CEO DECISION MEMO

DATE 5/6/2022

TO: Charles North, Acting CEO		
FROM: Nilse Ryman (CEP Regional Manager), Sven Baeten (Grant Operations Team Lead), Kirsten Majgaard (QA Team Lead), Daisuke Kanazawa (CTL), Ana Tobar (Finance) and Praveen Prasad (Innovative Finance)		
SUBJECT: Application for Multiplier ESPIG		
Country: Mongolia	**Grant Agent:** Save the Children Australia	**Co-financing :** Save the Children Japan: $2,000,000 JICA (Inclusive Education): $3,250,000 JICA (School Feeding): $2,500,000 KOICA: $8,000,000 $15,750,000 in total
Grant Type: Multiplier ESPIG	**Agency fee %(+US$ amount):** 7% ($350,000)	**Expected Start Date:** 7/1/2022
Amount: $5,000,000 (of which US$ 143,234 or 3% is the supervision fee)	**Grant duration:** 3 years	**Expected End Date:** 6/30/2025

Action request

Approve Mongolia's application for a Multiplier ESPIG

Grant Summary

Unlocking US$ 15.75 million for the co-financing programs from Save the Children Japan, JICA and KOICA, the requested Multiplier ESPIG for US$5 million, including US$143,234 for GA implementation support costs, will support the implementation of the Enabling Equity to Advance Learning (EQUAL) program, of which the overall objective is to improve access and quality of learning through inclusive approaches.

The program consists of the following 3 components:

Component 1 (**inclusive Education –** $1,097,040 in multiplier funds) to support 18 target schools primarily through the Government's newly established Student Development Support Classrooms (SDSC) approach and leverage partner resources such as Save the Children and JICA's teacher training modules but also pilot additional innovative interventions such as the deployment of a Special Education teacher for scale.

Component 2 (**school feeding -** $1,548,576 in multiplier funds) to expand the existing school-based feeding programs in Mongolia. EQUAL's expansion is with special population groups not addressed by KOICA or JICA, including boarding schools for children in rural and remote areas and special schools for children with disabilities.

Component 3 (**blended learning -** $1,784,824 in multiplier funds) to contribute to development of blended learning at the policy and planning level and pilot a blended learning model at schools in the targeted areas.

Current Portfolio

There are no other ongoing or pending GPE grants in Mongolia.

Requirements

Requirement 1 (credible endorsed ESP), Requirement 2 (domestic financing) and Requirement 3 (data) are all met.

Significant Opportunities

This EQUAL program is quite unique in the sense that it will finance activities that the co-financing programs of the Multiplier (JICA, KOICA and Save the Children Japan) expect the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) to implement for these co-financing programs. i.e. counterpart activities such as applying standards and tools developed by the co-financing programs in operations in schools, supporting teachers in schools who are trained through the co-financing programs, and raising awareness and capacity of school stakeholders including parents on inclusive education and school feeding, in addition to expanding the coverage of these co-financing programs. With the MES' leadership, slightly different approaches taken by these co-financing partners will be fully standardized through the implementation of the EQUAL program. As such, this program has a strong harmonization effect on outputs made through different development partners' support, which would contribute to strengthening the MES' leadership on Mongolia's education sector development, which has seemingly tended to be donor-driven. According to both the EOI, the Multiplier grant application and the subsequent program document this arrangement would not have been made without the availability of the Multiplier grant.

Significant Issues and Risks

Due to the EQUAL program's strong complementarity with the co-financing programs, this program will be highly dependent on the progress made by the co-financing programs, not only with the Multiplier co-financing partners but also with other development partners on the blended learning component, in particular. This would pose higher transaction costs on program coordination and could cause implementation delays. Although mitigation measures on this risk are identified in the program document, this risk needs to be carefully monitored during the program implementation.

Another concern raised during the grant preparation was with the GA arrangement where Save the Children Australia and Save the Children Japan work together in their member-to-member partnership, which made significant implementation delays in the past program in

another country. Built on the past experience, GA has clarified the roles and responsibilities of the two entities in the program document. It would, however, be wise to make sure that the Secretariat always includes Save the Children Japan and its Mongolia Office in communicating with Save the Children Australia which is the GA's primary contact.

Lastly, with regard to integration of a gender lens in the program design, the QAR 2 report pointed out that the program should consider and address the specific gender barriers facing boys and girls through the program activities in view of the critical challenge of boys' high dropout at the secondary school level and underachievement in the Mongolian education system. The QAR 2 memo (change log), however, does not address this issue, as it only indicates that there is relative gender parity in terms of access across all levels and does not pay specific attention to how this issue could be addressed through the program activities. In light of the importance of this issue, it would be appropriate to request a report-back in an annual grant implementation report on how the program assesses and addresses gender barriers in targeted schools through the program activities and how the local education group reflects on it.

Recommendation

The Review Meeting (RM) concluded, based on the Secretariat's quality assurance review, that the **RM recommends the CEO's approval of an allocation of US$5,000,000 for Mongolia for the Multiplier ESPIG with Save the Children Australia as the grant agent.**

RECOMMENDED DECISION

Grant: Multiplier ESPIG
Country: Mongolia

CEO/2022/05-XX–XXXX

CEO, in his delegated authority from the Board of Directors, approves the Multiplier ESPIG funding request for Mongolia in the amount of US$5 million plus an additional US$350,000 in agency fees to Save the Children Australia as the grant agent.

The full decision language can be found in Annex A below.

Annex A –Report Back

Mongolia	
Report Back	The government and the grant agent are requested to i) report to the local education group about how the program assesses and addresses gender barriers in targeted schools through the program activities, and what lessons learned are captured through implementation of these activities, and ii) include these report backs and lessons learned in the annual grant implementation report.

Date: May 10, 2022



Charles E. North, Acting CEO