



Project Information Document/ Identification/Concept Stage (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 17-Jun-2021 | Report No: PIDC245776



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)	Environmental and Social Risk Classification	Project Name
P176697		Low	Institutional Strengthening and the Quality Education for All Project
Region	Country	Date PID Prepared	Estimated Date of Approval
AFRICA WEST	Guinea-Bissau	17-Jun-2021	
Financing Instrument	Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency	
Investment Project Financing	Ministry of National Education and Higher Education	Ministry of National Education and Higher Education	

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PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	2.65
Total Financing	2.65
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	2.65
Education for All - Fast Track Initiative	2.65

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

Guinea-Bissau is one of the most fragile countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and has suffered from decades of political turmoil and *coup d'états* since its independence in 1974. Between 2000 and the present, the country has had 16 Prime-Ministers appointed to lead different Governments. This political instability has prevented the formation of stable and accountable institutions and has had a devastating impact on the economy. The constant changes in leadership, coupled with institutional fragility, underinvestment in human



capital— driven by weak, under-budgeted, and inefficient systems—has led to frequent strikes and disruptions in both education and health services. As a result, the majority of the population continues to have limited access to basic goods and services.

The cost of this long history of political and institutional fragility has been significant. As a result, Guinea-Bissau is one of the poorest countries in the world, with over two thirds of the population living below the poverty line. While poverty is widespread, it is even more entrenched in rural areas where it is compounded by deprivation of social services, human capital, and infrastructure. While overall resources are limited, the allocation of these resources strongly favors the capital city of Bissau and more urban areas. Elite capture has led to a system geared towards providing private goods to elites rather than public goods to citizens. The country ranks 178th out of 189 countries on the 2019 United Nations Development Program Human Development Index (HDI), with an overall low level of human development.

The global Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is expected to have severe socioeconomic consequences. The first case of COVID-19 in Guinea-Bissau was recorded on March 24, 2020 and confirmed cases and deaths have reached about 2,532 and 45, respectively, as of January 23, 2021. Of these confirmed cases, the majority of cases are in the capital city of Bissau, but 10 regions out of the 11 in the country have confirmed cases. While still yet to be fully seen, the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to negatively impact Guinea-Bissau's economy (i.e., falling global cashew demand and price, tighter financial conditions, etc.), thus resulting in reduced remittances to the country. Similarly, lockdowns resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic are also likely to reduce economic activity domestically and result in negative macroeconomic growth. In the baseline scenario where lockdowns are short-lived, growth is projected to decline from 4.6 percent in 2019 to -1.5 percent in 2020 and the fiscal deficit will increase from 5.1 to 6.2 percent.

In addition to these economic and health challenges, both gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), are pervasive and persistent in Guinea-Bissau. Studies like UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey reveal that violence against women, especially domestic violence, is widespread, generally accepted and deeply pervasive. Guinea-Bissau has been taking significant steps over the last decade to adopt a legal and policy framework to address GBV and SEA, showing commitment to eliminate different forms of violence in adherence to international and regional agreements. Key pieces of legislation include: (i) the 2014 Law against Domestic Violence; (ii) the 2011 Law to Prevent, Fight and Suppress Female Genital Mutilation; and (iii) and the 2011 Law to Prevent and Combat the Traffic of Persons, Particularly Women and Children. The Government has also adopted the National Policy on Gender Equality and Equity, a framework aimed at promoting, coordinating and following up on gender equality in all sectors.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

Education is recognized as a basic right in Guinea-Bissau and is central to the country's vision for development. Reliable and effective delivery of basic education services is identified as an urgent priority in the country. According to the Education Law of 2011, basic education in Guinea-Bissau is organized into three cycles covering the first nine years of schooling. The first cycle consists of grades 1-4 (EB1); the second



cycle grades 5-6 (EB2), and the third cycle grades 7-9 (EB3). The first two cycles are compulsory and free and constitute the full cycle of primary education; the third cycle is comparable to lower secondary school and requires students to pay a fee. While the government is keen to improve its education system and human capital outcomes, recent challenges related to (i) ongoing political instability; (ii) rampant teacher strikes; and (iii) the global COVID-19 pandemic have made it extremely challenging to make any measurable progress.

Institutional Capacity

The impact of the political instability and constant changes in leadership can be seen in the weak institutional arrangements and organizational structure of the Ministry of National Education and Higher Education (MENES). MENES has centrally-based staff at the national level, regionally-based staff at Regional Directorates of Education (DREs), and school directors and teachers at the school level. Due to political instability, there are frequent changes across the entire sector and staff turnover is high. Most of the leadership positions in the central ministry, the DREs, and even at the schools, are seen as quasi-political appointments. Hence, every time the government changes, a substantial number of these staff are changed as well. Given the constant changes in leadership, the roles and responsibilities of various directorates and staff within MENES has been lost over time and are often unclear. Many directorates do not have clear mandates and when executing various activities with donor support, different directorates are tasked to carry out the same functions. In addition to having overlapping roles and responsibilities, there are also often gaps and unclear division of responsibilities between key departments and personnel. This lack of clarity limits accountability, introduces delays in implementation, and ultimately contributes to poor sector performance.

Rampant teacher strikes also contribute to the education sector's weak performance and the country's poor learning outcomes. The Education Law in 2010 included significant reforms to teacher management, including a new Teacher Career Law. Poor implementation and ineffective communication of the changes associated with the new Teacher Career Law has been one of the main factors contributing to the widespread teacher strikes. In 2015/2016, more than 90 days of instruction time, over half of the entire school year, were lost due to teacher strikes; then in 2018/2019, almost the entire school year was lost due to teacher strikes. However, in 2019, with support from the World Bank, the Ministry of Finance and MENES worked closely together to begin the implementation of the new Teacher Career Law. As a result, the 2019/2020 school year started on time, with nearly no teacher strikes observed during that academic year. However, this positive outcome was short lived given the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The physical distancing required to arrest the COVID-19 spread has had a direct impact on the functioning of the education system. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak—and as a measure to protect children and to prevent the spread of the virus across communities in Guinea-Bissau, all educational institutions (from preschool to higher education) were closed by the third week of March 2020. Approximately 300,000 children have been affected by COVID-19 school closures. Schools reopened in October 2020, but new closures, particularly in Bissau, were announced on January 24, 2021 due to an increasing number of COVID-19 cases. The expected learning losses from these school closures worldwide is high. Unfortunately, the



fragility of Guinea-Bissau's education system before the pandemic has meant that they have been unable to establish distance learning programs in a timely manner. Poor existing infrastructure and low access to technology has limited options in the country. With the support from the GPE, the country developed and secured approximately US\$4.5 million of financing from the Global Partnership for Education to implement a COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan for Education. Other donors, such as the World Bank, have also redesigned their projects in order to: (i) account for the need to continue to socially distance for the foreseeable future; (ii) urgently help the country develop distance learning programs; and (iii) draw on virtual support while travel of international consultants remains limited.

Education Data, Planning and Management of Resources

Weak institutional capacity and the lack of data means the sector is also unable to effectively plan and manage resources. The last reliable education data is from 2014-2015. Currently, there is no national level data with even the most basic statistics such as the number and location of schools, teachers, students, etc. While data collection instruments have been developed and a significant number of trainings have taken place over the past few years, the high level of turnover of school directors and regional directors, along with school closures, has hampered the government's ability to collect reliable school level data. This lack of data, in turn, has made planning and executing any activities at the school level extremely difficult. Various donors such as the European Union, the World Bank, and GPE all have financing targeted to help the MENES collect reliable education data.

Learning materials are instrumental to improve student learning but the majority of schools in Guinea-Bissau have no learning materials at all. While many previous donor-financed initiatives have provided textbooks and other learning materials, dissemination has been weak and effective planning hampered by the lack of basic data about locations of schools, number of students by grades, etc. During the last textbook distribution in 2016, textbooks were being sold on the black market, a large number of these textbooks remained in central-level warehouses, and many of those delivered to schools stayed in boxes that were never even opened. With donor support, the government is currently developing a textbook policy together with procurement and dissemination plans. However, recent reliable education data is needed to support these activities and attention needs to be given to ensure that the schools have the necessary conditions to manage these materials once they arrive at the schools.

Gender Norms and Citizen Engagement

In Guinea-Bissau, women are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to educational outcomes. Literacy rates among women (50.5 percent) are much lower than among men (70.4 percent); 41 percent of women have never attended school or completed primary education; and approximately 26 percent of girls between 10 and 11 years are out of school. Inequities in access to education is also reflected in the number of women educators and leaders in the education system. When collecting data on the nearly 500 schools and other key stakeholders expected to participate in the pilot of the new curriculum, only 3 percent of school directors, 5 percent of regional education directorate staff, and 20 percent of the staff at MENES were female. These low number demonstrate the poor representation of women in leadership roles.



The inexistence of school policies and inadequate teacher training to prevent and respond to GBV contribute to the perpetuation of violence and the lack of redress. The lack of pedagogical skills and knowledge on child development, combined with there being no system in place for disciplinary action and violence referrals, create unsafe environments where sexual harassment is prevalent. Reports from NGOs and international partners indicate that sexual harassment and abuse in schools, as a form of transactional sex, is pervasive and affects mainly girls. This sexual abuse in schools is often perpetrated by male teachers and non-teaching staff requesting sexual favors in exchange for grades or required documentation. Such forms of transactional sex often occur in a context of constrained choices and extremely limited negotiating power of women and adolescent girls.

The World Bank has supported Guinea-Bissau's education sector since 1997, and most recently through the Quality Education for All Project (*Projeto Educaçao de Qualidade para Todos – PEQT*) approved in July 2018. PEQT comprised of two grants totaling US\$15 million: US\$10.7 million financed by the International Development Association (IDA) and US\$4.3 million financed by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and is expected to close in October 2024. The project development objective (PDO) is *to improve the teaching and learning environment in grades 1-4 in targeted schools in Guinea-Bissau*. For the reasons outlined above, the project has encountered significant challenges during implementation and its performance has been rated Moderately Unsatisfactory for the past year and a half. Given these challenges, the project recently underwent a significant restructuring with the objective of: (i) simplifying the project further; (ii) making adjustments in the design due to COVID-19 pandemic; and (iii) introducing a few new activities to resolve project bottlenecks. Although there were funds set aside under PEQT for capacity building of MENES staff, the budget was very nominal. After two years of implementation, it became clear that much more attention needs to be given to institutional strengthening for the project to be successfully implemented and for results to be sustainable in the long-term.

Relationship to CPF

The project is well-aligned with the goals stated in GPEs proposed new Strategic Plan 2025. The proposed activities are expected to help strengthen the resilience of Guinea-Bissau's current education system and support a system wide education transformation that will leave no one behind. GPE's new goal is "to accelerate access, learning outcomes and gender equality through equitable, inclusive and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century." Currently, the limited capacity and weak institutions within the Ministry of Education, prevent the country from being able to improve the performance of the current system and ensure high-quality education for every child.

The project is also aligned with the Guinea-Bissau Country Partnership Framework (CPF) FY18-FY21 and specifically Focus Area 1 which addresses the need for increased access to basic quality services. This includes increased access to and quality of primary education. The overall aim of the CPF is to move beyond just emergency and immediate support in Guinea-Bissau and work towards transformational change. As this project supports institutional capacity building and the use of accurate and reliable data to develop a more



efficient system within MENES, it is directly aligned with this aim of the CPF for long-term and sustainable change.

C. Project Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To strengthen institutional capacity within the Ministry of National Education and Higher Education (MENES) in order to improve sector performance

Key Results

These efforts to strengthen institutional capacity within MENES are expected to improve service delivery, which in turn, would indirectly benefit the entire education system. The key result of this proposed grant would be having approximately 100 MENES staff who would be better equipped to perform their expected job functions. Due to the technical support and training activities provided, MENES will be better able to collect reliable and timely data, plan more effectively, and ultimately more effectively lead and govern the education sector.

D. Preliminary Description

Activities/Components

The project includes the following three components: (i) strengthen institutional capacity; (ii) improve planning and management of resources; and (iii) strengthen citizen engagement and address gender norms.

Component 1: Strengthen Institutional Capacity (US\$1.30 million)

Establishing Clear Organizational Structures and Building Capacity. This component will focus on establishing clear organizational structures and building capacity within MENES to be able to effectively carry out their responsibilities. In the context of a continuously changing government and leadership, a clear manual and organigram of the required roles and positions and associated responsibilities needs to be developed to ensure sustainability of key activities and initiatives. The project will support the hiring of technical assistance to analyze the current organizational structure and institutional arrangements at MENES. A review of the entire organogram of the Ministry will be done to take stock and better understand what currently exists and identify any existing gaps or potential redundancies. Following this exercise, technical expertise will be hired to do a deep dive on each of the Directorates involved in the implementation of PEQT. This includes the Directorate of General Education (DGE), Inspectorate General in Education (IGE), Directorate of Human Resources (DGRH), National Institute for Education Development (INDE), and the Directorate of Planning and Statistics (GEPASE). See Figure 1 for the existing structure of these departments. For each department, manuals outlining key roles and responsibilities, staffing requirements and the skills needed of people to be able to carry out these roles, and a detailed capacity building plans, will



be developed. It is expected that the training plan will cover a wide range of activities with priority given to on-the-job and more informal courses, while also including formal courses like distance learning graduate level courses offered by development partners. Training content will include areas such as writing, management, digital skills, use of Excel, Word, etc. together with more formal trainings such as Masters level courses and distance learning programs in areas related to education. The project will then support the implementation of these training programs by paying course fees and any potential travel costs, hiring certified training providers, operating costs and some limited equipment.

Full-time Technical Assistance Based at MENES. To mitigate the ongoing risks related to the frequent changes in leadership and weak capacity, the project will support the hiring of three full-time technical experts to be based full-time at the Ministry – one within the Directorate of Human Resources (DGRH), one within the National Institute for Education Development (INDE), and one within the Directorate of Planning and Statistics (GEPASE) for the duration of PEQT. These consultants will provide technical support for the day-to-day implementation of PEQT-supported activities and provide on-the-job training for staff within these departments according to the needs outlined in the capacity building plans.

Component 2: Improve Planning and Management of Resources (US\$1.10 million)

Accurate data of the education system is key for planning and management purposes. The Ministry does have an EMIS with data collection tools and processes in place to obtain data at the school level, however there are serious issues with timely and accurate data collection. Without even the most basic data such as the number and location of schools, number of students, number of teachers, etc., planning sample-based learning assessments, procuring and distributing textbooks, supporting reforms to the Teacher Career Law is not possible.

School Mapping. This component will focus on developing a robust dataset of the entire education system, which in turn will help with the effective management of resources. The project will support a detailed mapping exercise of the entire system. International technical assistance will be recruited to help MENES develop a survey instrument and conduct the school mapping exercise. The instrument to be developed will draw on the existing EMIS questionnaire. Prior to implementation of the school mapping, clear definitions will be agreed upon with MENES on the differences between public, community, self-managed schools, expected pupil/teacher ratios, etc. The questionnaires used will also include information on gender and inclusive education. It is expected that the school mapping will produce an up-to-date census-based database of the entire system. Results from the school mapping will support the government in effective and evidence-based decision making on how to best make use of the limited resources available. (This same activity was included under PEQT but due to financing gaps was removed when the project was restructured. The rationale in doing so was to include this activity under this new project to allocate even more resources which will enable the Ministry to map the entire system – all levels of education, both state and non-state schools, include questions on inclusive education, etc.)

Management of Learning Materials. One of the key activities under the PEQT is the purchase of textbooks and learning materials to accompany the new curriculum. However, without accurate data on school



locations, number of teachers, number of students, etc., it is impossible to effectively distribute and ensure proper management of these materials once they arrive at the school. Building on the data collected during the school mapping exercise, this component will support the development of clear procedures for the effective storage and management of these materials at the school level so they can be used in a sustainable and effective manner year after year. Then the project will support activities such as training for school directors and administrators, the purchase of shelves, storage cabinets, etc. for the schools targeted by PEQT. No civil works or construction will be supported.

Component 3: Strengthen Citizen Engagement and Address Gender Norms (US\$0.25 million)

PEQT has yet to effectively establish the required feedback mechanism and Grievance Address Mechanism (GRM). This is partially due to a lack of financing for this purpose and a limited number of technical staff at the PIU. The project will support the recruitment of a Social Development Specialist who will help to design and accelerate the implementation of the GRM. Potential mechanisms to be used include rapid SMS surveys, a toll free anonymous hotline, and radio messaging. This Specialist will also help to conduct the activities related to citizen engagement and ensure successful implementation and adherence to the ESF.

Addressing School-related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV). The project will support MENES to develop codes of conduct for teachers and any other persons involved in the activities supported by the project. The code(s) of conduct will include provisions on SEA/SH and GBV (against students, fellow teachers, and community members) as well as consequence for its breach. The project will also support MENES to build the capacity of education administrators and school staff to prevent and report SRGBV, to mainstream gender equitable and violence prevention related concepts and skills into school curriculum, and include training related to SRGBV in teacher training activities.

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Environmental and Social Standards Relevance

E. Relevant Standards		
ESS Standards		Relevance
ESS 1	Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	Relevant
ESS 10	Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure	Relevant
ESS 2	Labor and Working Conditions	Relevant
ESS 3	Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 4	Community Health and Safety	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 5	Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 6	Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of	Not Currently Relevant



Living Natural Resources

ESS 7	Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 8	Cultural Heritage	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 9	Financial Intermediaries	Not Currently Relevant

Legal Operational Policies

Safeguard Policies	Triggered	Explanation (Optional)
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

Due to the technical assistance nature of the activities both the environmental and social risks are perceived to be low. Hence, only a Stakeholder Engagement Plan including a GM will be prepared, and the ESCP will contain references to select labor issues.

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