



Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 23-Jun-2020 | Report No: PIDC29275



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Country Zambia	Project ID P174012	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Zambia Early Childhood Learning Enhancement Project (P174012)
Region AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date Sep 07, 2020	Estimated Board Date Apr 15, 2021	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Finance	Implementing Agency Ministry of General Education	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve access for children of 3-6 years of age to quality early childhood services in targeted areas.

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	39.80
Total Financing	39.80
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	39.80
Education for All - Fast Track Initiative	39.80

Environmental and Social Risk Classification
Substantial

Concept Review Decision
Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue



B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

- 1. Zambia achieved middle-income country status in 2011 during a decade (2004-2014) of impressive economic growth, averaging 7.4 percent per year. Yet the country's poverty and inequality levels are among the highest in the world.** Growth in Zambia has only benefitted a small segment of the urban population and had limited impact on poverty reduction. Zambia ranks among the countries with the highest level of inequality globally. As of 2015, 58 percent of Zambians earned less than the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day (compared to 41 percent across Sub-Saharan Africa). Three quarters of the poor lived in rural areas¹. The Zambian economic growth fell to 3.5 percent in 2017, grew marginally to 3.7 percent in 2018, and again fell to 1.9 percent in 2019. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the growth rate is expected to decline further with the impact on the poor and most vulnerable particularly at risk.
- 2. Economic growth has been accompanied by improved development outcomes in health and education, however significant challenges persist.** Since 2007, many health indicators progressed - child malnutrition, stunting, infant and under-5 mortality, and maternal mortality rates decreased². Efforts in combating Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), malaria, and other diseases have also shown success. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) linked to the education sector were achieved (although there are still challenges in eliminating gender disparity in secondary education).
- 3. Zambia remains one of Africa's youngest countries by median age and its human capital will be key to Zambia's growth.** The total population of Zambia was estimated at 16.6 million in 2016, up from just 3.45 million at independence in 1964. Zambia is experiencing a major demographic shift with the population growing at a rate of 2.8 percent per year and a Total Fertility Rate of 4.7 percent. Zambia's population is expected to double every 25 years with a large youth population entering the reproductive age and given high levels of early pregnancy. According to the latest data, the adolescent fertility rate for Zambia reaches 118 per 1,000; only 10 countries around the world have higher adolescent fertility rates³. Rapid population growth is placing enormous pressure on the education sector while straining the capacity of the labor market to absorb new workers.
- 4. Zambia's human capital is very low, it ranks 131 out of 157 countries on the Human Capital Index (HCI).** Zambia's HCI score is lower than those of its comparator countries. An HCI score of 0.4 indicates that a Zambian child born in 2018 will only be 40 percent as productive as she could have been had she received a complete education and been in full health. Data show that 40 out of 100 children in Zambia are stunted, and so at risk of cognitive and physical limitations. Additionally, by age 18, children in Zambia can expect to complete an average of 9.2 years of education but acquire only 5.2 years of learning. Low human capital has significant adverse impact on Zambia's growth potential

¹ Central Statistical Organization, Government of Zambia, Zambia in Figures 2018.

² The prevalence of malnutrition reduced from 14.8 in 2014 to 9.5 percent in 2018 with a decrease in the proportion of malnourished children. Stunting reduced from 40 percent in 2007 to 35 percent in 2018; the proportion of underweight children reduced from 15 percent in 2007 to 12 percent in 2018 and wasting reduced from 6 percent in 2014 to 5 percent in 2018.

³ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT>



and global competitiveness. It is therefore critical for the country to invest more and more efficiently to quickly move the needle on human capital development, particularly in education, health and social protection. Holistic investments in young children, including through immunization, nutrition, stimulation, and education interventions, are highly effective means to develop the human capital that is needed to drive economic development.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

5. **The Zambia education sector follows a three-tier system including primary⁴, secondary and higher education.** It has experienced several changes in the recent past. In 2015, the sector was reformed, splitting the Ministry of Education into the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). MoGE is responsible for Early Childhood Education (ECE), Primary, Secondary Education and Youth and Adult Literacy while MoHE oversees Higher Education, Skills Development, and Science Technology and Innovation. Subsequently several other reforms followed including the revision of the curriculum, the establishment of a number of statutory bodies to manage and strengthen teacher management, regulate quality and set standards in higher education and the setting benchmarks for qualifications in comparison to international good practices.
6. **Considerable progress in improving access to education has been recorded however, learning levels are alarmingly low and challenges in gender parity at the secondary level remain.** The country achieved nearly universal primary education in 2015 and gender parity in primary education. According to latest statistics⁵, the gross enrolment rate is over 100 percent and gender parity in primary education is 1.02. However, the ratio of girls to boys is 85 percent at the secondary level, with 36 percent of girls in the 14–18 age-group estimated to be out of school, compared to only 19 percent of boys. In terms of learning performance, Zambia’s recent participation in the PISA-D international assessment revealed low achievements of 15 years old children with only 5 percent of test takers achieving minimum reading proficiency⁶. Similarly, the SACMEQ report (2011) indicates that learning achievement levels at Grade 6 especially in reading and mathematics are below the minimum expected grade level standard⁷. Results from the most recent SACMEQ III show lower achievement for girls than boys with girls scores 5.6 points lower in reading and 11.5 points lower in math⁸. Similar low learning achievement is evident at lower levels of education results on the 2015 Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) show considerable low learning achievements in literacy and numeracy at Grade 2⁹ pointing at the gravity of ‘learning poverty’ in Zambia.
7. **In terms of Early Childhood Education (ECE) access has only increased marginally, an issue which impacts internal system efficiency.** Although enrollment in public, community and private ECE centers doubled between 2014 and

⁴ Primary also included Education Childhood Education

⁵ 2018 Education Bulletin

⁶ KaffenBerg, Michelle, 2019. Pisa-D Reveals Exceptionally Low Learning. PISA Web site

https://www.riseprogramme.org/blog/PISA-D_low_learning

⁷ Musonda B., & Kaba, A (2011). The SACMEQ III profile in Zambia: A study of the conditions of schooling and the quality of education Report (p.113).

⁸ Saito, Mioko, 2011 Trends in the Magnitude and Direction of Gender Differences in Learning Outcomes, SACMEQ, Working Paper No 4, 2011.

⁹ The average oral reading fluency rate for the local languages ranged from 1.84 to 8.40 words per minute, indicating that the typical grade 2 pupil could sight-recognize a few words but struggled to string the words from a passage into a coherent sentence. While in mathematics, for addition and subtraction tasks, for which a technique other than counting was required (such as borrowing tens), the percentage of pupils scoring zero 49.5% for addition and 60.7% for subtraction.



2018, this enrollment represents less than 10 percent¹⁰ of pre-primary school aged children. The proportion of grade one entrants with ECE exposure grew from 16 percent in 2004 to 29.4 percent in 2018¹¹. As a result, Zambia still falls behind some of its peers in the Southern Africa region in terms of access to ECE such as Zimbabwe (32 percent), Malawi (45 percent), South Africa (above 50 percent), and is below the SSA average of 53 percent. According to the Zambia's 2007 Demographic and Health Survey (ZDHS, 2007) only 31 percent of children are in school by age 6 generating a situation of overage students in classrooms. This has a significant impact on the effectiveness of teachers, on at grade level students with whom they interact and on the overall environment of the school. Children who attend pre-school are more likely to enroll on time and are at a lower risk of repeating and to graduate on time. This reduces the number of years needed to produce a graduate, thus increasing the internal efficiency of the system.

8. **Zambia has a policy strategy to improve quality and expand equitable access to ECE.** The Government has identified three scale-up models for improving access to ECE: annex centers, standalone centers, and hub-satellite centers. The annex model was launched in 2013 through annexing of ECE centers to existing primary schools. As a result, a total of 2,992 ECE centers have been annexed across the ten provinces. In the Standalone model, the ECE center operates as an independent entity under direct monitoring of the District Education Office. The hub-satellite model was introduced recently as a low-cost strategy where satellite centers are established at community level and a where a respective primary school annex center acts as a hub providing support for quality assurance and development. The hub-satellite model has demonstrated feasibility for expanding access to ECE with targeted interventions, including early learning and stimulation, health, nutrition, safety and security through strong partnerships across multiple sectors. Additionally, Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) has been piloted with the potential to enhance access and quality of service.
9. **The enabling legislative and policy framework for the Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Zambia is reasonably sound.** The policy framework draws its mandate from the Directive Policy principles related to the right to health, food security, and education in the Constitution¹². The 7th National Development Plan -2017-2021 (7th NDP) prioritizes human capital development through an integrated multi-sectoral approach which is considered a critical component to drive the country's developmental agenda towards the attainment of the so-called Vision 2030. The Education Act of 2011 seeks to ensure provision of accessible, equitable and quality education within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. With regards to ECE, the Education Act, No. 23 of 2011 sub section 12 acknowledges Early Childhood Care Development and Education (ECCDE) as a foundational stage in the Zambian Education structure. ECE was integrated into the MoGE education structure in 2011 and only in 2014 the first intake of children was enrolled in government funded ECE centers.
10. **The Education and Skills Sector Plan (ESSP) 2017- 2021 identifies early childhood education as a key strategic priority.** Several strategies to accelerate access to ECE and improve quality, equity efficiency, and effectiveness¹³ in service provision have been clearly outlined in the ESSP. A Directorate for ECE was established in MoGE in 2015. Deployment of teachers, annexing of ECE centers to existing primary school, establishment of satellite centers at

¹⁰ The World Bank School Enrollment Pre-Primary (Gross%). Retrieved 5/18/2020 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRE.ENRR>

¹¹ Ministry of General Education (2018), Education statistical Bulletin. Lusaka: ZEPH

¹² Constitution of Zambia, Chap 1 of the Laws of Zambia

¹³ Ministry of General Education (2018). Education Sector Skill Plan 2018-2021. Lusaka: Ministry of General Education.



community level, and the development of an ECE regulatory framework have been some of the strategic policy actions undertaken thus far by this new Directorate.

- 11. A multisectoral approach to enhancing children's school readiness across the Government agencies provides opportunities for synergies.** Given the multisectoral nature of the initiatives to enhance children's readiness for learning, close collaboration of several government agencies is envisaged including the Ministry of Health (MoH) in areas related to maternal and child health, nutrition, stimulation, safety and security; the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare (MoCDSW) in nutrition sensitive interventions, child protection, social protection, and functional literacy; the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in nutrition sensitive interventions; and the Ministry of Gender on gender related interventions.
- 12. Along with the strong commitments made in the policies and plans, significant investment and efforts are required to address the following ECE challenges in order to improve human capital of Zambia:**
- a) **Effective coordination among various institutions:** While the MoGE is responsible for providing ECE, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Child Development and Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare are responsible for providing nutrition and health services, and parenting programs. Inter-agency/Ministerial coordination is gradually improving. The inter-Ministerial coordination is in a nascent stage, which needs to be institutionalized and strengthened. The UNICEF supported integrated ECD pilot project in the Katete and Petauke districts of Eastern Province has demonstrated feasibility of effective multisectoral coordination at district level with strong community engagement.
 - b) **Equity gaps.** The geographical reach for ECD services is mainly concentrated in urban provinces¹⁴ which leaves children in rural provinces (with a high proportion of children in lowest wealth quintiles) with limited access to ECD services¹⁵. According to the Zambia Demography and Health Survey (2018) only 27.8 percent and 5.8 percent of children in the age-group of 0-5 have attended ECE in urban and rural areas respectively. Additionally, the proportion of children with disabilities accessing ECD is exceptionally low and remains undocumented¹⁶.
 - c) **Quality of ECE services.** The regulation for ECE class size is 20 learners per class with five- and six-year-olds. However, the actual pupil-classroom ration varies from an average 20:1 in Central Province to an average 49:1 in Copperbelt Province. Finally, inputs critical for quality of ECE are often inadequate due to inappropriate infrastructure and furniture, lack of teaching and learning materials, and inadequate playgrounds and WASH facilities. Weak curriculum implementation, monitoring, regulation and quality assurance systems¹⁷ add to the low quality of service delivery.
 - d) **Trained teacher workforce.** Although the MoGE has embarked on ECE teacher recruitment, there is an under supply of ECE teachers to meet the growing demand for ECE services especially in rural areas. The majority of qualified ECE teachers tend to be clustered in urban areas with untrained volunteer caregivers comprising a large proportion of the workforce in rural areas. Most rural centres are managed

¹⁴ Similar patterns were found in the UNESCO study conducted in Burkina Faso, Uganda and Ethiopia.

¹⁵ Musonda B., & Kaba, A (2011). The SACMEQ III profile in Zambia: A study of the conditions of schooling and the quality of education Report.

¹⁶ Fink, G., Matafwali, B., Moucheraud, C., & Zuilkowski, S. S. (2012). The Zambian Early Childhood Development Project: 2010 Assessment Final Report. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

¹⁷ Ministry of General Education (2018). Status of Early Childhood Education in Zambia.



- by volunteer caregivers who are recruited from Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) contributions and most have not received the training needed to improve child development and learning.
- e) **Public financing for ECE.** There are two main sources of financing of ECE in Zambia: public financing through the government budget and donors and private financing. Public financing for ECE remains as low as 1 percent of the education sector budget in 2020. Only 0.4 percent was allocated towards ECE in the 2020 national budget. Furthermore, the release of funds by treasury is unpredictable and often below the allocation. The official allocation is way below the recommended benchmark of 10 percent for low income countries. Richter et al., (2018) noted that 2.7 percent of GDP would be required for a minimum ECD package for low income countries and 1.2 percent of GDP for low middle-income countries¹⁸. Overall investment on ECE is difficult to estimate because there are no figures on donor financing to ECE and information from the majority of ECE centers in the urban areas that are run by private individuals, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the church is not readily available.
 - f) **Data for decision-making.** The ECE sector lacks a comprehensive information management system. MoGE annually collects education data through a paper-based Education Management Information System (EMIS). However, the system does not collect comprehensive data on ECE, which is critical for planning, decision making and budgeting. The only data on ECE that the EMIS currently collects is the proportion of grade one entrants with ECE exposure. Additionally, no system exists that systematically measures the quality of ECE service and child developmental outcomes.

13. Development partners have significantly contributed to the education sector with the majority of support going towards primary education. The World Bank is currently supporting the school education sector through a USD180 million Zambia Education Enhancement Project (ZEEP) (P158570 and P174012) with the aim to improve the quality of education, particularly in language arts, mathematics and science at both the primary and secondary level, and access to secondary education. Support to the ECD sub-sector has been limited and predominantly ECE focused. The United State Agency for International Development (USAID) is supporting a large-scale intervention on pre-school and early grades implemented in five out of the 10 provinces in Zambia. UNICEF is implementing an innovative program in two districts in Zambia focusing of ECD. Additionally, several small-scale interventions supported by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international private voluntary organizations (IPVOs) such as Save the Children Fund (UK), Plan International, VVOB (Belgium), World Vision, Child Fund are on-going to support ECE across the country. These interventions supported by NGOs, IPVOs, bilateral and multi-lateral agencies have generated Zambia-specific knowledge on ECE. Some of the innovative models that have worked in Zambia may offer potential for scaling up. The proposed project design incorporates lessons from the on-going interventions in the ECE sub-sector and builds on innovations that are currently showing promising results.

Relationship to CPF

14. The proposed project is closely aligned with the World Bank's Country Partnership Framework 2019-2023 (CPF 2019)¹⁹ for Zambia, as well as the findings of the recent Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD)²⁰. The CPF's objectives include improving access to high quality education opportunities, health services, nutrition and social protection, with attention to girls and women in selected rural areas (Objective 2.1 under Focus Area II). The SCD

¹⁸ Richter, L., Black, M., Britto, P., Daelmans, B., Desmond, C., Devercelli, A., ... & Lu, C. (2019). Early childhood development: an imperative for action and measurement at scale. *BMJ global health*, 4(Suppl 4), e001302.

¹⁹ Report Number: 128467

²⁰ Report Number 124032



revealed large disparities in education quality and binding constraints on access to quality education. The current project is designed to directly address Zambia’s human capital challenges by tackling ‘learning poverty’ through the provision of early-childhood development opportunities in terms of quality, equity, and access as identified in the SCD.

- 15. The proposed project deepens supports multi-sectoral human capital development in Zambia.** Zambia recently joined the group of Human Capital Project (HCP) countries, which provides a good platform to initiate high-level dialogue to increase budgetary allocation for education and human development including through early childhood development interventions. The ongoing World Bank financed Zambia Education Enhancement Project (ZEEP - P158570 and P170513) focuses on improving learning achievements of students attending primary and secondary education. The proposed project targets early years based on neurological research that shows that the experiences of early years including those around nutrition, early stimulation and preventions from psychological shocks, play a key role in children’s brain development and in the development of their cognitive, emotional, and social development skills. Learning starts in infancy, long before formal education begins, and continues throughout life. The competencies and skills fostered through ECD programs help develop competencies and skills that are not limited to cognitive gains, but also include physical, social and emotional gains, all of which play a key role on future learning potentials, employability and civic participation. Effective ECD systems are characterized by the presence of five central components including: early stimulation and education, sanitation, nutrition, health, and child protection. All these elements are holistically interconnected requiring the design of programs that are offered in an integrated, inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder manner.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve access for children of 3-6 years of age to quality early childhood services in targeted areas.

- 16.** To achieve this objective the project will support the expansion of early childhood education centers and improve quality of ECE services through the introduction of a package of services aimed at enhancing school readiness of 3-6 years old children in targeted areas. The services will be directed at strengthening the cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development of children in the project’s targeted areas. The package will encompass interventions to: (a) provide a safe space for children to have structured opportunities to play and learn under the guidance of a qualified adult and quality play-based learning materials so they can develop the socio-emotional and cognitive functions that they will need to succeed in school; (b) build parents’ and caregivers’ skills and capacity to engage children in early stimulation and to ensure proper child’s nutrition and health; and (c) promote continuous assessment of children’s progress to ensure that children have the individualized attention needed to develop their full potential.

Key Results

17. PDO Level Results Indicators

- (i) Percentage increase in enrollment in early childhood centers in targeted areas (disaggregated by gender and locality) (access and equity)



- (ii) Children beneficiaries of the project improve socio-emotional and cognitive functions needed to succeed in school²¹ (learning outcomes)
- (iii) Increase in on-time enrollment in first grade in school located in program targeted areas (internal efficiency)

D. Concept Description

- 28. Interventions that promote early cognitive and socio-emotional development, and early learning are critical to ensure children arrive to primary school ready to succeed and are central elements of any effective ECD system.** Accordingly, the proposed program will support three sets of interventions under three components:
- a. Improving access to early childhood education and school readiness opportunities;
 - b. Enhancing quality of services critical to early childhood and school readiness; and
 - c. System strengthening, project management, and monitoring and evaluation.
- 29. The proposed project is the first-ever externally funded interventions of a scale that will be implemented directly by the MoGE.** Therefore, it is critical that the proposed project also strengthen the systems, policy framework and sets required standards for long-term sustainability. Hence, under each component, some of the activities will have system wide impact while the intervention itself may be implemented in the project targeted areas.

Component 1: Improving Access to Early Childhood Education and School Readiness Opportunities

- 30.** The MoGE has articulated a draft strategy for the expansion of ECE services. The proposed project will support that strategy through the following two sets of interventions:
- 31. Sub-component 1.1. Expansion of ECE Facilities and Promotion of Healthy ECE environment.** In order to help expand ECE access and to ensure a healthy ECE environment the project will support three types of interventions under this sub-component.
- a. **Establishing and validating national ECE standards.** The project will support the development and introduction of infrastructure standards that ensures a safe and healthy learning environment for children, including water, sanitation; and standards for the development of playful teaching and learning materials to support early stimulation, and cognitive and socio-emotional growth. These standards will be applicable to both public and private ECE centers nation-wide. The standards will be disseminated nationwide and will be used in the design of the hub-satellite centers to be built under the project and on the equipment and learning materials to be distributed under the project.
 - b. **Expand ECE access in the project target areas** by supporting the expansion of ECE services through two strategies:
 - i. *Establishment of hub ECE centers.* In those targeted areas where the existing primary schools do not provide ECE services the project will support the establishment of an ECE center hub at the primary school. These centers will serve as a hub to smaller community-based satellites ECE that the project will also support within the catchment area of the respective primary school. For effective

²¹ This will be assess using the Zambian Child Assessment Test (ZAMCAT)



management, each hub will establish a maximum of five satellite centers. It will be a requirement that the hub ECE center is managed by a qualified ECE teacher as this will provide an opportunity for knowledge transfer and on-going technical support to caregivers at the satellite centers.

ii. *Establishment of ECE satellites.* In primary schools where there is an ECE center in operation but that due to its location it is not meeting families' demand for ECE services within its catchment area, the project will finance the establishment of small community-based satellites ECE that will be supported by the respective existing primary school ECE center²². The project will support the development of a strategy to promote the participation of local communities and the involvement of local leaders on the establishment of the hub- satellite model using local technologies while at the same time following the national ECE infrastructure standards developed under the project.

c. **Community participation in expansion of access.** Drawing from the ZEEP experience of community-based construction, similar community mobilization strategies will be implemented to involve communities in the building and maintaining the centers using locally available materials and technologies, and also generating demand for ECE services. These satellite centers will help reduce the distance that children would ordinarily need to cover to access the ECE. To enhance sustainability, a community driven approach will be applied with the communities taking leadership in the establishment of the hub and satellite centers. Parent Center Committees (PCCs) will be responsible for center management with support and guidance from the hub center.

d. **Promote ECE healthy environment.** In order to promote safe and healthy environment the project will provide support to the improvement of water and sanitation condition in ECE facilities in the project targeted areas that either lack those facilities or where they are in poor conditions. Also, in all target ECE centers and satellites, the project will help establish and disseminate a program promoting good hygiene practices following WHO guidelines. The materials developed under this initiative will be available for national distribution on the MoGE website.

32. Sub-component 1.2. Expand Access to a Comprehensive Array of ECE Resources and Parenting Support. To increase the effectiveness of early childhood services, the proposed project will put together a comprehensive system to provide an array of services linking young children and their families to qualified personnel, quality equipment and age relevant cognitive and socio-emotional developmental materials, and parenting support resources as follows:

a. **Establishment of Parent Center Committees** to assist in recruitment of local caregivers to staff the ECE satellites, including support community mobilization activities to recruit volunteer caregivers and to promote children's enrollment and regular attendance in the ECE satellite centers.

b. **Provision of furniture and playground equipment** for the Core ECD hubs and satellites following the standards developed under sub-component 1.1.

²² This satellite-based model for expanding ECE access is currently been supported by UNICEF in selected communities that are not covered by ZEEP



- c. **Promotion of parenting behaviors activities** to help enhance children developmental growth and to promote practices aimed at promoting child protection, reducing stunting and improved nutrition among children in the areas covered by the project. This will be done through project support to the:
 - i. Development and implementation of parenting education programs including aspects related to positive and playful parenting practices, nutrition, health and sanitation, child protection, and early stimulation using locally available produce and materials;
 - ii. Integrate strategic use of technology such as interactive radio and mobile smart phones to promote playful parenting and caregiver-child engagement in developmentally appropriate activities. Mobile phones will also provide feasibility for targeted interventions on maternal and child health, nutrition, safety and security through short messaging;
 - iii. In areas with poor coverage cellular phone and/or internet coverage distance learning technology through Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) using non-broadcast delivery mediums, will be used to train and educate teachers, care-givers, and to provide direct instruction to parents and community leaders on active child-centered learning activities, playful learning, maternal and child nutrition, playful parenting, safety and security and through guided lessons that engage children socially, cognitively, physically, emotionally and creatively; and
 - iv. Design and implementation of community-based nutrition sensitive programs to empower parents, community leaders, caregivers and teachers to enhance child feeding practices and maternal nutrition through participatory cooking classes, nutrition training, and door-to-door educational outreach activities. The communication, dissemination and training materials and strategies developed and validated in the project target areas will be made nationally available through the website of MoGE. Through synergies with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoG) and active community engagement, backyard gardens will be promoted at the center to ensure sustainability of nutrition sensitive interventions.

Component 2. Enhancing Quality of Services Critical to Early Childhood Education and School Readiness

- 33.** In all communities in the targeted areas, the project will support a set of interventions to promote the delivery of quality learning opportunities through the following two sets of activities;
- 34. Sub-component 2.1. Support Continuous ECE Professional Development.** The project will enhance professional capacity of ECE centers and satellites by:



- a. *Delivering continuous and comprehensive ECE professional development.* The proposed project will support the development of an ECE comprehensive continuous professional development (ECE-CPD) framework along with a national implementation strategy, an ECE training program and training materials for training ECE teacher, caregivers, headteachers, parents, community leaders, and local education authorities. The training program will be implemented in ECE and satellites centers in the project targeted areas. It will also include the training of schools' headteacher and PCCs' on ECE management competences. The ECE-CPD will be fully aligned and build on activities implemented during the development of the ECE teacher professional development index (TPDI) that will be prepared under the ZEEP-AF²³. The framework, training methodologies and materials will be validated and implemented in the project targeted areas and will be made available to be used by MoGE and local education authorities at the national and local level so they can incorporate them to their own awareness, dissemination campaigns and training events.
- b. *Using mobile technology and Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) for training.* Training using IRI capacities already available in the country will be further developed in ECE to provide access to innovative and flexible technologies in remote areas. ECE modules will be developed in all seven local languages to deliver IRI-based training to hub and satellite ECE centers targeting community leaders, ECE teachers, caregivers and facilitators. Mobile phones will also provide feasibility for targeted training through short messaging. Additionally, a WhatsApp like group for a network of caregivers would be created to encourage a community of practice on improved pedagogical skills and innovations.

35. Sub-component 2.2. Use of formative and summative assessment. Under this sub-component, the project will develop tools and instruments to support formative and summative assessment. ECE teachers and caregivers will be trained on the use of user-friendly *formative assessment instruments* to carry out continuous assessment to monitor student learning and to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. This will allow teachers and caregivers to plan and implement individualized instructional and developmental activities for children under their care. Education administrators at the local level in targeted areas and policy makers at the MoGE level will be trained on the use of *summative assessment instruments* to assess the status of implementation of ECE programs and to design evidence-based programs and policies. Also, MoGE staff will be trained on strategies and methodologies to disseminate the use of these tools in areas not covered by the project.

36. Sub-component 2.3. ECE Materials for Early Stimulation and Learning. The project will support the development and distribution of ECE materials for early stimulation and early learning, including the stimulation of early reading²⁴ and playful tools as well as additional development, production and distribution of ECE guides for teachers, caregivers and facilitators in targeted areas. Since the project will cover the cost of developing the materials its distribution in the project targeted areas, it is expected that the marginal costs of distributing the materials in the rest of the country will be covered by the MoGE. To enhance sustainability, the project will integrate capacity development of the PCCs and communities in the development of low-cost teaching and learning materials using locally available materials.

²³ ZEEP-AF will be developing ECE standards and training ECE teachers. The proposed project will expand the training to cover the target groups mentioned above. The training will be based on the set of standards develop under ZEEP-AF.

²⁴ The program will also finance the production and distribution of materials that have been developed and tested with support of development partners



Component 3: System Strengthening, Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation and Communications

- 37.** This component will support strengthening MoGE's capacity to guide and manage the sector, to provide services in COVID-19 like situation, and to implement the proposed project in a timely, effective and efficient manner through the following sub-components.
- 38. Sub-component 3.1. System strengthening.** This sub-component will support activities to strengthen the capacity of the MoGE, particularly of ECE Directorate, Provincial and District Education Offices for evidence-based planning, budgeting, managing and monitoring ECD programs. This will involve:
- a. Strengthening governance and accountability systems and mechanism, including fiduciary mechanisms to improve accountability to results and overall system integrity.
 - b. Strengthening the monitoring and evaluation systems and the capacity for data collection, analysis, utilization and reporting;
 - c. Capacity for inter-agency coordination encompassing, among others, joint planning and annual review of nutrition, early learning and stimulation, community involvement, and care-giving and parenting interventions; and
- 39. Sub-component 3.2. System Capacity for continuity of service delivery.** To strengthen MoGE's capacity to continue operating under emergency situations the project will support:
- a. Capacity development and preparedness to respond and continue delivery of learning during crisis and emergency situations like COVID-19, climate induced emergencies, etc.; and
 - b. Capacity development to use of technology and innovative delivery for continuity of learning (e.g. training of parents to continue with some of the core activities, use of interactive radio and cell phone for training of teachers/caregivers to manage such situations in collaboration with local communities/parents)
- 40. Sub-component 3.3. Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation.** While MoGE will be responsible for overall implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the project, the District Education Boards (DEB) will play a key role in planning, implementing and monitoring the project. Under the leadership of DEB Secretaries, district level multi-sectoral committees (if does not exist, to be formed) will be constituted involving district health, water, district local body, community development, and gender officials. These committees will be involved in planning and directly monitoring the program implementation. At each center, a mothers committee for example, or existing community level body, will be involved in a participatory planning process to plan for their center. At the national level, while the Directorate of ECE in MoGE will be directly responsible for the project implementation, the project implementation arrangements will dovetail with the ZEEP-AF, which will provide unified oversight and accountability mechanisms reducing project management costs and increasing implementation efficiency. The detailed implementation arrangements will be developed during project preparation.
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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

The Environmental and Social Risk Classification is substantial is due to the social risk rating of this proposed operation. The environmental ratings are moderate with potential typical construction related environmental and social impacts emanating from the construction of the hubs and satellite centers. These impacts along with impacts associated with sanitation related wastes from the Water, Sanitation and Health (WASH) facilities as well as electronic wastes from the use of mobile phones is anticipated but expected to be site specific, reversible and managed through established and proven mitigation measures. The social risk substantial rating is due to the expected project implementation in rural areas where target communities experience high poverty levels and inequalities are prevalent due to existing social and cultural practices. Gender disparities are evident, with low participation of women in decision making, high vulnerability to gender-based violence and teenage marriages have contributed to adolescent girls being caregivers at an early age. Additionally, for construction limited labor influx is expected as a result of the construction activities and may cause a strain on the already stretched services in rural areas, including a possible surge in incidence of communicable diseases and the risk of SEA. The COVID-19 pandemic also presents a risk as the virus may spread in the community, among teachers and young learners if public health guidelines are not adhered to. COVID-19 pandemic control measures may increase vulnerability to GBV. The GBV and SEA risk mitigation measures applied will require appropriate strategies that take into consideration the limitations.

Note: To view the Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, please refer to the Concept Stage ESRS Document.

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