5 MARS 2021

DIRECTRICE GÉNÉRALE DU SECRÉTARIAT

ALLOCATION D'UN FINANCEMENT POUR LA MISE EN OEUVRE DU PLAN SECTORIEL DE L'ÉDUCATION DU NICARAGUA

Référence	Décision
CEO/2021/03-01	**Allocation d'un financement pour la mise en œuvre du plan sectoriel de l'éducation du Nicaragua** En vertu des pouvoirs qui lui sont délégués par le Conseil d'administration, la Directrice générale : 1. Note que les prérequis d'accès aux allocations maximales par pays pour un ESPIG sont satisfaits, comme indiqué dans la requête ainsi que dans l'évaluation figurant dans le rapport sur l'étape 3 du processus d'examen de la qualité réalisé par le Secrétariat.

	2. Approuve une allocation au titre d'un ESPIG, à prélever sur les fonds fiduciaires du GPE, comme indiqué dans la requête soumise ainsi que dans la synthèse figurant au tableau 1, sous réserve : a. de la disponibilité des fonds. b. de la décision du Conseil BOD/2012/11-04 d'engager des ressources des fonds fiduciaires pour financer les ESPIG sous forme de versements annuels. c. de la recommandation issue de la réunion d'examen concernant les financements (voir le tableau 1). 3. Prie le Secrétariat : a. de mentionner, dans sa notification d'approbation de l'allocation d'un financement en faveur du Nicaragua, les demandes de comptes rendus et les observations recommandées lors de la réunion d'examen et exposées au tableau 2. b. d'indiquer l'état d'avancement des points soulevés à la rubrique « comptes rendus » dans le rapport sur la performance des financements, conformément à l'échéancier spécifié.

Tableau 1: Résumé de la requête et recommandations aux fins de l'allocation (en dollars):

Pays : Nicaragua		
a.	Allocation maximale par pays au titre d'un ESPIG	7 500 000
b.	Allocation sollicitée (100 %)	7 500 000
c.	Part fixe	7 500 000
d.	**Allocation recommandée**	**7 500 000**
e.	Agent partenaire	Banque mondiale
f.	Commission de l'agent partenaire (% et montant)	1,75 % ou 131 250
g.	Coûts d'appui à la mise en œuvre encourus par l'agent partenaire	325 000[1]

[1] Ce montant doit être prélevé sur le financement et ne s'ajoute pas à celui-ci.

h.	Durée	Un an et dix mois
i.	Date de démarrage prévue	1er avril 2021
j.	Source de financement	Fonds du GPE

Tableau 2 – Réunion d'examen : Observations, comptes rendus et conditions

Pays : Nicaragua	
Observations	Le Secrétariat note avec satisfaction les progrès réalisés par le Nicaragua dans la mise en place d'un groupe local de partenaires de l'éducation présidé par le gouvernement et composé de représentants des multiples acteurs du secteur de l'éducation. Il constate également une nette amélioration de la collaboration et des échanges d'information entre le gouvernement et les autres membres du GLPE. Afin de poursuivre sur cette lancée, le Secrétariat recommande au gouvernement et au GLPE : • De publier davantage de données pour faciliter l'élaboration des politiques et de continuer à promouvoir la responsabilité mutuelle. Le manque de données sur le secteur de l'éducation a entravé l'évaluation des progrès accomplis et de l'efficacité des interventions pour résoudre les problèmes clés. • D'envisager d'élargir la composition du GLPE pour qu'il soit plus représentatif.
Comptes rendus	Le Secrétariat prie le gouvernement nicaraguayen de rendre compte des points suivants au cours du premier semestre 2021 : • Indicateurs communiqués à l'ISU. • Complément d'information sur les mécanismes de supervision ainsi que sur les rôles et responsabilités concernant les écoles communautaires (inspections, par exemple). Le Secrétariat demande à l'agent partenaire de fournir les comptes rendus suivants dans le cadre de son rapport d'activité périodique : • Supports disponibles pour les enseignants et les élèves dans les langues des populations visées par le financement.

	• Critères de sélection des directeurs d'école, des conseillers pédagogiques et des enseignants itinérants pour la formation en cours d'emploi, ainsi que des bénéficiaires du matériel éducatif.
Condition	Néant

Annexe A – Rapport de l'étape III du processus d'examen de la qualité par le Secrétariat (uniquement disponible en anglaise)

QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW – PHASE 3 (SECRETARIAT DELEGATED AUTHORITY)

NICARAGUA

EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION GRANT

Proposed GPE Grant Amount: US$7.5 million
Fixed Part: US$7.5 million, of which US$325,000 for Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs;
Variable Part: Not Applicable
Implementation period: One year and ten months
Projected implementation start date: April 1, 2021
Grant Agent: The World Bank

1 BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION SECTOR OVERVIEW

1.1. COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America based on land area. It has access both to the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, and borders Honduras to the North and Costa Rica to the South. Based on population, Nicaragua is the third largest in the region, after Guatemala and Honduras. It has the lowest GDP per capita of the region. Although Nicaragua experienced economic growth and poverty reduction in recent years, progress has been halted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of hurricanes Eta and Iota, which caused widespread destruction in the country's infrastructure in November 2020. As a result, Nicaragua continues to be amongst the poorest countries of Latin America with approximately 15 percent of its population living in poverty conditions in 2020 compared with 9.7 percent in 2017[2]. The COVID-19 pandemic is also expected to negatively affect the remittance influx to the country, which is one of its major sources of income.

Nicaragua has two Autonomous Regions in the Caribbean Coast: The North Autonomous Region (RAAN for its acronym in Spanish) and the South Autonomous Region (RAAS for its acronym in Spanish). These areas are mostly tropical jungles that have low economic productivity, lack adequate transport infrastructure and have limited connectivity, which hinder the adequate provision of public services, including education. Indigenous children in those areas speak indigenous languages, while afro-descendant children speak English

[2] World Bank (2020). Nicaragua Country Overview.

creole. Populations in the autonomous regions face severe conditions of vulnerability compared with their urban peers.

	Nicaragua
Population	6,545,501 (2019, World Bank/UN Population Division)
Human Development Index Ranking	126 out of 189 countries (2019, UNDP Human Development Index)
Learning-adjusted Years of School	Boys: 6.5, Girls: 7 (2020, World Bank Human Capital Index)
GDP	US$12.5 billion (2019, World Bank / OECD)
GDP per capita	US$1,912 (2019, World Bank /OECD)
World Bank Income Classification Level	Lower Middle Income (2020, World Bank)

In June 2018, GPE announced a maximum country allocation for Nicaragua of US$ 5 million, which was increased to US$ 7.5 million, following a decision by the GPE Board of Directors in December 2019. The development of this ESPIG program began in May 2018 with the World Bank as grant agent, but the preparation was put on hold by partners at the country level due to a political crisis in the country in the second half of 2018[3].

In October 2018, the Grants Performance Committee (GPC) discussed the situation in the country and prompted the GPE Secretariat to support Nicaragua in establishing an inclusive Local Education Group (LEG)[4], in improving the monitoring of the ESP through JSRs and in enhancing information sharing. In light of the GPC discussion, the Secretariat met with the partners at country level and recommended the government of Nicaragua to make progress towards meeting GPE funding model requirements by: 1) establishing a LEG with terms of reference; 2) improving the monitoring of the education sector plan (ESP); 3) sharing the ESP's implementation plan; 4) sharing the education sector analysis; 5) updating the requirement matrix; and 6) developing a strategy to strengthen data sharing and management, including regular reporting to UIS.

The government and partners agreed to a roadmap for achieving the 6 recommendations. A new LEG was established on November 13, 2019 with participation from the government,

[3] Human Rights Watch (2019). World Report. Nicaragua Events of 2018.
[4] At the time, the existing Development Partner Group was acting as Local Education Group for GPE purposes.

development partners and CSOs[5]. In addition, the ESA and ESP implementation plan were shared among LEG members, and a joint sector review took place in October 2020. A strategy for data-sharing was also developed. The government has shared information with partners and is in the process of "reengaging" with UIS-UNESCO with whom they shared information in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, the government is in the process of approving a new package of information to share with UIS.

1.2. EDUCATION SECTOR OVERVIEW

The education system in Nicaragua encompasses four levels: preschool, primary, secondary and higher education. **Primary education** is compulsory and free and comprises six school grades divided into two cycles: basic education (first four years) and second cycle (5th and 6th grade). **Secondary education**, which provides educational attention to young people and adults by preparing them to continue their studies at a higher level or to participate efficiently in the labor market, entails two levels: the basic cycle (three years, basic course diploma) and the diversified cycle (two years, bachelor's degree in humanities or science)[6]. Finally, **higher education** includes universities (public and private), higher technical education centers (polytechnic and technological institutes), and research and training centers. With regards to the **preschool level**, which is the focus of the proposed ESPIG, the system has three modalities[7]: (i) formal preschools, that are established mostly in urban areas and where teachers tend to hold a college degree in ECE teaching; (ii) community-based preschools, established in community centers, churches or individual homes in both urban and rural vulnerable areas. Community-based preschools aim at expanding the coverage of ECE services by serving the poorest students; and (iii) multigrade preschool designed to serve children in remote rural communities where preschools are distant. They are also actively supported by parents and the community. In this setting, teachers are usually volunteers who receive a stipend but do not hold a formal teaching position. Most of the preschools are public (84%) and a small part of the private institutions receive grants from the government (5%).

Nicaragua has a schooling population of 399,000 of pre-primary education age (3-5 years), 784,000 of primary education age (6-11 years) and 619,000 of secondary education age (12-16 years). Most of the country's schools are located in rural areas (82%) and are public (86%). In 2013, a third of primary level education (33%) was provided through multi-grade schools, reflecting the high share of rural population.

[5] USAID is not actively participating in the LEG.
[6] Secondary technical education offers a three-year program to 15-18-year-olds for the intermediate technical degree as well as for teacher training.
[7] Education Sector Analysis (2015), p. 29.

The country has been improving educational coverage at all levels and is close to achieving universal primary schooling. Between 2008 and 2015, gross enrollment rates increased from 55% to 61% in preschool, exceeded 100% (and decreasing since 2006, the year in which the indicator reached 123%) in primary school, and from 66% to 75% in secondary school. Gross enrolment rates in primary are decreasing due to improvements in internal efficiency of the system and more students enrolling at the right age in first grade. The outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020 has threatened educational progress, especially that of preschool-aged students from the most vulnerable households. Although public schools in Nicaragua remain open, attendance varies by grade and geographical area, as some parents have opted out of sending their children to school for fear of contagion. MINED administrative data show that public school attendance decreased from 70.1 percent in March 2020 to 45.3 percent by June 2020, later recovering up to 70.6 percent in September 2020. Irregular attendance also creates challenges for health, nutrition, education, and child welfare, which is especially critical for students in preschool and basic education.

The system is affected by the lack of adequate infrastructure and the limited capacity of teachers. Inadequate physical learning conditions, including infrastructure and equipment, affect education service delivery directly. Furthermore, the main program to train teachers, denominated Reference Classrooms (*Aulas de Referencia* in Spanish) and based on coaching and classroom observations, has also been affected by the poor quality of the classrooms where the coaching and classroom observations take place.

The government is addressing these challenges. For example, it has adopted a new set of standards for school construction through the Alliance for Education Quality Project, the parent program of the proposed ESPIG. Further, the implementation of Reference Classrooms is MINED's Institutional Strategy to train public preschool teachers through classroom observation, knowledge exchange, and best practice sharing. As of 2020, 191 of the approximately 9,000 total public preschool classrooms are Reference Classrooms.

It is worth noting that the government collects data through an Education Management Information System (EMIS) developed with support from development partners. In fact, key information has been shared with the Secretariat upon request. However, no formal mechanism exists to distribute it regularly to the general public and UIS. As part of the dialogue and the roadmap to restart program preparation, the Ministry of Education agreed to share the Education Sector Analysis of 2015 (used to inform the development of this report) and other education indicators relevant for sector monitoring. The government is currently working with UIS to submit Nicaragua's data. Some initial information regarding the impact of COVID-19 has already been shared with them.

1.2.1. Equity:

With regards to socioeconomic conditions, children in the Caribbean coast register worse education results than their urban peers. For example, while the national dropout rate for primary education was 12 percent in 2008, for RAAN and RAAS it reached 22 and 29 percent respectively in 2010.

Children with disabilities also represent a vulnerable group. The government has a two-fold approach for children with disabilities. They prioritize inclusion in regular classrooms by providing training to teachers and adequate infrastructure. Special education schools also exist to serve children with severe disabilities. In Nicaragua, Special Education represents 0.1% of those enrolled in 2015, signaling a low level of public policy interventions in this regard.

With regards to gender, no significant differences exist in enrollment of boys and girls in basic education. In Nicaragua, vulnerable girls and boys are both exposed to at-risk factors that contribute to their dropping out of the education system, mostly at lower and higher secondary levels. These factors include: early pregnancy and home chores in the case of girls and child labor in the case of boys[8]. Vulnerable children also have less access to quality early childhood education services and tend to enter late into preschool levels. This lag thus continues to affect their performance in later grades.

1.2.2. Learning outcomes:

Learning outcomes remain low in the country. In the 2010 national learning assessments, the results obtained indicate that more than 50 percent of students achieve a basic or lower level of performance in language arts in fourth grade, 34 percent of students in sixth grade and 25 percent of students in ninth degree. In math, 39 percent of students achieve a basic performance level or below in fourth grade, 53 percent in sixth grade, and 49 percent in ninth grade. At the regional level, Nicaragua's results in UNESCO's Third Regional Education Comparative and Explanatory Study (TERCE 2015)[9] were below the regional average in grades three and six in mathematics and language. The TERCE test shows that boys and girls of indigenous origin obtain lower results than non-indigenous boys and girls of similar characteristics.

Differences between boys and girls exist in terms of learning outcomes. Analysis from TERCE 2015 shows that, after controlling for socioeconomic status, boys score better in mathematics (0.09 standard deviations higher in 6th grade) and science (0.07 SD higher in 6th grade), while

[8] Education Sector Analysis (2015), p. 77.
[9] Nicaragua participated in UNESCO's fourth Education Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (ERCE) in 2019. Results will be available in 2021.

girls outperform boys in literature (0.11 SD higher in 6th grade). Although specific studies analyzing gender disparities in learning outcomes for the context of Nicaragua are not available, evidence from other countries of Latin America suggests that these gaps may stem from gender stereotypes that are propagated through the education system and the households.

1.2.3. Efficiency:

The basic education system still faces internal efficiency challenges that are concentrated in the first and eighth grades. In 2013, the repetition rate was 6.3 percent for primary school and 5 percent for secondary school, contributing to an overage problem in the system. Dropout rates were 7 percent in primary and 16 percent in lower secondary, with higher records in the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast, where they reach 14 percent and 26 percent respectively. In 2013, 69,099 boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 11 and 153,754 boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 16 were outside the school system. The most cited reason for dropping out of school is lack of interest (22 percent), followed by financial problems (17.6 percent) and a very distant school (15.8 percent)[10].

1.2.4. Monitoring of Sector Performance:

Nicaragua's recently formed LEG has a strong leadership from the government and sound support from UNFPA, the Coordinating Agency. Current members include: government representatives (Ministry of Education and Minister of External Relations), Development Partners (EU, JICA, AECID, World Bank, UNICEF, UNFPA, OEI, UNOPS, World Vision and Plan International), Civil Society Organizations (FUNARTE, Educo, and ABACOenRed) and teacher organizations (ANDEN and FES). It is worth noting that despite progress made regarding the LEG's inclusivity, there is an organization with a strong track-record of education programs in Nicaragua and that has been previously supported by GPE's Civil Society Fund who was not initially invited to participate in the LEG. The Ministry of Education indicated that, per the LEG TORs and if interested, this organization should apply for membership to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

According to its TOR, the LEG aims to address the priorities of the Education Sector Plan 2017-2021 and, to this end, it plans to hold regular meetings (Joint Sector Reviews) every semester. As a result, the first Joint Sector Review since 2014 was held in October 2020. The LEG has also met regularly and designed a participatory plan to produce the new Education Sector Plan (ESP).

Improving the monitoring of the education sector performance and fostering dialogue among partners at the country level is key for mutual accountability. The Secretariat will continue

[10] Education Sector Analysis (2015), p. 77.

providing support to the LEG in order to enhance the quality of the Joint Sector Reviews and of the upcoming Education Sector Plan (ESP).

2. ESPIG DESCRIPTION

2.1 PAST ESPIG PERFORMANCE

Nicaragua has been a GPE member since 2002. The country has benefited from three Education Sector Program Implementation Grants (ESPIG) with the World Bank as Grant Agent. The amounts were as follows: US$7 million covering 2004-2005; US$17 million covering 2006-2010; and US$16.7 million covering 2013-2017. These three grants have used an Investment Project Financing (IPF) modality.

The objective of the most recent grant (2013-2017) was to: (a) increase access to preschool and lower secondary education in participating municipalities; and (b) improve preschool learning conditions and quality, as well as increase the completion of lower secondary education nationwide. With the World Bank as Grant Agent, the 2013-2017 ESPIG supported the Education Sector Strategy Support Project (ESSSP), which included US$16.7 million from GPE and US$32.68 million from the European Union (EU) totaling US$49.4 million. The funds were not fungible and were disbursed through a Multi-Donor Trust Fund, in part due to the EU operating procedures restricting the pooling of investment grant finances. The ESSSP was directly aligned to Nicaragua's 2011-2015 ESP and included four components: two related to preschool, funded with GPE funds, and the remaining two related to lower secondary education, funded by the EU. The project was designed to complement the World Bank's Second Support to the Education Sector Project (PASEN II), which focused on primary education.

The Implementation Completion Report (ICR) from May 2018 reports that the main project objectives were achieved with some of them exceeding their original targets. The ICR rated the outcome of the project as Satisfactory. The ICR also mentioned that the operation had a "positive impact on institutional strengthening and lays the groundwork for the longer-term development of the country's capacity."

Lessons learned per the April 2018 ICR were the following: 1) Multiple donors added complexity that can delay implementation; it was recommended to harmonize and simplify donor processes to increase efficiency in future projects; 2) the alignment of the project objectives with government priorities and using institutional mechanisms for implementation ensured ownership and supported sustainability; 3) have a more focused approach, in line with

available capacity and appropriate staffing; 4) adequate attention to design can prevent delays in implementation; and 5) quality measures in the Results Framework need careful consideration. These lessons were considered and improved upon in the approved Program Document for the 2017-2022 ACE project (the current parent program to which the proposed ESPIG will be added to), as discussed further below.

2.2 ESPIG DESCRIPTION

In line with the LEG endorsement, this ESPIG will be added as an Additional Financing (AF) to the Project *Alianza para la Calidad Educativa* (ACE) of Nicaragua, which is financed by the World Bank with a loan of US$55 million (P161029, Credit No. 6015-NI). The objectives of the ACE Project are to improve (a) the pedagogical practices of the teachers in Initial Education (II cycle), Primary and Secondary at the national level; and (b) improve the physical conditions of the learning environments in selected educational centers. ACE has both results-based financing and regular investment project financing (IPF) components.

The proposed ESPIG will support the expansion of the Quality Education Model for Preschool Education, which has been under implementation since 2012 with support from GPE and the World Bank and continues to be supported under ACE. In addition, although the parent program includes results-based financing, the GPE funds would be disbursed as regular Investment Project Financing (IPF) only. The ESPIG will align and harmonize with existing efforts, increasing its efficiency and complementarity, and creating synergies in the education sector. It is worth noting that, in the last ISR, ACE was rated as moderately satisfactory both in its advancement towards the achievement of project objectives and in its overall implementation progress. The ESPIG components are as follows:

Component 1: Improvement of the pedagogical practices of teachers in preschool, Primary and Secondary Early Childhood Education at the national level (US$4.0 million). The ESPIG will support the Improvement of teaching practices of participating teachers through the following activities (within the Subcomponent 1.1 of the parent program):

- Adaptation and implementation of the in-service teacher training plan for more Early Childhood Education teachers and community educators.
- Adaptation and implementation of the in-service teacher training plan for more principals, assistant principals, pedagogical advisers and itinerant trainers.
- Design, production and distribution of 14,400 packages of learning materials for Early Childhood Education teachers and community educators.
- Piloting mechanisms for the distribution and monitoring of learning materials, using digital technologies, which will be extended to other areas of MINED.

Goals of this component include:

- 1,008 additional teachers and community educators in the preschool initial education service, certified in the Continuing Training Course (of which 95% female).
- 1,365 principals of educational centers and 484 pedagogical advisors and itinerant teachers trained in the framework of the adjusted continuous training program to strengthen education management capacity (of which 40% female).

Component 2: Improving the conditions of learning environments in selected schools (US $ 2.9 million). The ESPIG supports the rehabilitation works and provision of equipment to improve learning conditions in approximately 25 additional pre-schools with at least 25 Reference Classrooms (within Subcomponent 2.3 of parent program). The main goal is: 25 early childhood preschool classrooms rehabilitated and equipped plus two new classrooms in AD/IP communities in the two autonomous regions (one in each).

Component 3: Project Management and Monitoring (US$0.3 million). The component will support the continuous management of the Project by the Ministry of Education, i.e. support to the teams that work on the Project's implementation, fiduciary management, and social and environmental safeguards.

The ESPIG will continue to support gender-sensitive interventions included in the parent program, namely gender-sensitive curricular contents, gender-sensitive classroom practices, gender-specific school infrastructure needs, and the strengthening of socioemotional skills. In this sense, under Component 1, the ESPIG will (i) continue to support the implementation of the national curriculum, which includes contents on gender equity and respectful coexistence; and (ii) promote practices that ensure equal participation for boys and girls and incorporate gender-sensitive aspects in their learning objectives. To address gender gaps observed in the TERCE regional assessment, the Project also includes an intermediate results indicator (IRI 11: Teacher training and teacher mentoring programs whose design or implementation have been adjusted according to student and child development assessments, and teacher mentoring results) that tracks the percentage of teachers with gender-informed pedagogical practices. Under Component 2, school construction, upgrades, and expansion will consider standards recognizing specific requirements for sanitation facilities to provide girls with dignity and comfort. The AF will also further address gender-based violence by supporting MINED's efforts to incorporate socioemotional skills in education through the activity "Growing in Values" (*Creciendo en Valores*), which seeks to promote healthy and respectful relationships.

Table A: ESPIG Components and Costs

		GPE Financing US$	% of total
	Total MCA		
A	Improvement of the pedagogical practices	3,995,000	**53.3%**
B	Improving the conditions of learning environments in selected schools	2,880,000	**38.4%**
C	Project Management and monitoring	300,000	**4%**
	Sub-total of Components	**7,175,000**	**96%**
Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs*		325,000	4.3%
GRAND TOTAL (with Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs)		**7,500,000**	**100%**
	Agency Fees**	131,250	

* Include Grant Agent's direct costs, such as Program Management, Administrative and other direct implementation costs.

** Agency Fee is not included in the MCA and is calculated as percentage rate (agreed with each GA) from the Total Fixed Part and Total Variable Part.

Although this ESPIG is processed as additional financing by the Grant Agent, GPE financing expands the IPF components of ACE. With regards to Grant Agent selection, in 2018, the World Bank was chosen as Grant Agent by the government and the development partner group in order to access the initial MCA of 5 million dollars approved for Nicaragua. Later, in 2019, when the program preparation process restarted and the MCA for Nicaragua increased to a total of 7.5 million dollars, the World Bank continued to be the Grant Agent, while the new LEG endorsed all the steps of the ESPIG development.

The grant will be executed directly by the Ministry of Education using country fiduciary and procurement systems. To this end, the ESPIG will benefit from the arrangements in place for the implementation of the ACE program. Through this strategy, the program will help build the national capacity of the government to successfully implement education programs and strengthen their procurement and fiduciary mechanisms, while contributing to program sustainability over time. Through the use of national systems and alignment with ACE, the program follows best practices with regards to aid alignment.

With regards to the Private Sector Education Strategy (PSES), the Grant will finance activities in community schools. As mentioned above, community schools is one of the three modalities to

provide pre-school education, while the other two are formal preschools and multigrade preschools. These schools are run by communities and receive different levels of support from the government, including stipends for volunteer teachers. The community preschool modality is staffed by educators that are local, young volunteers lacking formal pedagogical training and that are only required to have completed lower secondary education. They are located in rural vulnerable areas, and operate in classrooms set up in schools built by the community, community houses, family homes and churches. In article 23 of its National Education Law (582), the Government acknowledges community and non-formal settings as the primary vehicle for the provision of care and education for children under the age of six. The Government has confirmed that community preschools are subject to regulation and must meet minimum standards for their operation, including water, light, school feeding, appropriate infrastructure, etc. In the event that a community preschool does not meet these standards, the Government has noted that it provides support to ensure these are attained. Information on roles and responsibility for inspections has been requested.