June 17, 2020

Hon. Dr. Moeketsi Majoro  
Minister of Finance  
Ministry of Finance  
Maseru  
Kingdom of Lesotho  

H.E. Mr. Mokoto Francis Hloaele  
Minister of Education and Training  
Ministry of Education  
Maseru  
Kingdom of Lesotho  

Approval of COVID-19 Accelerated Funding to Support Lesotho’s Education Sector

Hon. Dr. Majoro, H.E. Mr. Hloaele,

On behalf of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), I am pleased to inform you that with the delegated authority from the GPE Board of Directors, I have approved Lesotho’s application for a COVID-19 accelerated funding request in the amount of US$ 3,470,000. I have also approved a 7% agency fee for the grant agent, UNICEF, in the amount of US$ 242,900.

The grant has a start date of June 17, 2020 and an end date of November 30, 2021. The full decision language of this approval can be found in the annex to this letter.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Fazle Rabbani, Country Lead for Lesotho.

We look forward to working with you closely to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of Lesotho’s children.
Sincerely,

Alice P. Albright
Chief Executive Officer
Global Partnership for Education

cc:
Members of Local Education Group (LEG)
Mrs. Lineo M. Mokitimi, Director Education Planning, Ministry of Education
Ms. Trine Petersen, Chief of Basic Education and Adolescent Development, UNICEF
Ms. Saadhna Panday, Education Specialist, Global Education Partnerships Lead, UNICEF
Ms. Poonam Buttan, Public Partnerships Officer, UNICEF
Ms. Reiko Okumura, Public Partnerships Specialist, UNICEF
Mr. Sven Baeten, Acting Country Support Team Manager, GPE Secretariat
Mr. Fazle Rabbani, Country Lead and Senior Education Specialist, GPE Secretariat
Annex – DECISION LANGUAGE

In line with the delegated authority granted by the Board of Directors, the GPE CEO approves the COVID-19 accelerated funding request for Lesotho in the amount of US$ 3,470,000 plus an additional US$ 242,900 in agency fees to UNICEF as Grant Agent. The grant has a start date of June 17, 2020, and an end date of November 30, 2021.

The GPE CEO recognized with appreciation the leadership and commitment of the Government of Lesotho in preparing a national response plan and grant proposal that will mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the education sector as well as support the recovery of the education system from the crisis.

The GPE Board approved the COVID-19 funding mechanism on a first come, first served approach for the first US$ 125 million of the original US$ 225 million COVID-19 country funding window. Although the remaining US$ 100 million has been subsequently significantly increased to US$ 350 million by the Board, the demand for the COVID-19 funding mechanism still exceeds the available funds and the maximum allocation for Lesotho is now US$ 3.5 million, lower than the initial allocation of US$ 5 million.

Recognizing the GPE Board’s intent to proceed with the COVID-19 funding on a timeline which acknowledges the COVID-19 emergency, the Government and Grant Agent are asked to move forward with implementation immediately while addressing the following points, monitoring and reporting back to the Secretariat as indicated:

Request for Report-Back

1. Noting that the program targets several at-risk groups that are not included in the risk assessment accompanying the proposal, the Grant Agent is requested to include in the response to the first quarterly survey to the Secretariat an overview of risks that could threaten vulnerable populations (i.e. rural boys, poorest wealth quintiles, children with disabilities, etc.) and clarify how these are mitigated.

2. The Secretariat notes that certain details of the accelerated learning activity are still under development and that the activity may not involve teacher training. The Grant Agent is requested to include Indicator 5 (Table 2) from GPE’s M&E Guidance on COVID-19 Accelerated Funding if activities related to teacher training to support accelerated learning are included in the program, and to share an updated results framework with the GPE Secretariat when/if applicable.

3. Noting that the Grant Agent will use PESA for risk assessment and mitigation against possible sexual abuse, especially towards vulnerable children, the Secretariat requests the GA to attach in the first quarterly survey response a summary of the PESA assessment and mitigation actions taken to safeguard children of such groups.
The Secretariat also raises the following points of observation, which are recommendations rather than requirements:

**Observations**

a) Given the urgency of the crisis, grant implementation to commence on schedule and the Grant Agent to submit a cash transfer request within two weeks of approval to facilitate the timely release of funds in support of program implementation.

b) To ensure public access to the government response plan, the Secretariat recommends that the Ministry of Education post the plan on its website.

**Reporting**

Please note that during the implementation period, the GPE Secretariat will require the Grant Agent to fill out a quarterly survey which will request core data on program implementation. At the end of the implementation period, the Grant Agent is expected to submit a completion report to the GPE Secretariat. Detailed information on the reporting requirement is available in the Guidelines for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding on GPE website.

**Reprogramming**

The Government and the Grant Agent may reprogram this grant, in consultation with the Local Education Group and where active the Education cluster, for an amount not to exceed 25% of the allocation without prior Secretariat approval but must disclose such cases to the Secretariat. For an amount of 25% or more, as well as for any extension, advance approval from the Secretariat must be sought. The process for advanced approval will be that of non-minor revisions of ESPIG which can be found here: https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/policy-education-sector-program-implementation-grants