Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 07-Jul-2020 | Report No: PIDA29516

BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country	Project ID	Project Name	Parent Project ID (if any)
Bangladesh	P174268	Bangladesh COVID 19 School Sector Response (GPE)	
Region	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Board Date	Practice Area (Lead)
SOUTH ASIA	16-Jul-2020	10-Aug-2020	Education
Financing Instrument	Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency	
Investment Project Financing	Ministry of Finance	Secretary, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Project Development Objectives (PDOs) are to (i) strengthen the basic school system's institutional capacity to respond to, and recover from, the COVID-19 crisis; and (ii) build resilience to face future crises from pre-primary to secondary levels.

Components

1: Engaging in Systemic Response
2: Supporting Education Systems Recovery
3: Building System Resilience
4: Project Management, Results Monitoring and Communication

The processing of this project is applying the policy requirements exceptions for situations of urgent need of assistance or capacity constraints that are outlined in OP 10.00, paragraph 12.
Yes

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	14.80
Total Financing	14.80
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	14.80
Education for All - Fast Track Initiative	14.80

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Moderate

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1.   Bangladesh has made rapid social and economic progress in recent decades, reaching lower-middle income status by 2015**.** Gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged close to 6 percent annually since 2000 and, according to official estimates, accelerated to over 8 percent in FY19. Strong labor market gains contributed to a sharp decline in poverty, with the national poverty rate falling from 48.9 to 24.3 percent between 2000 and 2016, while extreme poverty declined from 34.3 to 12.9 percent.[1] However, the pace of poverty reduction slowed in recent years even as growth accelerated**,** particularly in urban areas and in the west of the country. Similarly, the progress on shared prosperity slowed between 2010 and 2016 after a decade of improvements. Bangladesh entered the COVID-19 crisis with a relatively strong macroeconomic position. Garment exports and remittances narrowed the external deficit in recent years and international reserves were adequate at the end of April 2020.

2.   Growth declined sharply as the COVID-19 pandemic brought about major disruptions to economic activity. The initial phase of the pandemic in early 2020 disrupted the supply of intermediate goods from China, reducing manufacturing output. As the pandemic intensified abroad, export orders from Europe and the United States declined precipitously and an estimated US$ 3.2 billion in RMG orders were cancelled or suspended.[2] The government implemented a national shutdown from March 26 to May 30 to control an accelerating domestic outbreak of the virus. Control measures resulted in a sudden stop of many components of the service and industrial sectors. Remittance inflows declined by 23.6 percent year-over-year in April 2020 and exports declined by 82.9 percent in the same period. Demand for food surged with precautionary purchases ahead of the national lockdown but has eased more recently as government food distribution programs were implemented.

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[1] Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2000/01 through 2016/17.
[2] Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), as of May 22, 2020.

3.   COVID-19 has darkened the economic outlook through domestic economic disruptions, declining exports and remittances, and rising stress in the financial sector**.** FY20 GDP growth is projected in a range between 1.6 percent and a downside scenario of 1.0 percent. The downside forecast is based on a situation in which (i) lockdown measures are extended and mobility remains significantly constrained and (ii) the global outlook deteriorates further. In FY21, growth is projected between 1.0 and -3.0 percent. In the downside scenario, a second round of infections and a prolonged global recession would result in the realization of some contingent liabilities, especially from the financial sector. The extended national shutdown is likely to depress economic activity across all sectors in the last quarter of FY20, and varying levels of control measures are likely to continue in FY21. Private consumption, the main engine of growth, is expected to slow and declining remittance inflows reduce household income. The unprecedented uncertainties related to COVID-19 are likely to further dampen private investment.

4.   Bangladesh is extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The Global Climate Risk Index ranks Bangladesh as the world's seventh most affected country over the period 1999-2018.[3] Rising temperatures leading to more intense and unpredictable rainfalls during the monsoon season and a higher probability of catastrophic cyclones are expected to result in increased tidal inundation. It is estimated that a one-meter rise in sea levels would submerge 18 percent of arable land in coastal areas[4]. Recent studies estimate that by 2050 Bangladesh could have 13.3 million internal climate migrants[5]. Additional rural-urban migration would have significant consequences for air and water pollution and unsustainable consumption of natural resources, while putting additional pressure on urban labor markets. Addressing climate risks is increasingly becoming urgent to ensure sustainable economic development of the country.

5.   Bangladesh faces significant challenges with human capital formation, which the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic will only exacerbate**.** According to pre-pandemic estimates for Human Capital Index by the World Bank, a child born in Bangladesh today will be 48 percent as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health. Part of this lost productivity comes from low learning. Nearly 4.5 years of education are lost on average due to low levels of learning. And despite its recent onset, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in total school closures and already caused significant socio-economic disruption to families that will impact education outcomes in the future.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

6.   Bangladesh has a large and complex education system involving two ministries, several line agencies and varied provider[6]**.** The education system has around 34.6 million students: 3.79 million in pre-primary; 16.3 million in primary; 10.5 million in secondary and 4 million in tertiary education[7]. There are 685,400 teachers at pre-primary and primary level in 134,147 primary schools; and around 357,000 teachers in 20,465 secondary schools[8]. There are two ministries managing education—the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME),

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[3] Germanwatch (2020) *Global Climate Risk Index 2020*

[4] UNFCC (2007) *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*

[5] World Bank (2018) *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration*

[6] There are 13 types of providers in primary education; 10 examination boards at the secondary level; and about 98 percent of secondary institutions are private, mostly supported through public subsidies)

[7] Annual Primary School Census 2019; BANBEIS, 2019

[8] Among the primary schools, around 75,345 are government schools which account for nearly 77 percent of total primary enrollments (ASPR, 2019).

and the Ministry of Education (MoE). Both ministries operate through two directorates for primary and secondary education service delivery: Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) under MoPME and Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) under Secondary and Higher Education Division (SHED) of MoE.

7.   Bangladesh made impressive gains in ensuring equitable access to basic education and gender parity. Net enrolment rate (NER) at the primary level increased from 94.8 percent in 2010 to 97.9 percent in 2018 while NER at the secondary level increased from 49.5 percent in 2010 to 69.4 percent in 2018.[9] Bangladesh has also achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education. Disparity in access across income groups has also declined. Further, access to preprimary education (PPE) has steadily improved[10]. Progress in education quality is also visible. The Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE) has been progressively transformed to assess competencies rather than content recall.

8.   However, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Bangladesh was grappling with issues of out-of-school children and low and unequal learning outcomes**.** Equity issues remain with pockets of out-of-school children in hard-to-reach areas, such as urban slums, hill tracts and hoar areas. Around seven million children and adolescents (80 percent in rural areas) aged between 6-16 years old were out-of-school in 2016[11]. Furthermore, learning levels are low and unequal as majority of school children are not reaching their grade level competencies. There are large differences among sub-populations: student from well-off and urban areas do better than those from poorer families and rural areas.[12]

9.   COVID-19 pandemic and its impact will exacerbate the situation and deepen the learning crisis of Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, learning activities of around 38.6 million students have come to halt due to the pandemic. With the on-set of the COVID-19 pandemic, nation-wide school closures were declared on March 17, 2020 and are expected to continue till September 2020[13]. The potential impacts of the pandemic on education in Bangladesh are:

- **Potential Increase in Out-of-School Children (OOSCs):** During the current shutdown of schools, the drop-out rate in primary and secondary level is likely to increase, especially among girls and children from socio-economically disadvantaged families. Increase in school drop-out will most likely be linked to increased incidence of early marriage, adolescent fertility, and child labor.

- **Potential Learning Loss:** Long period of disengagement from school and learning activities will disrupt children's learning gains, especially among families with less educated parents. The current situation is disrupting the planned activities of the school year and may result into complete year gap at the worst.

- **Increase in learning inequality:** The most educated and wealthiest families will be better able sustain their children's learning at home during school closures. This means that when schooling restarts, disadvantaged children will find themselves even further behind their peers. This may also become a

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[9]Annual Primary School Census, 2018 for primary and BANBEIS, 2018 for secondary statistics.

[10] Annual Primary School Census, 2018

[11]Household Income Expenditure Survey (HIES), 2016-17. According to latest MICS, 13.95% of children aged 6-16 are OOSC, and only 35% of them was female

[12]Statistics for primary are from the National Student Assessment 2017; statistics for secondary are from the World Bank 2018.

[13] All education institutions, including public and private education institutions (schools, colleges, universities etc.) in Bangladesh.

big problem for teachers when schools re-open, as they will have to deal with greater student heterogeneity within classrooms.

- **Teacher engagement and development:** Lives of teachers are also disrupted from the pandemic and school closures. Prolonged absence and disengagement from teaching and on-going professional training will affect their quality of teaching and motivation. In addition, potential personal and economic loss and unprecedented uncertainty in this crisis period are likely to affect mental health of teachers.

- **Risk to student health and safety:** As schools close, children who rely on school feeding programs may go hungry and malnourished. Students' mental health may also suffer, due to isolation during social distancing and the traumatic effects of the crisis on families. With the closure of schools, children may be more exposed to gender-based and other violence, including at home.

10. **Context of ongoing COVID-19 efforts in education sector.** Both MoPME and the MoE have started leveraging remote learning opportunities through pre-recorded TV broadcasts and online platforms while intensively using media campaigns to keep students engaged and help to reduce the risk of dropout. MoPME has established working groups to develop learning content and roll out lessons through four platforms: Electronic Media Platform, Mobile Platform, Radio Platform and Internet Platform. Government, private and NGO entities are working together in each working group to produce and facilitate remote learning contents to reach maximum number of students[14]. However, at least 70 percent of the contents for tele-broadcasting is yet to be developed. For radio and mobile platform, the GoB is yet to develop content[15]. There is a huge financing and technical expertise demand to develop high quality remote learning content and make the system functional across the four platforms.

11. **Despite these efforts, there remains critical challenges especially in terms of coverage.** The major challenges for the basic education sector of Bangladesh are:

- **Reaching whole student population:** Reaching all school-going children from all socio-economic backgrounds is a key challenge. According to the latest Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey 2019, around 56 percent households of the country have access to television while in case of radio it is a staggering 0.6 percent. Only 5.6 percent households of the country have access to a computer and 37.6 percent households have access to internet.

- **Low tech environment in school education sector:** In Bangladesh, the basic education system (preprimary to Grade 10) function on a low tech environment, where teachers and students are not accustomed in using digital platforms for teaching learning. Moreover, young children require assistance and motivation to be engaged in distant learning activities which is an added challenge for households with less educated parents.

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[14] UNICEF, a2i, BRAC, Save the Children, JAGGO Foundation, Light of Hope, Grameen Phone, Plan International, *Alokito Hridoy* Foundation, Spice FM, BNNRC, Radio71, SACMID
[15] Based on administrative data on the latest number of remote learning contents produced from UNICEF.

- **Resource constraints:** Currently, Bangladesh does not have the financial and technical resources for development of comprehensive digital infrastructure and digital literacy programs for resilience building of the school system.

12. Maintaining equitable access to learning resources is important to reduce expected learning gaps associated with student socio-economic profile and the consequent digital divide. In the short term, a combination of technologies needs to be utilized; and in the medium term, further resources will need to be devoted to accelerating digital development in Bangladesh. In country contexts with limited technological infrastructure, continued use of offline remote learning models may represent the best and only option. Given the variation in household access to the different types of technologies, maintaining equitable access to learning resources using alternative modalities will be important to reduce expected learning gaps.

13. **The Government's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan for Education Sector:** The GoB has prepared a COVID-19 response and recovery for plan for education that was developed with the leadership of the MoPME and MoE and in consultation with the Local Education Group (LEG). The Plan conceptualized a three phase response focusing on immediate, medium term and long term actions. The required interventions envisioned in this Plan aim to build on and complement the existing infrastructure and activities of two existing GoB programs in basic education – the Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4) and the Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP). While these two programs cater to the whole basic education sector of the country, the GoB is seeking Technical Assistance (TA) from Development Partners (DP) to implement its COVID-19 Plan, focusing on developing and strengthening its remote learning system, communication and outreach, and system resilience building.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

14. The Project Development Objectives (PDOs) are to (i) strengthen the basic school system's institutional capacity to respond to, and recover from, the COVID-19 crisis; and (ii) build resilience to face future crises from pre-primary to secondary levels.

Key Results

I. **Response**. Number (and % of children in the relevant age-group in the program area) of children supported with inclusive distance learning programs (disaggregated by gender)
II. **Recovery**. Number (and %) of children previously enrolled in grant-supported pre-primary and primary level government schools who immediately return to schools once schools reopen
III. **Resilience**. Remote learning system integrated into the basic education school system

D. Project Description

15.   The Bangladesh COVID-19 School Sector Response (CSSR) Project will support the short- and medium-term response and recovery needs under the COVID-19 pandemic, while establishing the technical and institutional capacity to build back a stronger and more resilient education system. The three main components aim to support the Bangladesh basic school system to (i) Respond to the urgent crisis; (ii) Recovery once schools reopen; and (iii) building Resilience to respond to future crises. All activities will be provided through technical assistance services (TA). All three components can start concurrently and will complement each other.

16.   **Component 1: Engaging in Systemic Response.** This component aims to provide technical assistance to MoPME and the Secondary and Higher Education Division (SHED), MoE to implement immediate response interventions during the first six (06) months of the project. While the activities planned under the Response component will be carried out intensively during the first phase, these are expected to continue on throughout the recovery phase to contribute to the ultimate goal of achieving system resilience building. This component has three sub-components: (i) Develop and Disseminate Content to Prevent Learning Loss; (ii) communication and outreach; and (iii) Development of School Reopening Plan. Expected Outputs from Component 1: (i) remote learning resources/contents; (ii) dissemination plan and technical expertise which operationalize all four remote learning platforms; (iii) communication campaigns; (iv) safe school re-opening plan and (v) safe school re-opening readiness assessment.

17.   **Component 2: Education Systems Recovery.** This component will focus on comprehensive recovery strategies for students, teachers, and schools once schools reopen while preparing to work towards building resilience. This component aims to provide technical assistance to MoPME to implement medium term recovery interventions during the first twelve (12) months of the project while the ongoing PEDP4 will continue to support the long-term plan. In case of SHED/MoE, the Recovery phase is agreed to be carried out through its ongoing Secondary Education Development Program. This component has three sub-components: (i) Support Implementation of Safe School Re-Opening Plan; (ii) Support Re-enrollment of pre-primary and primary; and (iii) Support for Assessment and Learning Recovery. Expected outputs from Component 2: (i) safe schools re-opened and school health protocols in place; (ii) maximum re-enrollment at pre-primary and primary level; (iii) learning loss assessment and recovery lesson plans; (iv) teachers' professional development program; and (v) tools to ensure mental health issues post-shutdown.

18.   **Component 3: Building System Resilience.** This component will focus on enabling the school system under MoPME and SHED of MoE to be better prepared to react and recover from future shocks. This set of interventions aim to improve the system's resilience in the long term. The implementation of some of the previous activities from Response and Recovery phases will be continued and mainstreamed through this component in preparation of a protracted pandemic or future crises. This component has two sub-components: (i) Continue and Integrate Remote Learning; and (ii) Develop Emergency Operation Procedure. Expected outputs from Component 3: (i) system level remote learning integration plan; (ii) core group of teachers trained for remote education delivery; and (iii) emergency operation guidelines for future shocks.

19.   **Component 4: Project Management, Results Monitoring and Communication.** The objective of this component is to support project management and build results monitoring and evaluation capability. Under this component, the Project will create a grievance redress mechanism (GRM), which covers all aspects of the project during implementation. In addition to providing. TA and implementation support, this component will support project operating costs and will support the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the Project.

Legal Operational Policies

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

Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

20. The associated environmental risks owing to the Project is assessed to be Moderate. There will be no civil works and hence no construction related environmental impacts are expected. The interventions also are not likely to affect any biodiversity, natural/critical habitat, ecosystem or living natural resources negatively. However, school premises and classrooms will be disinfected, sanitization/hand washing facilities will be installed including health screening provisions. The major source of environmental concern will emanate from the use of disinfectant. A specialized agency or service provider with required technical expertise would be engaged for school sanitization along with implementation of health safety protocols issued by the MoHFW. Improper selection, use and disposal of such disinfectants might impact the physical environment, affect health and safety of the workers and communities living near the schools.

21. Reaching all school-going children inclusive of all socio-economic backgrounds for distance mode of lessons delivery will be a major challenge. Given the lack of access to TV, radio, computer and Internet, even after rolling out all four platforms of distant learning (TV, Radio, Internet and Mobile) mechanisms, a significant segment of the student population will be out of reach and disengaged with learning activities. This will create a gap in accessibility to learning opportunities for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized segments of society. Resource constraints in the rural schools in terms of digital infrastructure provision of remote lessons and long term resilience will also create gaps in learning. Beneficiaries living in small ethnic minority communities, as well as IPs meeting the criteria of ESS7, will also need differentiated approaches given their difference in language, culture and social norms, in the absence of which the exclusivity criteria of project beneficiaries may be difficult to achieve. Without project interventions however, the education progress would cease and cause mass increase in school drop-outs, ultimately leading to increased incidence of early marriage, adolescent fertility, and child labor. De-escalation of crime and Gender Based Violence (GBV) will also result from project intervention since many students, especially those living in poor areas are more exposed to gender-based and other violence, including in the home due to school closure. The Project is not likely to cause any labor influx, land acquisition and resettlement activities, and adverse impacts on small ethnic communities/IPs and cultural heritage are also unlikely. Based on the scale of the project, capacity of the Borrower, anticipated E&S risks and impacts and the context under which this intervention will be implemented, the social risk has been assessed as Moderate.

22. To address the potential E&S risks, an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) will be prepared as the locations of the schools are not yet finalized which will include an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) template to be used for specific location once selection is completed. The borrower has prepared a preliminary Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) that will be updated throughout the life of the project taking into account feedback received from project beneficiaries and stakeholders. As part of the SEP, a

project level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) accessible to all stakeholders will be put in place for raising issues and grievances. A Labor Management Procedure (LMP) will be prepared and if necessary, a Small Ethnic Community Planning Framework (SECPF) would also be prepared as reflected in the ESCP.

E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

23.   At the national level, a Project Steering Committee (PSC), chaired by the Secretary MoPME and co-chaired by the Secretary of SHED/MoE, will be constituted to (i) provide policy guidance to the implementing agencies; (ii) approve annual development plan and review project progress; and (iii) resolve implementation problems including inter-ministerial issues. An Advisory Committee, involving high level policy and decision makers of the two education ministries and Director Generals of DPE and DSHE will be formed. The Project will coordinate and support these high level meetings, as necessary.

24.   The overall responsibility of the proposed project implementation will lie with Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), as the lead implementing agency while Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) will support the implementation of activities with close cooperation with the DPE. A Project Implementation Committee (PIC), chaired by the Director General, DPE, and supported by DG, DSHE will be constituted to (i) review annual development plan prepared by the GPE COVID-19 School Sector Response Project Implementation Unit and recommend for approval by the PSC; (ii) monitor project implementation progress and provide implementation support; and (iii) maintain strong coordination among the implementing agencies.

25.   A project management and implementation unit called COVID-19 School Sector Response (CSSR) PIU will be put in place, which will be responsible for (i) planning, coordination, implementation and monitoring of project activities; (ii) procurement and financial management; (iii) capacity building at various level; (iv) awareness campaign and communication; and (v) reporting on project progress.

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APPROVAL

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