriers to effective progression and completion of secondary education, namely, (i) demand-side barriers such as the direct cost of going to secondary school, the high opportunity cost of going to school (e.g. a higher return derived from labor market participation), and family and health issues such as pregnancy and HIV/AIDS; and (ii) supply-side barriers relating to a lack of supply of good quality junior secondary education.

### **2.2.1. Addressing demand-side constraints**

#### *Improved targeting and implementation of the OVC grant*

49. At inception, the project will support a study to review the coverage, targeting and program effectiveness of the OVC Education Grant. It will also support an assessment of the current cost of secondary education in the context of ESwatini with projections up to 2030. It will provide recommendations on how the grant and its implementation can be strengthened as well as how indirect costs of education (hygiene issues, transport, uniform etc.) can be



covered to increase attendance. This sub-component will be led by the MoET's Secondary Education Department in collaboration with DPMO's Social Welfare Department.

*Strengthening and scaling up Girls/Boys clubs to support young learners*

50. Supporting girls and boys to complete secondary school is a priority. Global programs that target youth through peer groups/clubs have shown some success in retaining learners in school. In addition to the regular Life Skills Education Program which is implemented in all 285 secondary schools for one period per week, some schools have extracurricular activities such as Girls Clubs which are a mentorship and peer support program that addresses issues of sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, child marriage, adolescent pregnancy and others. While these clubs mainly target girls, MIET Africa is working with the MoET to develop and implement programs that target boys as well. UNESCO is supporting the MoET to implement the 'Unintended Pregnancy' program and UNFPA is also supporting the 'Safeguarding Young People' program, which is implemented in schools, clinics and in community youth centers. As described earlier, the involvement of religious and traditional leaders as well as parents in changing attitudes and behaviors to these issues will be just as important as creating safe spaces for young people in schools. While many of these programs exist in ESwatini, few have been evaluated to ascertain its effectiveness in improving retention. The project will support the evaluation of some of the existing initiatives as well as strengthen and scale up some of these programs concurrently in selected schools and communities with low junior secondary retention rates. This will be done in collaboration with the Guidance and Counselling unit at the MoET, the secondary education unit, the MoH's School Health Department, and partners responsible for implementing these programs in selected schools and communities.

**Box 2: Supporting Girls and Women in ESwatini**

More than half (52 percent in 2019) of ESwatini's population are female yet the data below shows that a woman's ability to exercise voice and agency as well as opportunities for participation in the economy and politics has been limited.

- Unmet need for family planning using modern contraceptives (15-49-year-old women): 10 percent<sup>24</sup>
- 48 percent of girls and women between the ages of 13 to 24 reported having experienced some form of sexual violence with 1 in 3 girls experiencing some form of sexual violence before the age of 18<sup>25</sup>
- Female labor force participation rate (47 percent); Male labor force participation rate (56 percent)<sup>26</sup>
- Median monthly earning of women is Emalangeni 1800; Median monthly earnings of men is E2500<sup>27</sup>
- Women's participation in Parliament in 2018; 5 of 69 seats, i.e. 7 percent<sup>28</sup>

In recent years, the Government of ESwatini has made legislative reforms to further the promotion and protection of women and girls' rights. In August 2019, the ESwatini High Court ruled that the common law doctrine of marital power (giving a husband the ultimate decision-making power over his wife and the matrimonial property) is unconstitutional. The ruling builds on ESwatini's ongoing law reform process that included the passing of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act of 2018, which provides a framework to curb sexual and gender-based violence in the country. In 2018, the Election of Women Act was also enacted, designed to fulfill the constitutional requirement for quotas for the representation of women and marginalized groups in parliament.

**The project will support the Government's efforts to empower girls and women in the country by building on the recent legislative and policy reforms by focusing on critical points in a girls/woman's life when she is vulnerable- i.e, ensuring girls' safety in early years and in their transition to becoming adolescents; and ensuring equal opportunities for women to skills training and their transition to the labor market.**

<sup>24</sup> UNFPA, 2019

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(09\)60247-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(09)60247-6/fulltext)

<sup>26</sup> Labor Force Survey, ESwatini, 2016

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union for Democracy, Women in Parliament in 2018



### **2.2.2. Addressing supply-side constraints**

#### *Expanding Access to Secondary Education*

51. The project will support the implementation of pathways at senior secondary level in line with the National Curriculum Framework. This will enable learners to pursue careers aligned to their abilities and interests, hence providing opportunities for career progression. The introduction of pathways will require investment in human resource and infrastructure. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a full analysis of the existing 285 secondary schools, map them to the locations of existing primary feeder schools and population data, and analyze the enrollment numbers and available resources (physical and human) in these schools. Based on this, the project will support the development a secondary school expansion and utilization strategy to accommodate children leaving primary education. The project will support the analysis of existing data on schools, review the norms and standards for school construction, assess the costs and quality of school construction over the last few years, and based on this, develop a school expansion/construction strategy.

#### *Rehabilitation, expansion, and/or construction of junior secondary classrooms*

52. The project will support the rehabilitation and/or expansion of existing secondary schools where the schools do not meet the minimum norms and standards particularly related to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, including separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls and ensuring that menstrual needs of girls in schools are met. In cases where there are sufficient teachers and students but insufficient classrooms, the project will support the expansion of existing schools to include new classrooms. In cases where there is a need for a new secondary school and the government is able to provide the necessary recurrent funding for additional teachers and operational costs for a new school, the project will support the construction of new schools. The implementing entities are the MoET Planning Unit and the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development Micro Construction projects unit.

### **2.2.3. Integration of ICT to improve the quality of Mathematics and Science instruction in secondary education**

53. The project will attempt to address the digital divide experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic by starting to build an online learning system in secondary education. It will support improvements in the quality of Mathematics and Science in targeted junior secondary schools through the provision of training to Mathematics and Science teachers in a new approach using ICT in the teaching and learning process. Focus will be placed encouraging more students, particularly girls, to take Mathematics and Physical Science as a subject through the of senior secondary education. The project will also support the procurement of related learning resources. The project will target all junior secondary schools in phases. All Mathematics and Science teachers in these schools will be trained on the new teaching and learning approach, through a combination of online and face-to-face training with the goal that by the end of the project, all training of teachers will be conducted online asynchronously. Classrooms will be equipped with interactive projectors, whiteboards, necessary software, and ancillary equipment. For schools without electricity, the project will install solar panels. The project will finance the technical assistance of a company/university/service provider that can provide support to the MoET to implement ICT-enabled teaching and learning for Mathematics and Science programs. This will also include support for developing specifications for the procurement of necessary equipment and implementation of the appropriate content, pacing, and teaching methods, which will result in higher student achievement in Mathematics and Science. This sub-component will be led by the Secondary Education unit in the MoET, supported by INSET (UNESWA), NCC, the ICT and Special Needs units, and the Inspectorate and Ministry of ICT.





**Component 3: Improving employment prospects and support services for youth**

54. This component is focused on addressing the multiple deprivations faced by youth (including youth with disabilities) through comprehensive interventions targeted towards supporting them to become more productive citizens.

**3.1 Strengthening technical and vocational training for youth in selected economic sectors**

55. The project will support improvements in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs in two economic sectors, potentially energy and manufacturing. The project will support finalization and implementation of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) and its regulations. It will support the development of National Occupational Standards (NOS) for priority trades in these sectors in alignment with the NQF in collaboration with the private sector. It will also support a selected number of training institutions, in collaboration with the private sector, to review and update existing programs or develop new programs to impart to trainees the competencies (which would include digital skills, green skills and other non-cognitive skills) identified within the occupational standards. The project will support training of ESwatini Higher Education Council (ESHEC) and MoET staff for effective and smooth implementation of the NQF, train trainers within the selected training institutions, including training in the industry, to deliver the revised/new programs. It will support the upgrading of facilities and equipment to deliver the training, strengthen linkages between the training providers and employers, and strengthen the school to work transition for trainees. This sub-component seeks to empower youth with the relevant skills for future jobs and entrepreneurship skills for the improvement of their livelihoods.

**3.2 Providing support services to youth through established youth centers**

56. In ESwatini, the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports (through the Youth Council) and the Ministry of Tinkhundla have youth centers that provide support and training for youth who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Under the Youth Council, there are currently 20 Youth Committees established at Inkundla level and the aim is to establish these committees in all 59 Tinkhundla. These committees acknowledge that youth face multiple deprivations and aim to go beyond entrepreneurship and skills training by also providing psycho-social support and linking youth to available services in their communities (health centres, Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA), National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBOARD), the Youth Enterprise and Revolving Fund, Family Life Association for Sexual and Reproductive Health etc). The committees work closely with the Community Development Officers working under the Ministry of Agriculture in partnership with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States (FAO), to provide training to youth on 'Climate Smart Agriculture' through cooperative type arrangements. While this is a promising initiative, these committees are relatively new (established in 2018) and there is currently no systematic evaluation of its functionality or outcomes and satisfaction of youth.
57. The project will support a selected number of youth centres to provide the necessary holistic support to youth including better intermediation services by matching the qualifications and skills of youth with the demands of the labor market. The project seeks to reduce vulnerability amongst the youth by providing holistic services including technical skills for a sustainable livelihood.

**Component 4: Project Management, Capacity Building and Technical Assistance**

58. The objective of this component is to strengthen key management capacities of the MoET, regional and local education offices as well as the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) which will support the Ministry with procurement, financial management, supervision of project activities and monitoring and evaluation.



59. Interventions relating to project management and monitoring are aimed at ensuring that project activities are implemented on time and in a satisfactory manner, using an implementation mechanism that promotes ownership and capacity building within the MoET. The project will be implemented by the MoET, supported by the PIU which will be responsible for the daily management, administration and coordination of the project, including project accounting, procurement and disbursement, preparation of progress reports, and ensuring timely audits and monitoring activities. The component will support and finance activities of the MoET and PIU relevant to the project management, supervision activities and recurrent incremental expenditures associated with the project implementation and supervision.

**Collaboration between Ministries, Private sector and Projects**

60. The life-cycle approach to human capital development requires multiple Ministries and entities (both public and private sector) to be engaged in delivering an integrated package of high-quality services to children and youth. Across the three technical components- ECDE, basic education and youth employment- there are multiple implementing entities working together.

61. In ECDE, the main services to be provided include health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, and social protection. The table below indicates the specific services to be provided, responsible implementing entities and collaboration/integration amongst World Bank financed operations to support provision of these services. The table shows there are complementarities between this proposed project the Health System Strengthening (P168564) and the ESwatini Water Supply and Sanitation Access Project (P166697), which together will strengthen access to and the quality of services provided for Early Childhood Development and Education.





**Table 3: ECDE Service Provision and focus of WB financed projects**

Service Category	Specific services	Implementing Entities	WB financed projects
Nutrition	Counseling on adequate diet during pregnancy; Iron-folic acid for pregnant mothers; Exclusive Breastfeeding; Complementary Feeding; Treatment for acute malnutrition (moderate and severe)	MoH, Village Health Monitors (VHM) in homes	Health System Strengthening Project- Reproductive, Maternal, Neo-natal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH). Services delivered in health facilities and in homes through VHM
	Adequate nutrition and safe diet; Therapeutic zinc supplementation for diarrhea; Micronutrient: supplementation and fortification	MoH in health facilities; VHM in homes; MoET in ECD centers and pre-primary grades; NCPs; KaGogo Centers	Health System Strengthening Project  Education and Skills Project will target children 3 years and older
Health	Quality Antenatal and Postnatal Visits; Skilled and Quality Deliveries; Immunization, Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI); Coverage of Quality Healthcare Services; Deworming	MoH, VHM	Health System Strengthening Project- RMNCAH
	Quality Family Planning and Sexual Reproductive Health (including Youth/Adolescent-friendly Services)	MoH, VHM; MoET in schools	Health System Strengthening Project- RMNCAH  Education and Skills Project- through programs delivered in junior secondary education (both within curriculum and in Girls/Boys Clubs)
Education	Maternal education; Education about early stimulation, growth, and development	MoET in secondary schools; MoH, VHM, Ministry of Tinkhundla, DPMO	Education and Skills Project- through programs delivered in junior secondary education (both within curriculum and in Girls/Boys Clubs)  Health System Strengthening Project- RMNCAH
	Early childhood and preprimary programs	MoET, Ministry of Tinkhundla; DPMO	Education and Skills Project- through NCPs, Kagogo centers, pre-primary schools, ECD centers
	Continuity to quality primary education	MoET	Education and Skills Project- support for foundational literacy and numeracy
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	Access to safe water; Adequate sanitation; Hygiene / Handwashing	Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, ESwatini Water Services Corporation, MoET (access and information in schools); MoH (access and information in health facilities)	ESwatini Water Supply and Sanitation Access Project - increase potable water supply, sanitation and hygiene coverage for domestic and institutional settings (including health care and education facilities) in Shiselweni I, Zombodze and Hosea constituencies. A complementary behavior change campaign will focus on child-centric WASH behaviors for households with young children (<1000days old) and improving WASH behaviors for the whole community.
Social Protection	Birth Registration; Social transfer programs	DPMO	Education and Skills Project- support for OVC transfer program
	Child protection services	Ministry of Justice	



62. In basic education (i.e. primary and junior secondary), the main implementing entity is the MoET under this proposed project. When considering retention of students in junior secondary education, there would be links with other Ministries and NGOs on life-skills training programs and establishing/strengthening Girls and Boys Clubs, with the MoET taking the lead. The sub-component focused on ICT-enabled teaching and learning will have links with the World Bank-financed Network Reinforcement and Access Project, to ensure that schools that are targeted to implement this sub-component, are connected to electricity. Students attending schools will also benefit from a strengthened health system which is the focus of the Health System Strengthening project.

**Table 4: Improving efficiency and quality of basic education**

Service Category	Specific services	Implementing Entities	WB financed projects
Early Grade Numeracy and Literacy	Curriculum, teacher training, instructional materials, assessment	MoET	Education and Skills Project
Improving Retention in Junior Secondary Education	Integration of life skills training programs (including sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse etc.) into curriculum	MoET, MoH	Education and Skills Project
	After-school Girls and Boys Clubs that provide safe spaces, peer support and mentorship for students	MoET, NGOs, Ministry of Tinkhundla, MoH	Education and Skills Project
	OVC Grants to poor households to encourage participation of students in junior secondary education	DPMO, MoET	Education and Skills Project
ICT enabled teaching and learning in Junior Secondary	Focus on ICT enabled teaching and learning in Math and Science in junior secondary education	MoET, Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry of ICT	Education and Skills Project Network Reinforcement and Access Project- ensure access to electricity in targeted schools where pilot will be implemented.

63. Access to services for youth is provided multiple entities in ESwatini, which are reflected below. A strengthened health system will be beneficial for youth who have significant needs in terms of mental health and well-being, sexual and reproductive health, rehabilitation from substance abuse and others which will be supported by the World Bank's Health Systems Strengthening project. Other services to be provided to youth will be coordinated between multiple entities and implemented through this proposed project.



**Table 5: Improving employment outcomes and services for youth**

Service Category	Specific services	Implementing Entities	WB financed projects
TVET	Strengthen links to employers; Skills needs analysis in two economic sectors; Establish National Occupational Standards for priority trades in these sectors; Align these NOSs to National Qualifications Framework; Update existing or develop new training programs; Train Instructors; Upgrade facilities, equipment; Place graduates in employment	MoET, Ministry of Labor, MoEDP, Ministry of Commerce, Employers	Education and Skills Project
Support for youth in established youth centers	Skills training Intermediation services (links to employment) Links to health services Links to social assistance programs Links to financial services	Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports; Youth Council, Ministry of Thinkundla, MoH, NGOs	Education and Skills Project Health System Strengthening Project

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	

64. The environmental and social risks associated with the project are judged to be moderate and primarily associated with construction, rehabilitation and/or expansion of schools. Given that these are expected to be relatively small-scale construction activities, the potential adverse risks and impacts on human populations and/or the environment are not likely to be significant and can be managed/mitigated. The ESMF will incorporate all potential risks and mitigation measures, including possible risks associated with locations of new schools (natural habitats, ecologically sensitive sites, greenfields, areas with risk of erosion etc)



## The World Bank

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