

Cover Note for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Request

OVERVIEW	
Country:	Bhutan
Grant agent(s):	Save the Children Federation, Inc
Coordinating agency(ies):	UNICEF
Program name:	Supporting children's learning and well-being during COVID-19
COVID-19 Accelerated Funding amount requested:	USD 750,000
Agency fees amount (additional to COVID-19 Accelerated Funding amount requested): ¹	USD 52,500
Agency fees as % of total COVID-19 Accelerated Funding requested:	7%
COVID-19 Accelerated Funding application date:	7/31/2020
Estimated COVID-19 Accelerated Funding program start date:	9/1/2020
Estimated COVID-19 Accelerated Funding program closing date (must be last day of the month, e.g. June 30, 2021):	12/31/2021
Expected submission date of completion report (At the latest 6 months after program closing date):	4/30/2022

¹ General agency fees are additional to the Accelerated Funding amount requested and determined by the grant agent's own internal regulations. They are paid to the agency's headquarters and relate to overhead costs and are typically used to assist in the defrayment of administrative and other costs incurred in connection with the management and administration of grant funds. These fees are pre-determined in the Financial Procedure Agreement (FPA) between the grant agent and the GPE Trustee.

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List of Acronyms

AC	Adapted Curriculum
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BBS	Bhutan Broadcasting Service
BCSEA	Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment
CA	Coordinating Agency
CECD	Career Education and Counseling Division
COVID-19	Corona Virus of 2019
DEO	District education officers
DSE	Department of School Education
DPA	Department of Public Accounts
DYS	Department of Youth & Sports
EiE	Education in Emergency
ESCM	Education Sector Coordination Meeting
GA	Grant Agent
GNHC	Gross National Happiness Commission
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
LEG	Local Education Group
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
PC	Prioritized Curriculum
PPD	Policy and Planning Division
REAL	Rethinking Engagement and Approaches to Learning
REC	Royal Education Council
RGoB	Royal Government of Bhutan
SCI	Save the Children International
SCUS	Save the Children United States
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SHND	School Health and Nutrition Division
SIM	Self-Instructional Materials
SPCD	School Planning and Coordination Division
SWD	Students with disabilities
TEO	Thromde (Municipality) education officers
TEI	Tertiary education institutes
TLM	Teaching learning materials
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organization
WB	World Bank

1. Introduction

COVID-19 is a global pandemic which threatens children and their rights in countries around the world and exposes them to disruption and risks to their healthcare, education, access to basic needs and services like food, protection and social interaction with family members, teachers, peers and communities. While current trends indicate that children appear to be less severely affected by COVID-19 in terms of their health and survival, further data is urgently required to understand the nature of transmission and specific risks to children. However, response/mitigation strategies required to contain the virus, while necessary, will have serious immediate impacts on economic and social activities. The previous epidemics indicates that children and families – and particularly the most deprived and marginalized – are currently and will be impacted for months and years to come. Crisis like these will tend to worsen existing inequalities, including gender inequalities.

Bhutan detected the first COVID-19 positive case on 6th March 2020, a US citizen who had come to Bhutan as a tourist. As of 29 July 2020, there are 99 (46M; 53F) COVID-19 confirmed cases. Of the total cases reported so far, 86 people have recovered from the disease and 13 are undergoing treatment. Fortunately, as of 29 July 2020, there is no single case of death as a result of COVID-19. Most of the people who tested positive are Bhutanese nationals returning home from other countries. The returning individuals are kept in institutional quarantine facilities for 21 days where positive cases are detected and treated through isolation centres.

In response, the government has formed a high-level committee led by the Ministry of Health (MoH) to coordinate the preparedness and response efforts. The national level effort is jointly complemented by various civil society organizations, national and international NGOs, and the UN agencies including WHO.

Following the declaration of COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and its classification as a pandemic by WHO on 11 March 2020, the Ministry of Education has been closely monitoring the situation and taking precautionary measures to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19 in school settings. To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and the impending danger it posed on the lives of children, schools in the proximal zones were closed from March 6, 2020. Subsequently, on March 18, 2020, the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) through an executive order notified closure of all schools and educational institutes in the country. Normal classes for students in classes X and XII resumed on 1 July as these classes have to undergo critical national examinations. However, just recently on 11 August the government issues an executive order for nation-wide lockdown and schools for classes X and XII were closed again.

2. The Ministry of Education COVID-19 Response Plan, Education in Emergency (EiE)

The school closure caused disruption in meaningful engagement and learning in institutional settings. As an immediate response to the disruption, the Ministry of Education, the Royal Education Council, the Volunteer Teachers, private and government media firms, and development partners worked together to develop video lessons which were broadcasted on Bhutan Broadcasting Service to continue provision of learning through Education in Emergency approach as per EiE Guidelines developed in March 2020. Following this the MoE developed EiE Phase-II COVID-19 response plan through multi-stakeholder consultations. The Ministry of Education also developed the Safe Schools Guidelines and protocols for school re-opening based on Global and South Asian guidelines and examples. All these documents are shared with the Districts and Municipalities and made available through the Ministry's website.

The MoE's COVID 19 response plan consists of two phases.

Phase-I

This phase is focused on advocacy & awareness, development of EiE curriculum (Adapted), development of curriculum implementation guidelines for teachers, scaling up water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices at the outset of the COVID-19 outbreak, and provided psychosocial support. The school curriculum has been adapted into five key stages, based on which a total of 440 video lessons based on adapted curriculum have been developed within a span of over one and half month and are broadcasted through BBS channel 1 & 2. Following up on the lessons aired through BBS, teachers, and students use social media such as We Chat, WhatsApp, Telegram, etc. (Grade PP-II), and Google Classroom (Grade IV-XII) as an interactive platform. The Ministry and REC also developed and provided Self Instructional Materials (SIM) and Radio lessons that are in combination to support the education of about 32,135 identified children in remote communities who do not have access to Television or reliable internet facilities. Both the SIM and radio lessons were launched on May 2, 2020.

Phase-II

This phase is developed for two potential scenarios. The first is re-opening of the schools, and second is the plan if the school continues to remain closed based on the COVID-19 pandemic in the country and in the region, except for the tertiary education institutes in the country which will continue their education using online platforms. The contingency plans under two scenarios are as under:

Scenario-1 Schools reopen:

Reopening protocols, scale-up WASH, resume school feeding, and psychosocial support, continue teaching and learning based on Prioritized curriculum and curriculum-based assessment. Depending on the situation, the re-opening of the Centres, schools, and institutes may be phased

by opening one grade/ school/ Dzongkhag at a time based on epidemiological situation determined by the Ministry of Health.

Scenario-2 Schools remain closed:

Continue advocacy & awareness, deliver adapted curriculum (PP-IX, & XI) with Continuous Formative Assessment. Grade X and XII will follow Prioritized Curriculum with high-stake examination based on prioritized curriculum, while ECCD and NFE education will continue using social media platforms. The mode of delivery will be using interactive platform such as social media for grades PP-III, ECCD and NFE learners, and Google Classroom for grade IV-XII. The lessons will be delivered using broadcast media (TV & Radio), support identified vulnerable students with feeding provisions and SIM, and scale-up psychosocial support. As in the case of TEIs, the online education and assessment will continue as in the case under Phase-I.

3. Support from development partners to education sector

While development partners, international organisation, NGOs, CSOs, business entities, and individuals provided both in-kind and cash support to government during COVID-19 Pandemic, the following are the specific support received by MoE:

- UNICEF Bhutan Country Office mobilised these funds for the MoE
 1. Global- Thematic humanitarian Resources- USD 80,000
 2. Japan- USD 15,000
 3. UN COVID 19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund- USD 112,150
 4. Reprogramming of Annual Work Plan 2020- USD 77,000
 4. GPE- USD 70,000
 5. In kind support- Soaps, hand washing stations, sanitizers
- SCI
 1. Video Lessons - Nu. 4.6 million (USD 65,700)
 2. In kind support from SCI (Hand washing station, sanitizers)
- ADB- in kind support (Masks, sanitizers)
- Helvetas (Swiss) - Nu. 10 million

4. Rationale for the application

On June 26, the RGoB issued government directives to re-open classes X and XII, technical institutes, vocational institutes, and final year students of colleges under the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB). The re-opening of classes VI, VII, IX and XI will be assessed depending on the

situation while lower classes (Pre-primary to VI) would continue to learn from home and not have on-campus learning for 2020 academic year. While school closure limits the points of contact and potential spread of the virus, there is a need to minimize the education disruption particularly for the most vulnerable and younger children. School closures carry a high social and economic cost for disadvantaged children.

This application is submitted to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) by Bhutan in response to the announcement made by GPE to access COVID-19 Accelerated Funding. This proposal is developed to provide support in addressing the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic and to strengthen the resilience of education system against the allocation of USD \$ 750,000 available for Bhutan. This proposal has been developed based on the Bhutan Education Sector COVID-19 Response Plan Phase-II (attached in Annex 1) primarily targeting children from pre-primary to grade X. In the Bhutanese education system basic education covers children from pre-primary to grade X as per the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan. Although the proposal submitted primarily focuses on government schools some of the key activities proposed such as the video lessons aired through BBS and psycho-social support services will benefit all students in both government and private schools throughout the country. Therefore, there is no direct support to private schools through the GPE grant. However, the government provides other support to private schools in terms of providing free textbooks to all students, waiver of examination fees for high stake examinations and other fiscal incentives such as income tax holidays for 15 years. The private schools are regulated by the government through the Private Schools Establishment and Operational Guidelines 2018.

The overall goals of the Bhutan Education Sector Response Plan are to:

1. Ensure health, safety, and wellbeing of children, students, learners, and education personnel,
2. Provide platform for students to access and avail educational services remotely,
3. Provide guidelines on the learning areas, tools, and support mechanism by the relevant agencies such as MoE, REC, BCSEA, Dzongkhag/Thromde Education sector, etc,
4. Facilitate continuity in learning in achieving the desired learning outcome by adapting school curriculum and assessment,
5. Develop, adapt, disseminate, and support in distance and virtual learning, self and peer learning materials,
6. Support teachers, facilitators, and instructors to use digital and remote teaching materials,
7. Engage students meaningfully at home and minimize people-to-people contact to prevent the spread of virus,
8. Provide psychosocial support to students, learners, and education personnel,
9. Prepare towards reopening of schools,

10. Strengthen resilience of education system to abate the unprecedented situation safely either to re-open schools or to continue with the closure depending on the evolving situation.

5. Components for Intervention

The Project was prepared based on the Ministry of Education's COVID-19 Response Plan for Education in emergency, Phase II endorsed by the Government and publicly available. There are four components of intervention as follows:

Component 1: EiE Curriculum (Adapted and Prioritized Curriculum)

Lead: Royal Education Council (REC)

Based on the risk of contracting the novel COVID-19 and the impending danger to lives of children, all schools except for grades X and XII to remain closed until further notice as per the directives of the government.

As the prolonged closure of schools is continuing to impact students' education and achieving the expected learning outcomes for all key stages, the long-term implications of school closure is that children could lose more than a year's worth of learning. The short-term learning losses will continue to compound even after children return to school and it will take a long time to get learning back on track. Inevitably, this affects the achievement of learning outcomes and progression of students to the next higher grade. Though the easiest way is to compel students to repeat in the same grade in the following year, it is envisaged that the strategy is costly for the nation in all fronts, including financial expenses and learners' developmental progression, and may create generation gap in career opportunities.

In order to facilitate students to continue learning and progress to higher grade despite prolonged school closures, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with REC, BCSEA and relevant agencies have initiated a number of plans and programmes to roll out Education in Emergency (EiE).

The "Adapted Curriculum" (AC) was developed to deliver minimum desired learning outcomes in line with the EiE Phase-I. In EiE, Phase-II, essential learning contents fundamental in each subject necessary for learners to cope with the higher studies are selected and delivered in the form of 'Prioritized Curriculum'.

The Adapted Curriculum for EiE Phase 1 was organized around themes (for classes pre-primary to six) and key stages-based curriculum for classes seven to twelve. Diverse platforms like Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS) -the national television broadcasting service, Google classrooms, use of social media such as WeChat, Self-Instructional Materials (SIM), and radio broadcast were used to ensure that accessibility does not deprive children of their learning.

Understanding that the situation cannot be contained any time sooner, the Royal Education Council (REC) is striving to improve the delivery mode of the curriculum in emergency by drawing

lessons from the experiences of implementing the Adapted Curriculum of the EiE Phase-I. To continue facilitating children's learning despite closure of schools or partial/ complete lockdown due to the COVID 19 situation, REC and MoE have agreed on a number of EiE contingency activities.

The specific objectives of this component are:

1. Ensure the continuity of students' learning and keep them safe during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Enhance the effective delivery of Adapted Curriculum and Prioritized Curriculum to facilitate students to progress to next higher grades.
3. Strengthen remote learning through the use of TV, Google classroom, radio and other social media.
4. Enhance the capacity of teachers to support the delivery of the Adapted Curriculum and the Prioritized Curriculum.
5. Facilitate the meaningful and productive engagement of students in learning during the emergency.
6. Strengthen education system to reduce the impact of COVID pandemic.

Activities under component 1:

Activity 1.1. Development of additional video lessons for the Adapted Curriculum for classes Pre-Primary to X

In the EiE Phase-I, nationwide closure of schools disrupted the formal instructional mode of curriculum delivery. School curricula was adapted to deliver minimum desired learning outcomes. The adapted curriculum is based on literacy and numeracy at key stage I (classes pre-primary to III and key stage II (classes IV to VI), and theme based curriculum for key stage III (classes VII and VIII), key stage IV (classes IX and X) and key stage V (classes XI and XII).

The EiE Phase-I adapted curriculum lessons were delivered through BBS, Google classroom, SIM and radio programs. Every lesson concludes with about two to three questions as students' task to assess their learning. A total of about 440 video lessons were developed and are being aired. The impact study conducted by the MoE through Google platform involving more than 13,200 respondents representing students, teachers, and parents/guardians revealed a few grey areas which needed immediate interventions. Some of the concerns include:

- i. Imbalance of video lessons in themes across the key stages as lessons mainly targeted the higher classes in the key stages
- ii. The few students' tasks embedded as 2 to 3 questions at the end of each video lesson is inadequate to assess their performance for promotion to higher level.
- iii. The video lessons had limited emphasis on conceptual understanding vital in enhancing student's competencies to cope with learning in higher grades when the situation becomes normal.

If the schools continue to remain closed for the 2020 academic year, the video lessons developed during EiE Phase-I are insufficient to take students through the academic year. Therefore, based on the concern raised by the Ministry of Education, students, teachers and parents, there is a need to develop additional video lessons to fill the learning gaps at classes pre-primary to X. Lessons plans and video Lessons are developed by MoE in collaboration with REC. Currently, video Lessons are developed with the help of a pool of selected teachers and are recorded in a private recording studio. The budget proposed for video lesson will be used for paying the private recording studio for the video lessons recorded, including the procurement of stationery items for recording the video and other logistic support such as travel claims of teachers where travel from other districts is required. These lessons after a quality check is aired on BBS channel daily free of cost through a timetable drawn beforehand.

Activity 1.2. Video conferencing equipment for online support to teachers

Remote teaching is being used as one strategy to support student learning during this COVID-19 pandemic. Video lessons were developed based on adapted curriculum and aired on the national television BBS. Use of ICT tools and technologies is becoming increasingly indispensable to deliver and facilitate student learning. The REC and Ministry of Education conducted online webinars for more than 600 teachers on Google Classroom to engage students further on the video lessons aired on the BBS. However, due to inadequate video conferencing setup, the poor quality of video affected the effectiveness of training sessions. Besides additional training on Google Classroom, teachers have also requested for capacity development on the use of ICT tools such as video editing for them to prepare their own video lessons to facilitate online teaching. With the complete video conferencing kit, teachers can be supported better with online capacity development related to use of ICT tools and digital pedagogy, and clarify questions related to the curriculum content and its delivery. Teachers will also be oriented on online safety measures for students while accessing online learning. Furthermore, the teachers will conduct an awareness session for their students and / or caregivers on online safety. The equipment that will be procured is a Logitech Rally Premium Ultra HD Conference Cam system with automatic camera control (camera, speakers, microphones, connecting hub, cables) Sony 4K Ultra HD Smart LED TV, 75", WiFi, HDMI, USB, Ethernet; Shure GLXD4 wireless microphone system (receiver, transmitter, condenser lapel/headset microphone, battery charger, battery pack)

Activity 1.3. REC Studio enhancement

This activity is proposed for MOE and REC to develop the video lessons in-house in the future to cut down the cost of recoding and production currently paid to private recording studios and for long term sustainability. The REC will play a major role in producing video lessons and digital contents not only for the Adapted Curriculum but also physical education and value education for helping children's health and well-being. In order to cut down the production cost for video lessons, the REC has set up an in-house audio-visual studio recently to produce video lessons and other digital contents across the curriculum. The studio is equipped with basic equipment such as video camera, microphone, and other accessories, and now with the increasing demand, it

requires additional equipment to enhance the studio capacity for effective workflow and for sustainability in the long run. The following equipment will be procured: Camera, lenses and accessories; Microphone and accessories; Lighting equipment; Laptop; a set of camera, lenses & accessories; a set of sound recording & accessories; a set of studio lighting equipment; and one high spec laptop for video editing

Activity 1.4 Support to Self-Instruction Materials (SIM) stage I-IV, Volume V

SIM are print materials that carry the same learning lessons following the adapted curriculum currently being delivered through video lessons using BBS platform, targeting students who do not have access to either TV or reliable internet in rural areas. Self-Instruction Materials development and printing are carried out in collaboration with the REC and Teacher Volunteers starting March 25, 2020. As of date, the printing of first volume I-IV SIM package print materials for all Key stages has been completed and distributed. The fund allocated in the GPE accelerated funding will support the development of additional SIM materials specially for key stage I- IV, Volume V. SIM will be provided to those students who do not have access to BBS TV and reliable internet services for eLearning lessons particularly in rural and remote places. These lessons will be used to facilitate students in achieving competencies as set in the adapted curriculum.

Activity 1.5. Development of Guideline on the implementation of Prioritized Curriculum (PC)

With effect from 1st July 2020, as per the directives of the Government, children studying in classes X and XII resumed regular classes with the Prioritized Curriculum. Considering the limited time left for classroom instruction, the Prioritized Curriculum (PC) focuses on children achieving the main learning outcomes for their specific grade. The PC was designed and informed by the REAL model towards helping students in their current learning and cope with the next higher-grade learning. However, during the course of implementation of the PC in classes X and XII, teachers in different schools interpreted the curriculum with different perceptions which is affecting the effective implementation of the curriculum. In this context, it is important to develop and disseminate guidelines on the implementation of the PC to set a uniform and standard delivery of the curriculum. The GPE fund will support the development of guidelines for implementation of PC for Class VII - X curriculum.

Component 2: Strengthen WASH infrastructure in schools to enhance health and safety of children and staff

Lead: School Health and Nutrition Division, DSE, Ministry of Education

Accessible hand washing facilities and other COVID-19 preventive measures are made mandatory requirement in all schools with the outbreak of COVID-19. The School Health and Nutrition Division (SHND) is responsible for ensuring that all schools have the required health and WASH facilities and services when they re-open. Ensuring good hygiene and appropriate WASH practices in schools will not only help prevent transmission of the COVID-19 but will also reduce the prevalence of other infectious diseases. Under this component the SHND will focus on schools

with grades PP-X and support activities such as installation of SaTo pans/pots in school toilets, installation of water filter for provision of safe drinking water, and sanitary napkins for girls for ensuring menstrual health and hygiene for particularly girls from socio-economically disadvantaged families. These activities will contribute to mitigating the negative impacts of COVID-19.

The GPE's support will contribute to the achievement of the following objectives:

1. Improve the safe drinking water facilities in the schools through the installation of filtration/ disinfection facilities in schools.
2. Provide sanitary pads to expand the scope of maintaining menstrual health and hygiene among girls and create enabling environment for hygienic disposal of these pads.
3. Empower girls with a sense of responsibility to take care of their health and hygienic practices along with taking care of their physical and mental health and nutrition.
4. Promote proper hand washing habits as a preventive measure for COVID-19 pandemic
5. Focus on keeping toilet clean with access to adequate water supply and soaps to reduce the risk of spreading diseases.

Activities under component 2:

Activity 2.1. Upgradation of pit toilets to SaTo pan/pot

As a part of the Toilet up-gradation initiative the Ministry has been making efforts to upgrade pit latrines in schools with SaTo pan toilet. The SaTo pan toilet is Japanese technology that uses a mechanical and water seals to close off pit latrines from open air. This reduces disease transmission from flying insects that come into contact with human waste. It also eliminates the unsightly appearance and odours from open pit latrines and reduce the volume of water needed to flush. So far, schools in seven districts have benefitted from this initiative through an established modality. Along with the installation of SaTo pans/pots, this activity will also emphasize hygiene by teaching children to keep their toilets clean and will promote proper handwashing with soap and water after toilet use. This will support mostly primary schools and some secondary schools with primary sections. As of July 2020, out of 200 secondary schools (LSS, MSS, HSS), about 150 secondary schools have primary sections (Draft Statistics 2020).

Activity 2.2. Provision of safe drinking water (Water Filtration System) targeted for primary schools

The COVID-19 has forced schools to close resulting in a great loss of learning for children. When schools re-open it is critical that schools do their best to keep children healthy, stay in school and make up for the loss of learning. In this context the installation of water filters in schools will help children have access to safe drinking water reducing the chances of children falling ill and staying out of school, and help children maintain learning continuity while schools are open.

Many schools still do not have access to safe drinking water. This activity will focus on the installation of water filtration system catering to large number of student population in selected,

remote primary schools that do not have access to safe drinking water. This will help reduce waterborne diseases and other related illness thereby contributing to children's learning. Additionally, children will be regularly reminded about the importance of handwashing in the COVID 19 context and on the steps for proper handwashing. This activity will reach about 13 % of primary schools in the country. Some primary schools already have this facility while funding will be explored for the remaining schools that do not have access to safe drinking water.

Activity 2.3. Provision of Sanitary Pads

In many developing countries girls are more vulnerable to dropping out of school due to various factors, such as inadequate access to menstrual hygiene management at schools. Many girls, particularly from disadvantaged families cannot afford the use of sanitary pads thus they may stay away from school during the menstrual period leading to learning loss and ultimately academic failure and dropping out from school. This activity will identify girls who need this support and provide them with sanitary pads.

Component 3: Education continuity for students with disabilities (SWDs)

Lead: ECCD and SEN Division, Ministry of Education

Due to a unique need of students with disabilities (SWD), curriculum and its delivery also requires adaptation particularly designed for children with hearing and visual impairment at Wangsel and Muenselling Institute respectively, and for children with physical disabilities in schools with SEN programme. The teachers of the two institutes and schools with SEN programme have developed learning packages based on the EiE guideline. The lessons are delivered through adaptation and modification of the curriculum by developing Individual Education Plan (IEP). The students with hearing and visual impairment and schools with SEN programme follow the adapted curriculum with some modifications through the BBS TV, SIM, and radio lessons. These most-at-risk children need assistive devices such as mobile/tablet that is compatible for quality audio/visual systems, can store adequate amount of audio and visual learning materials shared and upload their learning progress to the respective teachers. To ensure that children can meaningfully engaged with the assistive devices for maximum learning and be accountable, guideline/ SOPs would be developed focusing on learning contents, online safety, usage, updates, and maintenance.

The specific objectives of this component are:

1. To enhance inclusion and equity for students with disabilities by accessing appropriate curriculum and lessons delivered by teachers through mainstream and social media.
2. To engage students with disabilities productively at home and minimize people-people contact following the COVID-19 preventive measures.
3. To create greater clarity of what teachers should teach and students should learn.
4. Ensure the psychosocial wellbeing of students in emergency.

Activities under component 3:**Activity 3.1. Procurement of Tablets for SWDs for home-based learning**

Students with disabilities and children who rely on classroom teachers or who use learning aids and equipment which are not made available at home during school closures are more likely to miss out on their learning and are particularly at risk of completely dropping out of school resulting in discontinuing their education with the prolonged closure of schools. With EiE being delivered mostly using the online platforms, students with disabilities without immediate educational support adapted to their needs find it doubly difficult to access online learning. To address such issues of educational access, provision of tablets for home-based learning is proposed for pre-primary to class X students with disabilities of 18 schools with SEN programme, and the children of the two special institutes for children with hearing and visual impairment. Data coverage for 3 months will also be provided to these children along with the tablets as an initial support so that children access online classes immediately when schools are closed. If the school closure situation prolongs ministry will explore other options to provide data charges or alternatives such as schools uploading the teaching learning materials directly into the tablets/phone periodically. Children with special needs and disabilities will need this support even when schools are open. As the schools with SEN programs are spread across the country the support will cover both rural and urban settings. The two special institutes for the Deaf and the blind are located in the west (Paro) and in the east (Trashigang) respectively. Internet connectivity is available in all the above schools.

Activity 3.2. Procurement of Smart Phones for Students who have blindness and low vision

Similar to above, students with visual impairments who rely on Braille and audio/speech-related products and services to access education in school are deprived of learning when schools remain closed. The lessons being delivered through national TV and other online apps are not specifically designed/adapted for them which makes it hard for them to follow. Unlike tablets for other students with disabilities smart phones with good storage capacity are recommended for students with visual impairment as they rely mostly on audio and speech programmes. This will help students to access their lessons while teachers at Muenselling Institute will adapt lessons and deliver in audio format.

Activity 3.3. Data Charges for 3 months

Mobile data is proposed to be supported with the gadget (tablet or smart phone) to help students access lessons shared online. Since “poverty is both the cause and consequence of ‘disability’ and vice-versa, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation with possibility of leaving out students with disabilities from mainstream educational system. Therefore, providing mobile data will not only serve as a complete package but also ensure educational accountability as students learning will be closely monitored and assessed by the teachers.

Activity 3.4. Development of customized teaching learning materials (TLM)

With the partial re-opening of schools in the country, students in grade X and XII are following “prioritized curriculum”, while students in other grades are following ‘adapted curriculum’ from home. The Ministry has also supplied Self-Instructional Materials (SIM) for students in remote settings who are unable to follow online classes. However, the ‘adapted curriculum’ and SIM designed for general students will not be fully accessible or ‘appropriate’ for students with disabilities as they are heavily reliant on SEN teachers or teacher assistants while in school. In line with the REC’s EiE curriculum, Ministry of Education has started to collate existing EiE curricula and programmes for students with disabilities to ensure access to learning at home. This activity aims to consolidate existing documents, review, and produce relevant EiE programmes and curricula into accessible formats such as audio, video, Braille, closed captioning and using Bhutanese Sign Language. Once the production is complete, the planned delivery is desired to ensure quick reach to students at home and monitor the effectiveness over a period of time.

Component 4: Improved Psychosocial Support services

Lead: Career Education and Counseling Division (CECD), DYS, Ministry of Education

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the closure of all schools for an indefinite period and all children have been asked to stay at home. The school counsellors are pooled to provide counselling services to those children who may be affected by the COVID-19 and any other issues. With the sudden disruption of their education in school setting, and their daily normal routines, children are vulnerable to this disruption particularly in emergency situation such as this. As a result, many children experience increased level of stress anxiety, and abuse which can have long term implications on their learning, mental health, and wellbeing.

This service is primarily being targeted to school children, teachers and parents who would require this support. As of 17th July 2020, there are about 522 individuals comprising of students, parents, teachers and other who availed counselling services provided by the Ministry of Education.

Like any emerging area of practice in psychological therapies, the development of counselling and psychotherapy provision online requires clear, research-based evidence regarding its effectiveness and good practice to ensure that clients are protected, are adequately supported, and that the benefits to them are maximized. With the pandemic situation, remote psychosocial support is the provision of support services using technological platform such as hotline, WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook, or any other similar platform where the counsellors provide psychological first aid and/or emotional support to clients. The services for children through these modes are limited to helping them understand their issues, teaching them some coping and management skills and techniques, providing self-help resources and linkages to other Hotline services. The remote psychosocial support programs and interventions will support the Ministry of Education and schools to further consolidate Psychosocial Support Contingency Plans

and implement the activities to plan and manage emergency situations better and help in the recovery process of students, teachers and parents.

The specific objectives of this component are:

1. Enhance and increase accessibility of mental health services
2. Provide constructed and therapeutic modality for those clients who have socially phobic and fearful to seek for a face-face counselling therapy.
3. Provide brief counselling interventions to distressed children who require support
4. Identification and referral of cases in need of additional support such as general referrals, COVID-19 referrals, case management etc.
5. Reduce stigma and social exclusion that may result from COVID-19.
6. Decrease the level of stress on caregivers.
7. Engage absent family members in the family therapy with the use of computer-mediated communication
8. Provide caregivers with positive parenting discipline tools to support their children.

Activities under component 4:

Activity 4.1 Support to Sherig (Education) Counselling Services

With the pandemic situation, face to face counselling are increasingly being replaced by online or telephonic support services and follow ups. In order to upscale the reach of counselling services and to continuously support the clients, talk time and internet data package services will have to be provided to school counselors and counselors to enable them to provide services remotely using technological platforms such as a hotline, WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook etc..

Activity 4.2 Capacity development of counsellors on Online Counselling skills and techniques

Capacity development of school counselors on the use of online counselling skills and techniques that aims to reduce children's experience of distress whilst also focusing on practical needs through remote means. Support to clients will be provided using hotline, WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook or any other similar platform where counsellors will provide psychological first aid and/or emotional support to students, teachers and parents/caregivers on an individual and/or a group level. This will enable the provision of support services to schools and communities remotely where physical presence is not possible. This proposal supports the capacity development of counsellors.

Activity 4.3: Procurement of video conferencing equipment for CECD, DYS

Counsellors themselves while providing services to others, undergo stress that can impact their own personal health and wellbeing as well as in delivering their professional service. They are exposed to difficult stories of their clients and undergo compassion fatigue. Such experiences can impact their personal choices, lifestyle, and professional judgement, and can lead to burnout. Therefore, it is imperative to include case supervision and self-care component in the counselors' training package. Due to the risk posed by COVID-19, most of the meetings and trainings need to

be conducted virtually through zoom meeting or other online social mediums. The concerned division requires a studio with well set up video conference equipment for timely and effective trainings for school counselors. The following equipment will be procured: camera, remote control, speaker phone, microphones, hub/cable/power cables; mount; displays; a desktop computer, and a VoIP conference phone

Activity 4.4. Psycho-Social Support training rollout for focal Teachers

The most important component in psychosocial counselling is related to training and preparation of teachers to return to school and carry out responsibilities. Students have been out of school for about five months and need to orient and adapt to regular schooling and the new normal. Under such situations, teachers are expected to know about the challenges that students are likely to face such as the need to reestablish relations and adapt to the learning pace. As all schools in the country do not have trained school counselors yet, the support to such schools needs to be reached by training identified focal teachers in that school to enhance access to counseling services. Their capacity will be strengthened to identify vulnerable children who will need further online or face-to-face counselling services and specialized treatment from the counselors/professionals.

5. Results Framework and Risk Mitigation Measures:

The table summarizes the main outcome and output indicators. Where possible data will be disaggregated by gender, age, and disability.

Component 1: Adapted and Prioritized Curriculum for Education Continuity				
Outcome/Output Statements	Indicator	Target Value	Means of Verification	Frequency of data collection
Outcome 1: Students in grades Pre-primary to X have access to distance education program based on adapted and prioritized curriculum.	% of students in grades Pre-primary to X who have access to online learning opportunities disaggregated by sex	80%	Policy and Planning (PPD) Ministry of Education final report on coverage. Survey on coverage will be conducted amongst teachers/principals and DEOs/TEOs	Annual
Output 1.1: Online lessons and 50 additional video lessons with lesson plans materials developed and aired in national television, radio and shared through social media platforms such as Telegram, WeChat, YouTube, Google Classroom.	# of children grades PP-X who access online learning resources through TV, radio & social media platforms disaggregated by sex.	92,263	Administrative data PPD. National TV & Radio airtime schedule.	Annual
	# video lessons PP-X produced	50	Inventory of 50 video lessons produced.	One time
	# of lesson plans developed for PP-X	50	Physical verification of the document – lesson plans.	One time

Output 1.2: Video conference equipment's for online support to teachers	#equipment in place to support the video conference	3	Inventory of the video equipment maintained.	One time after procurement is done
	#video conference conducted	10-15	Event records and online attendance/participants list	Quarterly
Output 1.3: REC video studio strengthened to record video lessons both for EiE and BBS 3 (national TV)	Relevant Equipment purchased for the studio by equipment type	4	Inventory of the video equipment maintained.	One time after procurement is done
	#video lessons recorded for EiE	30-35	Inventory of 30 video lessons produced	One time
Output 1.4: SIM lessons Stage I-IV, developed for Volume V	#of SIM lessons developed and distributed	80 lessons	Physical verification of the SIM and distribution list	One time
Output 1.5: Guidelines on implementation of prioritized curriculum developed to help classes X teaching and accelerate the re-opening of schools with classes 7-9	# subject based PC implementation guidelines developed	15-18 subjects	Inventory of subjects-based guidelines.	One time
	# teachers oriented on PC implementation	100-150 teachers	Reports on orientation through school visits.	
Assumptions	Risks	Mitigation		
Parents and children have platforms enabling access to video lessons and they are willing to participate.	Children are not able to access the distance classes provided since their routines are disrupted; children are helping their parents; children cannot access the lessons; parents do not encourage.	Regular follow up with parents and children by class teachers and school; DEOS and TEOs to follow up with teachers and the school; the HQ to monitor the DEOS and TEOs. Regular monitoring and reporting done at all levels.		
Component 2: Strengthen WASH infrastructure in schools to enhance health and safety of children and staff				
Outcome/Output Statements	Indicator	Target Value	Means of Verification	
Outcome 2: Students (boys and girls) have improved access to and make optimal use of handwashing, hygiene & sanitation facilities.	% of students reached through enhancement of WASH disaggregated by sex	50%	SHND Administrative data/report.	Annual
Output 2.1: Improved sanitation and hygiene through rehabilitation and upgradation of pit toilets to SaTo pan/pot	# children who benefit from improved WASH facilities in schools disaggregated by sex.	63,200	Progress report with pictures.	Quarterly
	# of toilets for boys and girls rehabilitated and upgraded.	1500	Progress report with before & after pictures.	Quarterly
Output 2.2: Schools create access to safe drinking water	# of schools with heavy duty filtration systems installed	43	Progress report with pictures.	One time after filtration system is

				procured and installed
Output 2.3: Improved sanitation and hygiene through provision of sanitary products for menstrual hygiene to targeted girls.	# of sanitary napkins procured and distributed to targeted girls	13,889	Distribution list and progress report.	Quarterly
Assumptions	Risks	Mitigation		
The WASH materials are available in the local market and there is no hindrance in transporting the materials to the schools.	Lock down in the neighboring country (in India) could impact procurement of SATO pans.	Bulk procurement of the SATO pans (as required) before the situation changes. Explore alternate technologies in case the SATO pans are not available during the implementation period.		
Component 3: Education continuity for students with disabilities (SWDs)				
Outcome/Output Statements	Indicator	Target Value	Means of Verification	
Outcome 3: Children of schools with SEN programs and Special Institutes (visual and hearing) have access to education	% of children in SEN schools who avail education disaggregated by sex	100%	SEN Division administrative data	Annual
Output 3.1: Assistive devices with enabled features to support learning for children with disabilities and hearing difficulties are procured and distributed.	# of tablets and mobile phones procured and distributed to schools with SEN programs and specialized institutes	649	Administrative data/Official report SEN Division /Procurement & distribution list	One time after the procurement is completed and tablets/mobiles distributed
	# of children in schools with SEN program provided with assistive devices (tablets) to support learning disaggregated by sex.	551	Administrative data/Official report SEN Division /Procurement & distribution list	One time, when students receive the devices
	# of children with hearing difficulties provided with assistive devices (tablets) to support learning disaggregated by sex.	98	Administrative data/Official report SEN Division /Procurement & distribution list	One time, when students receive the devices
Output 3.2: Assistive devices with enabled features to support learning for children with visual difficulties are procured and distributed.	# of mobile phones procured and distributed to specialized institute	46	Administrative data/Official report SEN Division /Procurement & distribution list	One time after the procurement is completed and tablets/mobiles distributed
	# of children with visual difficulties provided with assistive devices (mobile phones) to support	46	Administrative data/Official report SEN Division /Procurement & distribution list	One time, when students

	learning disaggregated by sex.			receive the devices
Output 3.3 Children provided data charges for 3 months	# of children with disabilities receiving data support	695	Administrative data/Official report SEN Division	Quarterly
Output 3.4: EiE curricula and program for children in SEN schools are contextualized and developed into different accessible formats (audio, visual, print etc.) for children with disabilities.	# of TLM developed by type (audio, video, BSL with caption, Braille, print)	At least 1 product in each format	Inventory of the resources, physical verification of the documents.	One time, when the materials are produced and quarterly as per distribution of different formats.
	# of student with disabilities accessing online learning resources	551	Administrative data/Official report SEN Division	Quarterly
	# of student with visual difficulties provided accessing online learning resources	46	Administrative data/Official report SEN Division /Procurement & distribution list	Quarterly
	# of children with hearing difficulties accessing online learning resources	98	Administrative data/Official report SEN Division	Quarterly
Assumptions	Risks	Mitigation		
Mobiles and tablets are available in the local market and there is no hindrance in transporting them to children with disabilities.	Lock down could impact procurement of tablets and mobile phones	Bulk procurement of tablets. If tablets are not available, alternative should be sought (smart phones?)		
Children have the capacity to use the tablets/ mobile and understand the lessons provided therein.	Children do not know how to use the tablets/ mobile phones and do not understand the lessons	Established guidelines/ SOPs: - Usage - Updates - Maintenance Handover details		
All SEN teachers are available for the workshop	Since the schools will be busy conducting exams from November, getting SEN teacher for the workshop may pose challenge.	Get approval in advance and convince approving authorities on the need without impacting the schools. Could invite those SEN teachers who are not involved in examination/teaching of classes X and XII students.		
Component 4: Improved Psychosocial Support services				
Outcome/Output Statements	Indicator	Target Value	Means of Verification	
Outcome 4: Children's mental health and wellbeing needs are met during COVID 19 through improved Psychosocial Support	# children boys and girls who are provided basic psychosocial support through outreach or	40000	DYS & individual schools' administrative data.	Quarterly

services provided by counselors, teachers, and education stakeholders.	other similar programs disaggregated by sex			
Output 4.1. Data support provided for education counseling services for 9 months	# of counsellors receiving support	153	List and verification of receipt of support	Quarterly
Output 4.2: Training of counsellors on online counselling skills and techniques to provide psychosocial support to students, learners, and education personnel.	# of counselors who have availed training on 'Online Counselling Skills and Techniques' disaggregated by sex	147 (80m, 67f)	Training report	One time
Output 4.3: Procurement of video conferencing equipment	# of video conferencing equipment purchased for virtual trainings	1 set	Meeting reports using the video conferencing materials List of equipment procured and verification of receipt	One time
Output 4.4: Psychosocial support training roll out for focal teachers	# of focal teachers trained to provide 'Psycho-Social' support disaggregated by sex.	464	Training report	One time
	# clients who are provided focused (one-on-one) psychosocial support disaggregated by sex and age.	2900	No. of clients served that is recorded on online case load.	Quarterly
Assumptions	Risks	Mitigation		
There is no lock down and children and their caregivers are aware of and avail psychosocial support services.	Children and their caregivers are not aware of and do not/ cannot avail psychosocial support services due to lock down.	Advertise the service availability on different mediums. Strengthen distance psychosocial support capacities.		
There is no lock down and face-to-face training of counselors and focal teachers can be conducted.	There is lock down and face-to-face training of counselors and focal teachers cannot be conducted.	Adapt, design, and use virtual training formats.		

6. Project Implementation and Management

Overview

The GPE Accelerated Funding project will be fully implemented using the government systems and processes. The RGoB has been implementing large-scale education projects funded by external partners through its well-established and transparent government mechanisms and has

demonstrated sufficient capacity to handle the additional financial flow as per the GPE/ESPIG project.

As per the GPE Guidelines for COVID-19 accelerated funding, the Ministry of Education has invited expression of interest from four development partners (UNICEF, World Bank, SCI, and ADB) who already have financial transfer agreement for GPE fund executed prior to the submission of the application. In response to this call, SCUS has submitted their expression of

interest to take up the role of 'Grant Agent', while UNICEF, Bhutan has submitted their interest to continue their role as the 'Coordination Agency'. This selection was endorsed through the 6th Education Sector Coordination Meeting held on 23rd July 2020. This meeting also endorsed COVID-19 accelerated funding proposals and nomination of KIX national steering committee and coordinator.

The implementation of COVID-19 accelerated funding project will be led by the MoE, in close collaboration with Save the Children United States (SCUS) as the GA and the Save the Children Bhutan Country Office (SC Bhutan CO) as its representative. . The Policy and Planning Division (PPD) of MoE will serve as the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) with Chief Planning Officer as the project manager. The project manager will be assisted by a project coordinator for day to day management of the project. The Secretary of the MoE shall provide oversight and overall direction for project implementation. UNICEF, Country Office, Bhutan will serve as the

Coordinating agency and will support the PCU and GA in coordination and organizing consultations as required.

Each of the four components of intervention will be implemented by the relevant division/agency of the MoE namely:

- Component 1: Royal Education Council in collaboration with SPCD, DSE
- Component 2 : School Health and Nutrition Division, DSE.
- Component 3 : ECCD & SEN Division, DSE; and
- Component 4 : Career Education & Counseling Division, DYS.

The Chief Programme Officer of each of the above-mentioned divisions/agency will be responsible for the management and implementation of the respective component activities. Each implementing division/agency will assign a project focal person for day to day management and reporting of component activities.

The following will be the specific roles of each of the agencies involved in managing, supervising, and monitoring the GPE/ESPIG Programme implementation:

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The main role and functions of the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) shall be to:

- Carry out day to day management of the project in close coordination with the Coordinating Agency (CA) and Grant Agent (GA) including the GPE Secretariat
- Provide overall direction and support for the implementation of the four proposed components
- Ensure coherence and complementarity of the project with other relevant projects and programmes under the MoE
- Monitor the progress of the implementation of the project on quarterly basis and submit Quarterly Progress Reports (both narrative on programme activity and financial on programme expenditure) to GA
- Coordinate and resolve any project implementation issue
- Take the lead to coordinate review meetings and report on the status of project implementation during the review meetings to project review committee members
- Prepare and submit annual project review report to the GA with copy endorsed to CA
- Present the annual review report on the status of project implementation to the Education Sector Coordination Meeting (ESCM) members mentioned below in coordination with CA

Project Implementation

Each of the four components of intervention will be implemented by the relevant division/agency of the MoE namely: Component 1 by the Royal Education Council; Component 2 by School Health and Nutrition Division; Component 3 by ECCD & SEN Division; and Component 4 by Career Education & Counseling Division.

These divisions/agency of the MoE shall:

- Take the lead in implementing their component activities in close coordination with the districts/municipality Education Offices/local governments
- Take the responsibility for managing, monitoring, and reporting (both narrative on program activity and financial on program expenditure) on progress quarterly to PPD.
- The project focal persons/Chiefs of the implementing division/agency will be the contact point for reporting to PPD as well as for any information related to the project

Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC):

As is the existing practice, the Quarterly Progress reports as well as other reports will be routed through the GNHC to the GA. GNHC will review the reports, provide feedback to PPD of MoE if required and forward the reports to the GA as is the existing practice. The GA will provide feedback on the reports to PPD of MoE through the GNHC.

Project Review Committee

The existing joint biannual, the midterm and end of Project Review Committee meetings of the MoE and SC Bhutan CO will be used as the project review platform to carry out the joint review of the progress of the project implementation including identification of challenges, and discuss implementation issues as necessary so that the activities could be implemented within the

timeframe of the action. All the meetings will be documented, and the progress shared with the Education Sector Coordination Meeting members on annual basis.

The biannual review meeting will be chaired by the Director General of Department of School Education, the MoE and midterm and end of project review meetings. The members of the project Review Committee shall comprise:

1. Director General, Dept. of School Education, MoE (Chair)
2. Director General, Department of Youth & Sports
3. Director General, Royal Education Council
4. National Director, Save the Children International, Bhutan Country Office (Co-chair)
5. Education Specialist, UNICEF/ Education Officer, UNICEF
6. Chief Finance Officer, Administration & Finance Division, MoE
7. Senior Program Analyst, Royal Education Council
8. Chief, School Health & Nutrition Division, Department of School Education, MoE
9. Chief of ECCD & SEN Division, Department of School Education, MoE
10. Chief, Career Education & Counseling Division, Department of Youth & Sports, MoE
11. Head, Policy & Planning Division, MoE
12. Project Coordinator (Focal Point), Policy & Planning Division, MoE
13. Project focal person, Royal Education Council
14. Project focal person, School Health & Nutrition Division, Department of School Education, MoE
15. Project focal person, ECCD & SEN Division, Department of School Education, MoE
16. Project focal person, Career Education & Counseling Division, Department of Youth & Sports, MoE
17. Save the Children Focal Officer, GNHC
18. M&E Officer, UNICEF
19. Education Sr. Manager, Save the Children International Bhutan CO
20. ESPIG Project Coordinator, Save the Children Bhutan CO
21. Finance Sr. Manager, Save the Children Bhutan CO
22. Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Coordinator, Save the Children Bhutan CO

The Grant Agent (GA)

Save the Children US (SCUS) is the GPE Grant Agent (GA) and Save the Children International (SCI) will implement the project in Bhutan. As the GA, SCUS will facilitate the Grant Application including planning and budgeting in close collaboration with the Bhutan Country Office, the MoE, funds transfer, activity implementation, monitoring and evaluation, preparation and submission of reports to all concerned including the GPE Secretariat. The GA will prepare reports with input from the SC Bhutan CO and the MoE and submit to GPE secretariat as per the required frequency.

The SC Bhutan CO will appoint Project Manager who will be responsible for overall management of the project. In addition, SCI will appoint a Project Coordinator who will look after the day to

day implementation and ensure timely implementation and effective management of the project. Further SCI will also provide technical support during implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project.

On the project fund Management, SCUS as the GA will follow the existing partnership modality. Under this modality SCI will execute tripartite agreement with the GNHC, Ministry of Education and SCI. After signing the agreement SCI will release the funds to the Department of Public Account (DPA) with intimation to the GNHC. Following this the DPA will then disburse the funds to the Administration and Finance Division of the implementing agencies. The implementing partner agencies will manage the funds under the RGoB financial rules and procedures and submit quarterly progress reports (both program & financial) to SCI through GNHC. Further, SCI will also receive monthly financial reports from the MoE due to monthly cash planning and disbursement procedures of SCI. On receiving the program and financial reports SCI will review and provide necessary feedback. The next fund release from the SCUS (GA) will depend on the program and financial progress against the funds released. SCUS (GA) will also periodical financial monitoring/ reviews of the partner agencies.

On the auditing requirement of SCI, the MoE will be audited by the Royal Audit Authority (RAA) of the RGoB on the sub-grant received and the audit report will be shared with SCI. SCI's internal/external auditors and donor audit will have access to the partner agency's books of accounts.

The Coordinating Agency (CA)

UNICEF is the Coordinating Agency (CA) for the project in Bhutan. There will be a need for close working cooperation between the CA, PPD of MoE and the GA. The CA will work closely with the GA (SCUS/SCI/SC Bhutan CO) and ensures that the education sector coordination meeting members (ESCM) is updated annually about progress of the grant implementation. The CA will ensure that the challenges are discussed and addressed properly amongst the partners and new approaches discussed and agreed between partners and all relevant partners are involved in the discussions.

Education Sector Coordination Meeting (ESCM)

The Education Sector Coordination Meeting (ESCM) is chaired by the Secretary, and the purpose of this meeting is to strengthen coordination, collaboration, and partnerships among the MoE, relevant government agencies, development partners, and civil society organizations towards provision of equitable quality education and skills in the country. The membership of the ESCM is open to all stakeholders of education (multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, CSOs, other relevant government ministries/agencies). The ESCM is conducted on a quarterly basis or as necessary. The Policy & Planning Division, the MoE serves as the Secretariat to the ESCM. Technical and capacity development support to the MoE to ensure its effective coordination will be provided by UNICEF (CA) and Save the Children (GA).

The main role of the ESCM in this Project will be to build close relationships between members and ensure synergies and coherence between this project and other MoE activities particularly

related to the education sector's COVID-19 Response Plan Education in Emergencies Phase II Plan. This will ensure the alignment of the project not only to the government priorities articulated in COVID-19 Response Plan Education in Emergencies Phase II Plan BEBP 2014-2024 and the 12FYP, but also to the various partners' interventions in the education sector. This shall improve efficiency and effectiveness of education provision in Bhutan as a whole.

7. Project Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning

Monitoring, accountability, and evaluation are key components of the program's Quality Assurance and link to the outcome and output indicators presented in the program's Results Framework. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) will be carried out as per the Results and M&E framework during the programme period, involving the programme staff, the monitoring officers from the Education Monitoring Division (EMD) of the MoE and key stakeholders. M&E will be used to measure the indicators of achievements as per the results framework and the M&E Framework.

Both qualitative and quantitative milestones achieved will be established through the M&E process. The education authorities from the MoE, the DEOs at district levels, principals/ teachers and parents will be involved in the M&E process. Data collection will vary depending on the data source and where possible SC will work closely with the partners to collect data jointly.

The M&E process will be built on the existing SCI and MoE M&E systems, which will include:

1. The results framework included in this proposal will be used by the MoE and GA to track progress against the indicators and targets.
2. The partners focal staff from the implementing departments in the MoE, monitoring officers from EMD, the DEOs/TEOs from the districts /thromdes and school teachers/ principals will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on the activities at the field level as per the Results framework.
3. Joint field monitoring will be carried out by the GA and the MoE (PPD) focal persons to monitor and verify the progress of activities at the implementation sites for the four components on a rotation basis. SC's internal MEAL team will also conduct regular monitoring visits on the local level to ensure the program is on target and meeting output and outcome targets in relation to results framework.
4. Monitoring of the project activities will emphasize implementation monitoring as well as intermediate outcome monitoring. Implementation monitoring will collect process level data by identifying and mapping key project activities and developing Quality Benchmarks (QBs) which are activity level process standards. These Quality Benchmarks will be used to monitor program activities to ensure that key activities are carried out following agreed processes and result in quality outputs and corresponding outcomes. Information generated from QB monitoring will help project teams jointly come up with improvement actions and follow-up raising the quality and effectiveness of the work and drive learning.

5. To ensure accountability, the program will facilitate a Mid-Year and Annual review meetings convened and chaired by the DG/Secretary respectively or his representative will be held, bringing together the key stakeholders. The purpose of the meetings will be to discuss progress in project activity implementation against the targets, identify challenges, and collectively find solutions to address them as necessary, take decisions for realignment if any so that the activities could be implemented within the timeframe of the action. The meeting will also generate possible recommendations and actions to put the implementation on track This will also include the status of expenditure against each activity.
6. Due to the changing nature of the disease, program adaptation is important to ensure effective implementation, especially as rapid changes can occur in the local context due to various situations such as a complete lock down of the country. The program will be responsive to changes happening locally and will use findings from the monitoring exercises to inform adaptive management of the program. The Education Sector Coordination Meeting (ESCM)/ Local Education Group (LEG) and Coordinating Agency will be kept updated on any changes made to program activities because of changes on the ground. Any non-minor changes to the program will be discussed with the Coordinating Agency, ESCM/LEG and following this a submission will be made to the GPE Secretariat for their appraisal, input, and advice.
7. The GPE recommends two objectives for documenting and applying Learning from Evidence Approach to enhance and drive program effectiveness, relevancy, and efficiency of grants. The twin objectives are:
 - 1) Objective I: Learn continually from evidence and apply that learning adaptively to enhance program effectiveness
 - 2) Objective II: generate knowledge and evidence on the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of grants.

To meet these objectives and in our concerted efforts to ensure education continuity in a complex operating environment such as the pandemic, we will make use of regular monitoring data and end of project evaluation to serve as a basis for informing Learning from Evidence Approach and given the data is being collected on regular basis, we will be able to engage in an ongoing learning process. To fulfill objective I, reports will be produced quarterly to inform the project implementation status, the completion of the key activities with quality and realization of the corresponding outputs and intermediate outcomes. Learning generated from regular monitoring will inform course correction if required and gauge to the extent possible relevance, and effectiveness of the ongoing interventions. In particular, Objective 1 will allow the program to be adaptive in response to the evolving situation on the ground as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The end of project evaluation will use information being generated from regular monitoring activities and in addition evaluative data will be collected to deepen the understanding of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and coherence of the grant

corresponding to Objective II of the Learning from Evidence Approach. Following are the broad questions around which relevant sub questions will be developed and tracked.

Relevance: The extent to which the grant met the needs of children whose education has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the girls, and the most marginalized children.

Effectiveness: The extent to which it was aligned to MoE's ' COVID-19 response plans.

Efficiency: The extent to which grant resources (inputs) translated into intermediate results (outputs) and whether the same intermediate results could have been achieved with fewer resources.'

Coherence: To what extent did the interventions synergize which improve overall performance and coordination among the implementers.

8. Gender and Inclusion

Gender and inclusion inequalities create all-pervasive deprivations therefore gender equality and inclusion have been recognized as cross-cutting priorities to foster results for the most deprived children, girls, and boys. All the activities proposed will ensure girls, boys, women, and men participate equitably, and have equitable access to project services and resources. Activities/sessions will be planned to build capacity on gender equality for staff and partners, including on gender mainstreaming and gender analysis. The project will support the creation of an enabling environment within which girls, boys, women, and men can all fulfill their equal rights. Vulnerable groups and particularly vulnerable girls continued learning and education will be addressed. All data is dis-segregated by sex and age (where applicable and available). Specific activities and interventions are also included for students with special educational needs and children with disabilities. Accordingly, specific data will be collected.

9. Building Sustainability and resilience

The process of program document development is fully owned by the Ministry of Education. The Grant Agent along with the PMU team and the CA worked closely to develop the program document. In addition, the heads, and focal officers of the four departments/ agencies i.e. REC, SHND, ECCD & SEN and CECD were part of the team supporting the development of the content of the program document providing information, guidance, and advice. Furthermore, the program document was developed in close collaboration and consultation with the wider ESCM/ LEG, who also endorsed the same. The program is aligned with the 12th Five Year Plan (2018-2023) and with the COVID 19 response plan of the country. The project is consistent with the approach taken by the MoE in its planned COVID-19 interventions for the education sector. As such, it will serve to extend the reach and deepen the impact across the whole of the system in what are expected to be the most affected areas.

The school closure has affected children in many ways, children have lost almost a year of learning, their familiar social network of friends and peer relationships have been disrupted, they are uncertain and fearful of the situation, they are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, and inequalities in education have increased for children particularly coming from economically disadvantaged families. Girls are more vulnerable to discontinuing education in this situation. In local context, it is more common for families to rely on older daughters to look after their younger siblings and manage the household chores. This would affect their learning and could be detrimental to them dropping out from school in later years due to low performances and loss of interest in education. In poorer communities, there is a risk of families marrying off older daughters to lighten the economic burden. Girls from these families could also miss out school days due to the inability to afford sanitary napkins. Maintaining menstrual hygiene is an issue generally for most girls as many schools do not yet have appropriate WASH facilities to allow

girls to be able to take care of their menstrual hygiene needs. Due to these conditions, many girls still face the risk of loss of learning, loss of interest in school and dropping out from school in the long-term. Due to the unpredictable nature of the COVID 19 infections and assuming that it will persist until treatment and/or a vaccine is developed, and based on the multi-dimensional impact of the virus on children's access to quality education, the COVID 19 accelerated funding will serve to strengthen the response actions of the MoE to mitigate the challenges faced by our children. It will also lay the groundwork for moving forward over the longer period of recovery. The response to COVID-19 will be seen through the lens of building back better, leading to enhancing the resilience of the education sector to be prepared to face future emergencies.

Key activities within this project will lay the foundation for sustainable, long-term developments within the basic education sector in Bhutan in the following ways:

Digital Learning: The library of materials and lessons that are available digitally is increasing exponentially because of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery activities. This experience will increase students', teachers' and caregivers' interest and comfort in using technology to support learning. It will also provide useful lessons on what worked or did not work well during the intervention. This learning and the resources themselves will be taken as groundwork for further development of digital and blended learning.

Procurement of equipment: This GPE-funded COVID-19 Response Support Program includes the procurement of hardware for all the departments in the Ministry for video conferencing, as well as equipment for studio enhancement at REC. This equipment will initially serve to enhance distance monitoring, guidance, and development of learning materials. It will further continue to serve the purposes of the Education Sector Development Plan in multiple ways after the end of the grant period.

Improvement of Facilities: The installation of water filtration and the improvement of sanitation facilities in schools will serve long-term goals of school WASH, and the objectives of the Government of Bhutan to continue expanding and improving basic education facilities.

Self-Instruction Materials: these materials along with the videos developed for learning continuity will serve in the longer term to maintain children’s participation – especially if COVID 19 infections persist, and other crises emerge.

10. Implementation Plan

Item	2020				2021											
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Component 1: Curriculum (Education Continuity)																
Adapted Curriculum																
1.1. Development of additional video lessons for the Adapted Curriculum for classes Pre-Primary to 10																
1.1.1 Develop additional videos and lesson plans (KS 1 and 2)																
1.1.2. . Develop lesson plans & video recording (KS 3 & 4)																
1.2 Video Conference Equipment for online support to teachers																
1.3 Studio enhancement in MoE & REC																
1.4 Support to SIM Materials stage I-IV, volume V																
Prioritized Curriculum																
1.5 Development of guidelines for prioritized curriculum																
Programme Management and M&E for MoE																
Component 2: Enhance WASH facilities																
2.1 Upgradation of pit toilets to SATO pan/pot																
2.2. Provision of safe drinking water (Water Filtration System) targeted for primary schools																
2.3 Provision of Sanitary Pads																
Programme Management and M&E for MoE																
Component 3: Special Educational Needs																
3.1 Procurement of tablets for children with disabilities for home-based learning (Schools with SEN Programme) and Wangsel Institute for the Deaf																
3.2. Procurement of mobile phones for 3 vision impairment/blind Schools/ institutes																
3.3 Data Charges for 3 months (Oct-Dec 2020)																

3.4. Development of customized TLM and production of EIE curricula and programmes (SIM & Video Lessons) into different accessible formats (audio, visual, print etc.) for students with disabilities (Workshop; review and finalization; production of materials; delivery)																			
Programme Management and Monitoring for MoE																			
Component 4: Psycho-Social Support																			
4.1 Sherig Counselling Services																			
4.2. Online Counselling Skills and Techniques Training																			
4.3. Procurement of video conferencing equipment																			
4.4. Psycho-Social Support training rollout for focal Teachers																			
Programme Management and M & E for MoE																			
Overall Project Management																			
Review Meetings, ESCM & M&E																			
Procurement of video conferencing equipment																			
Grant Agent																			
Bilateral Meetings																			
Review Meetings																			
Monitoring and Evaluation																			

11. Budget

Proposed priority areas and activities for GPE COVID -19 accelerated funding proposal

Component 1: Curriculum (Education Continuity)				BUDGET PHASING per FY		
Item	Unit cost (Nu)	Quantity	Total Budget	FY 2020 (Sept-Dec 2020)	FY 2021 (Jan-Sept 2021)	TOTAL
Adapted Curriculum						
1.1. Development of additional video lessons for the Adapted Curriculum for classes Pre-Primary to Grade 10						
1.1.1. Develop additional videos and lesson plans (KS 1 and 2)	20,000.00	30.00	600,000.00	600,000.00		600,000.00
Additional video development process (TADA/ DSA and resource material)	13,906.67	30.00	417,200.10	417,200.10		417,200.10
1.1.2. . Develop lesson plans & video recording (KS 3 & 4)	25,000.00	20.00	500,000.00	500,000.00		500,000.00
Lesson plan development process (TADA/ DSA and resource material)	21,390.00	20.00	427,800.00	427,800.00		427,800.00
1.2 Video Conference Equipment for online support to teachers	500,000.00	1.00	500,000.00	500,000.00		500,000.00
1.3 Studio enhancement in MoE & REC	3,500,000.00	1.00	3,500,000.00	2,500,000.00	1,000,000.00	3,500,000.00
1.4 Support to SIM Materials stage I-IV, Volume V	242,830.10	3.00	728,490.30	728,490.30		728,490.30
Prioritized Curriculum						
1.5 Development of guidelines for prioritized curriculum	22,600.00	85.00	1,921,000.00	1,921,000.00		1,921,000.00
Programme Management and M&E for MoE	500,000.00	1.00	500,000.00	100,000.00	400,000.00	500,000.00
Component 1: Total			9,094,490.40	7,694,490.40	1,400,000.00	9,094,490.40

Component 2: Enhance WASH facilities						
Item	Unit cost (Nu.)	Quantity	Total Budget	Oct-Dec 2020	Jan-Sept 2021	TOTAL
2.1 Upgradation of pit toilets to SATO pan/pot	3,000.00	1,500.00	4,500,000.00	1,500,000.00	3,000,000.00	4,500,000.00
2.2. Provision of safe drinking water (Water Filtration System) targeted for primary schools	150,000.00	43.00	6,450,000.00	3,000,000.00	3,450,000.00	6,450,000.00
2.3 Provision of Sanitary Pads for needy students	216.00	13,889	3,000,024.00	3,000,024.00		3,000,024.00
Programme Management and M&E for MoE	500,000.00	1.00	500,000.00	100,000.00	400,000.00	500,000.00
Component 2: Total			14,450,000.00	7,600,000.00	6,850,000.00	14,450,024.00
Component 3: Special Educational Needs						
Item	Unit cost (Nu.)	Quantity	Total Budget	Oct-Dec 2020	Jan-Sept 2021	TOTAL
3.1 Procurement of tablets for children with disabilities for home-based learning (Schools with SEN Programme) and Wangsel Institute for the Deaf	13,000.00	649.00	8,437,000.00	8,437,000.00		8,437,000.00
3.2. Procurement of mobile phones for 3 vision impairment/ blind Schools/ institutes	13,000.00	46.00	598,000.00	598,000.00		598,000.00
3.3 Data Charges for 3 months (Oct-Dec 2020)	1,193.56	695.00	829,521.00	829,521.00		829,521.00
3.4. Development of customized TLM and production of EiE curricula and programmes (SIM & Video Lessons) into different accessible formats (audio, visual, print etc) for students with disabilities	2,412,000.00	1.00	2,412,000.00	1,292,000.00	1,120,000.00	2,412,000.00

(Workshop; review and finalization; production of materials; delivery)						
Programme Management and Monitoring for MoE	71,428.57	7.00	500,000.00		500,000.00	500,000.00
Component 3: Total			12,776,521	11,156,521	1,620,000.00	12,776,521
Component 4: Psycho-Social Support						
Item	Unit cost (Nu.)	Quantity	Total Budget	Oct-Dec 2020	Jan-Sept 2021	TOTAL
4.1 Sherig Counselling Services	18,000.00	153.00	2,754,000.00	918,000.00	1,836,000.00	2,754,000.00
4.2. Online Counselling Skills and Techniques Training	13,605.44	147.00	2,000,000.00	2,000,000.00		2,000,000.00
4.3. Procurement of video conferencing equipment	800,000.00	1.00	800,000.00	800,000.00		800,000.00
4.4. Psycho-Social Support training rollout for focal Teachers	6,465.52	464.00	3,000,000.00	2,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	3,000,000.00
Programme Management and M & E for MoE	5,000.00	100.00	500,000.00	100,000.00	400,000.00	500,000.00
Component 4: Total			9,054,000.00	5,818,000.00	3,236,000.00	9,054,000.00
Overall Project Management						
Item	Unit cost (Nu.)	Quantity	Total Budget	Oct-Dec 2020	Jan-Sept 2021	TOTAL
Review Meetings, ESCM & M&E	40,000.00	10.00	400,000.00	200,000.00	200,000.00	400,000.00
Procurement of video conferencing equipment	500,000.00	7.00	3,500,000.00	3,500,000.00		3,500,000.00
Overall PM Total			3,900,000.00	3,700,000.00	200,000.00	3,900,000.00
Grand total of four components and Overall Program Management			49,275,011.4	35,969,011.4	13,306,000	49,275,035.40
SC Bhutan- Nepal CO and SC US program management cost			5,474,989	1,401,178	4,073,811	5,474,989
Total GPE AF budget (BTN)			54,750,000	37,370,189	17,379,811	54,750,000

In USD	750,000.00	511,920.40	238,079.60	750,000.00

Annex 1: Bhutan COVID-19 Response Plan- EIE Phase II



Bhutan Covid 19
Response Plan_EIE Ph

Annex 2: Excel sheet of Budget



GPE Accelerated
fund_Detail activity-w