

 MARCH 4, 2021

GRANTS AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

VIA NON-OBJECTION

BANGLADESH ACCELERATED FUNDING ALLOCATION

Reference	Decision
GPC/2021/03-01	<p>Bangladesh Accelerated Funding Request</p> <p>The Grants and Performance Committee in its delegated authority from the Board of Directors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approves the accelerated funding proposal from Bangladesh in the amount of US\$10,780,000¹ as described in Annex 2 to GPC/2021/02 DOC 03, including an 18-month implementation period.2. Approves an allocation of US\$754,600 in agency fees to UNICEF as grant agent.3. Requests the Secretariat to:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Include in its notification of grant approval to Bangladesh the observations and report-backs set out in Annex A.b. Include an update on the report backs in Annex A in the annual Grant Status Report in accordance with the specified timeline.

¹ Includes US\$889,000 for the cost of the grant agent to perform its roles and responsibilities.

Annex A – GPC Observations and Report-Backs

Bangladesh	
Observations	<p>The Committee commends the Government of Bangladesh and its humanitarian partners on their efforts to provide learning opportunities to Rohingya children and youth who have been forcibly displaced from Myanmar, while paying good attention and support to those who accept them in host communities. These should be encouraged to continue.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the Committee notes that it took more time than expected in the prior program to secure the government/ MoPME’s approval of all activities in the host communities, including construction/rehabilitation of 100 classrooms. Combined with the COVID-19 restrictions on the program implementation, the delay on construction/rehabilitation works resulted in six months extension of the prior grant, and it may be further extended for another three months.</p> <p>In this context, it is not certain if the planned construction/rehabilitation works in 63 schools in host communities could be completed within one year. To mitigate the risk that this activity cannot be completed within the proposed program period, the Committee approves an implementation period of 18 months. Nevertheless, the government and the grant agent are encouraged to immediately start the necessary preparation for construction/rehabilitation works, such as on-site selection, scoping of work and contracting, even before the program start date.</p>
Report-Backs	<p><i>For the Coordinating Agency</i></p> <p>In terms of education rights of Rohingya children and youth who have been forcibly displaced from Myanmar, intensive efforts have been made by the government and the humanitarian community securing spaces for them to learn through the LCFA and GIEP. A pilot project on Myanmar curriculum is also ready for implementation once learning centers are resumed after the COVID-19 pandemic is over.</p> <p>However, despite these efforts, it is yet difficult to assess that education rights of Rohingya refugee children and youth are already fully ensured. Further efforts are expected to secure their education rights. In this</p>

context, it is deemed to be relevant to keep the second report-back requested for the prior program.

The Committee therefore requests the coordinating agency, the co-chair of the Education Local Consultative Group, to continue to provide updates through an annual progress report and a final evaluation report on efforts made to secure the education rights of Rohingya refugee children.

For the grant agent

The Committee requests the grant agent to include the number of children with disabilities reached in the result framework, which is related to Activity 1.2, and report on it via its regular progress report.

Annex B – Secretariat quality assurance review phase III report

Accelerated Funding – Quality Assurance Review – Phase 3

Program title: Continuity of Education for Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals and Host Communities' Girls and Boys in Cox's Bazar

Total program cost: US\$10.78 million, of which US\$889,900 for Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs;

Implementation period: one year proposed (recommended to be approved for 18 months)

Projected implementation start date: June 1, 2021

Grant Agent: UNICEF

1. ELIGIBILITY FOR ACCELERATED FUNDING

Bangladesh meets the three eligibility criteria for accelerated funding¹:

- (i) **Bangladesh is eligible for education sector program implementation grant (ESPIG) funding.** In December 2019, the GPE Board approved an additional allocation of US\$ 10.78 million for accelerated funding to Bangladesh, valid until December 31, 2020 unless otherwise adjusted by the Board. The request for the accelerated funding was submitted on December 30, 2020. Additionally, Bangladesh has a Maximum Country Allocation (MCA) of US\$ 53.9 million for the period 2018–2020, for which it has submitted an application on January 24, 2021.
- (ii) **Bangladesh is affected by a crisis for which a humanitarian appeal has been launched and published by the UN Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA),² with education as a part of that appeal.** The 2020 Joint Response Plan (JRP)³ launched on March 3, 2020, was developed under the leadership of the Government of Bangladesh, with the humanitarian community closely engaging in needs assessments, consultations and strategic planning to develop the prioritized plan. The process included consultations at the district level with the Deputy Commissioner, the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), and engagement with relevant line departments and ministries, including the District Primary Education Officer and the District Education Officer. The 2021 JRP is under preparation and will be launched in March 2021. Given the Rohingya refugees' reliance on humanitarian assistance, the needs are expected to remain high for the duration of the proposed grant.

¹ [GPE Guidelines for Accelerated Support in Emergency and Early Recovery Situations](#)

² See <https://fts.unocha.org/countries/19/summary/2020>

³ See https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/jrp_2020_final_in-design_280220.2mb_0.pdf. The Joint Response Plan is the equivalent of a humanitarian appeal launched by UN OCHA, as it is launched by OCHA together with other UN agencies including UNHCR.

(iii) **The application demonstrates that GPE funds will not displace government or other donor funds but will be in addition to these resources.** The proposal demonstrates the additionality of the GPE funds. Current funding needs for education are US\$69 million, of which US\$ 11.1 million was met as of December 2020.⁴ An additional funding needs of US\$ 2.5 million related to COVID-19 was identified in mid-2020.⁵ On October 22, 2020, the Conference for Sustaining Support to the Rohingya announced new international commitments of US\$600 million for the Rohingya operations in Bangladesh and Myanmar.⁶ Collectively, the total requirements of the Bangladesh Joint Response Plan and the Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan amount to US\$1.3 billion, out of which current funding committed has totaled US\$636 million. Even if the additional funding materializes in full, the remaining funding gap will still amount roughly to US\$ 100 million.

2. COUNTRY AND EDUCATION SECTOR EMERGENCY CONTEXT

2.1 COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Bangladesh is a lower-middle-income country located in South Asia. It is ranked at 133 out of 189 countries on the human development index.⁷ Over more than 40 years, sporadic violence and persecution in Rakhine State in Myanmar have forced Rohingya people to flee into Bangladesh. The largest influx began in August 2017 due to intensified violence. Currently, 861,545 Rohingya refugees reside in 34 extremely congested camps formally designated by the Government of Bangladesh in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox's Bazar District.⁸ The Rohingya lack a formal legal status, and aspects of the current policy framework make reducing reliance on humanitarian aid challenging. Cox's Bazar District, with a population of 2.2 million,⁹ was already one of the least developed districts in Bangladesh before the latest influx of Rohingya refugees. Together with the 450,000 people in Cox's Bazar host communities who are negatively impacted by the influx, an estimated 1.3 million people are in need of humanitarian support.¹⁰

In November 2017, the Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar signed an arrangement on the repatriation of Rohingya refugees, also known as Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals. The first small group was planned to return in January 2018 amid grave concerns expressed by the international community, but the repatriation was postponed. A second attempt was made in August 2019. However, neither effort resulted in any formal returns, as refugees widely protested both

⁴ See <https://hum-insight.info/plan/906>

⁵ See https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/covid-19_addendum_rohingya_refugee_response_020720_0.pdf

⁶ See <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2020/10/5f915c464/conference-sustaining-support-rohingya-refugee-response-22-october-2020.html>

⁷ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2020-report>

⁸ UNHCR [Operational Update](#), September 2020

⁹ Census 2011

¹⁰ JRP 2020, p.11

attempts on the basis that they do not wish to return until the Myanmar government offers guarantees of security, freedom of movement, and citizenship.¹¹

2.2 EDUCATION SECTOR OVERVIEW

2.2.1 Education Sector Context

Bangladesh's education system caters to about 40 million students. Learning is offered through both formal and non-formal channels. The formal education system consists of pre-primary (for 5-year-olds), primary (grades 1-5), secondary (grades 6-12), technical-vocational education and training, and tertiary education. Currently, primary education up to grade 5 is free and compulsory. The Education Sector Analysis (ESA) 2020 reports that Bangladesh has achieved near-universal primary education enrollment with gender parity. The net enrollment rate (NER) for both girls and boys has converged to a national average of 98 percent as of 2018.¹²

Cox's Bazar District historically had some of the lowest primary education access and completion levels in the country. In 2016, the gross enrollment rate (GER) and NER for primary education were 78.2 percent and 71.9 percent respectively in this district, the lowest in the country, compared to the national averages of 112.1 percent and 98.0 percent.¹³ Survival rates to grade 5 were 64.3 percent for boys and 80.6 percent for girls, compared to the national averages of 78.6 percent and 85.4 percent, respectively. The influx of refugees put additional pressure on health services, food security, and the local economy.¹⁴ Initially, school attendance rates fell, especially for girls, and drop-out rates increased across the district.¹⁵ By 2018, enrollment had significantly improved in the district, to a GER of 112.2 percent and NER of 94.6 percent compared to the national averages of 114.2 percent and 97.9 percent.¹⁶ However, only 60 percent of children and youth aged 12 to 24 reported having completed primary school in Teknaf and 75 percent in Ukhiya.¹⁷ As for host community youth, only 26 percent reported attending formal education during the past academic year.

2.2.2 Education Sector Emergency Response Context

Of the Rohingya refugees, 445,168 (51 percent) are children under the age of 18. As of February 2020, there were 315,000 children and adolescents studying at more than 3,200 learning centers in the refugee camps.¹⁸ Despite significant progress over the last two years, more than 30 percent of Rohingya children and youth aged 3 to 24 still require access to education.¹⁹ Significant gaps remain, particularly in the provision of learning opportunities for adolescents aged 15 to 18, of

¹¹ Human Rights Watch [report](#), December 2019

¹² ESA. P.34

¹³ Final Draft of Annual Sector Performance Report 2017, p.50

¹⁴ JRP 2018, p.16

¹⁵ Program document of Bangladesh Accelerated Funding application in 2018, p.9

¹⁶ Annual Primary School Census 2018, p.73

¹⁷ JRP, p.71

¹⁸ See <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/stories/expanding-education-rohingya-refugee-children-bangladesh>

¹⁹ JRP, p.70

whom 83 percent lack access to any educational or skills development activities.²⁰ The JRP found that the main factors preventing children and youth from fully accessing educational opportunities are socio-cultural barriers (affecting 23 percent of children), early marriage (36 percent) and the need to provide support at home (20 percent). Issues of gender and disability inclusiveness in learning centers also require further attention.

Due to government restrictions and policy directives, Rohingya children are only allowed informal education, and it must adhere to the Guideline for Informal Education Program (GIEP). UNICEF provides informal education opportunities to 70 percent of the 315,000 refugee children aged 4 to 14 based on a tailor-made curriculum called the Learning Competency Framework and Approach (LCFA). However, the majority of children (over 90 percent) are learning at LCFA levels 1 and 2, the equivalent of pre-primary through grade 2 in a formal school system. Few Rohingya students are at a learning level that allows them to study at the higher levels (LCFA levels 3 and 4), equivalent of grades 3 to 8, due to the poor status of their education in Rakhine State in Myanmar.

In 2020, as a first step to ensure quality education provision for refugees in line with a formal curriculum, the Government of Bangladesh approved a pilot project for 10,000 refugee learners at grades 6 to 9 levels to be taught based on the national curriculum of Myanmar. Due to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the pilot program could not be implemented and has been postponed until schools reopen. However, despite these efforts, it is yet difficult to assess that education rights of Rohingya refugee children and youth are already fully ensured. Further efforts are expected to secure their education rights. In this context, it is deemed to be relevant to include a report-back on this matter, similar to the report back requested for the prior program.

With the COVID-19, the government decided to limit humanitarian operations in the camps to essential services only to reduce the footprint of the operation and mitigate the risk of introducing the COVID-19 into the camp. As education was classified as a non-essential service, learning centers have remained closed since March 2020, disrupting the learning of 315,000 children.²¹ Education partners are continuing their efforts to help children learn at home, engaging parents and caregivers to support learning and providing workbooks and visual aids. As a result, a recent survey found that 77 percent of children were engaged in caregiver-led learning activities at home.²²

2.2.3 Sector/ Emergency Response Coordination

For the Bangladesh education system overall, two ministries share its management responsibility: the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) for primary education (grades 1–5) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) for secondary education (grades 6–12), technical and vocational education and training, higher education, madrasahs and other religious schools.

Since the influx of refugees, the government has led the humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar. The Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC), under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, is responsible for operational coordination for the affected population. The UN Resident

²⁰ JRP, p.70

²¹ <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/rohingya-crisis>

²² UNICEF [press release](#), August 2020

Coordinator, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) lead the coordination among humanitarian aid providers.

In Dhaka, UNICEF, UNHCR and Save the Children lead the coordination of education support to Rohingya refugees and their host communities through the local education group, called Education Local Consultative Group (ELCG). The coordination focuses on technical issues such as the Learning Competency Framework and Approach and engagement of the central government in strategic planning and monitoring. Formally, the MoPME chairs the ELCG, and UNICEF currently performs the co-chair role. The ELCG members include MOE, other government bodies, a number of development partners and civil society organizations.

Coordination in Cox's Bazar is facilitated by Save the Children and UNICEF. The education coordination group in Cox's Bazar is part of the Inter-Sector Coordination Group facilitated by IOM and UNHCR. It focuses on day-to-day operations related to implementing interventions, ongoing coordination, and exploring further aid needs. The District Primary Education Office (DPEO) in Cox's Bazar has so far been well updated on the humanitarian situation in the camps and engaged in activities to support host communities. The DPEO and Upazila (sub-districts) offices play a direct role in implementing activities in host communities, including day-to-day operations.²³

At the global level, key partners are in frequent dialogue on coordination and issues related to curriculum and language. To facilitate harmonized collaboration, the GPE Secretariat and Education Cannot Wait have been regularly sharing information on their respective programming. Under the joint pledge made at the Global Refugee Forum between GPE, ECW and the World Bank, Bangladesh was also chosen as one of the pilot countries for targeted collaboration on the pledge to increase financing and coordination and improve education for refugees. ECW's current Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) has been extended to mid-2021, and the next grant from ECW will provide support for the following three years.

3. ACCELERATED FUNDING PROGRAM

3.1 PAST PERFORMANCE OF PRIOR ACCELERATED GRANT

In September 2018, the GPE granted Bangladesh US\$8.3 million to provide educational support to Rohingya children and youth and vulnerable children in the host communities. These funds were reallocated from the previous ESPIG for Bangladesh. The program aimed at directly supporting (1) access to education opportunities for 76,000 children and youth (15 percent of JRP target) affected by the crisis, (2) 2,000 newly recruited teachers and other education stakeholders to have strengthened capacity to support learning and psychosocial well-being of children, and (3) Cox's Bazar District and Upazila education officers with strengthened capacity to provide equitable and quality education to all. The Grants and Performance Committee requested the following two report-backs for this program: 1) quarterly updates on the number of people in need of educational support, the number receiving such support and the number not yet covered, as well as funds received against the total amount estimated in the JRP, to strengthen the sector coordination and 2) an

²³ Program document, p.19

update through the annual program implementation report on efforts made to secure the longer term education rights of Rohingya refugee children.

UNICEF submits quarterly updates on the overall response and progress towards JRP targets, as well as on the effort made to secure longer term education rights of Rohingya refugee children (see the section 2.2.2). By the end of 2019, 98 percent of JRP 2019 targets on access to education had been met (452,499 refugee and host children enrolled), and nearly 9,000 refugee and host community teachers had been recruited.²⁴ Due to the COVID-19 and the subsequent suspension of education services in the camps, some implementing partners have not been able to report progress since the lockdown started on March 17, 2020. Reaching refugee youth aged 15 years and older has been a particular challenge in 2020. The end date for the two-year program was extended from September 2020 to March 2021 due to COVID 19 -related delays in the implementation of the youth program in camps and in construction works in host communities.

3.2 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The expected program outcome is: *Children and adolescents, girls and boys, continue to access learning and skills training and are supported to learn at the appropriate levels.*

With the support of the Government of Bangladesh, the proposed program will provide access to quality learning for 93,250²⁵ children aged 5 to 14, 60 percent of whom from the Rohingya camps and 40 percent from the host community. Contrary to the previous program, this program does not cover adolescents aged 15 and above, as they will continue to be supported through skill enhancement programs that are currently funded by other donors such as Germany, ECW and UNICEF.

Major interventions and expected outputs are as follows:

Component/ objectives	Description	Major outputs
Objective 1: Access and retention in education are improved.	The program will ensure 1) that learning centers in camps and education facilities in host communities are operational, and 2) increased access to inclusive education for girls and children with disabilities in camps and host communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 700 learning centers (LC) in camps rehabilitated/maintained; • 137 schools in host communities provided with handwashing stations • 63 education facilities in host communities (classrooms or gender-sensitive WASH facilities) constructed or rehabilitated; • 56,000 girls and boys in camps enrolled, retained and provided with learning/instructional materials;

²⁴ UNICEF Quarterly update, July 2020

²⁵ 22 percent of JRP 2020 target: 421,771.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,500 girls and boys with disabilities in camps and host communities supported to enroll and continue learning; • Students' learning outcomes assessment conducted, and results disseminated; • 3,000 out-of-schoolchildren (OOSC) (60 percent girls and 3 percent children with disabilities) gain access to education through Ability Based Accelerated Learning (ABAL) centers rented in host communities; • A model developed and tested for providing a blended approach to education for children aged 5 to 18 in camps.
Objective 2: Quality teaching and learning are improved.	The program will 1) ensure that teachers apply gender-sensitive and student-centered pedagogy in camps and host communities and 2) support learner assessment and systems to monitor and improve the quality of service delivery to the children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,400 LC staff (50 percent female) adequately trained and continuously supported to provide quality learning; • All 700 LCs provided a set of learning materials needed to implement the GIEP, including teacher guides, storybooks and related teaching aids.
Objective 3: Community engagement is strengthened.	The program will 1) ensure community support for learning strengthened in camps and host communities and 2) support implementation of an inclusive and gender-sensitive school effectiveness program in the host community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,900 LC management committee members from 700 LCs (at least 30 percent female) established and oriented on their roles and responsibilities, including participation in LC management; • 700 LCs have disaster risk reduction (DRR) plans; • School Effectiveness (SE) grant provided to 137 schools in host communities where 1,507 school management committee members, community and religious leaders are engaged and support girls' enrolment and retention.
Program management	Program Implementation Unit (coordination and management), grant agent implementation support costs. (Technical support, program management, cross-sector supports, etc.)	N/A

Table A: ESPIG Accelerated Funding Components and Costs

	GPE Financing US\$	% of total GPE
Total MCA	US\$10.78 million	
Objective 1: Providing Access to Education	4,673,300	43.4%
Objective 1.1: Learning centers and education facilities are operational (camps & host communities)	3,975,000	38.0%
Objective 1.2: Increased access to inclusive education for girls and children with disability in camps and host communities	575,000	5.3%
Objective 2: Improved Quality of Learning Outcomes	4,528,000	42.0%
Objective 2.1: Teachers apply gender-sensitive and student-centered pedagogy in camps and host communities	4,328,000	40.1%
Objective 2.2: Support learner assessment and systems to monitor and improve quality of service delivery to the children	200,000	1.9%
Objective 3: Strengthen Community Engagement	410,300	2.7%
Objective 3.1: Community support for learning strengthened in camps and host communities	150,000	1.4%
Objective 3.2: Support implementation of inclusive and gender-sensitive School Effectiveness program in the host community	260,300	1.3%
Program Implementation Unit (coordination and management)	401,800	3.7%
Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs*	889,900	8.3%
GRAND TOTAL (with Grant Agent's Implementation Support Costs)	10,780,000	100%
Agency Fees**	754,600	

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

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

3.3 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAM DOCUMENT

- [Program Design](#)

The program is well aligned to the 2020 Mid-Term Review of the JRP and thus expected to be aligned to the 2021 JRP. The 2021 JRP will have four strategic objectives: access, quality, community

engagement, and system strengthening, which the project mirrors. The program directly addresses two of the main challenges cited in the 2020 Mid-Term Review of the JRP, namely “maintaining learning centres” and “availability of qualified teachers, particularly female teachers.” GPE’s strategic goals are adequately reflected, with the program particularly focusing on equitable access and improving learning.

In terms of lessons learned from the ongoing program, the Grant Agent has reaffirmed the importance of activities promoting effective collaboration between host communities and the Rohingya, including school rehabilitation. This program also underscores the benefit of access to multi-year funding to support recurrent LC expenses. Regarding the implementation period, while the Grant Agent has proposed 12 months, the Secretariat recommends approving a longer grant duration of 18 months. This is in light of the pandemic context, the desire expressed in the proposal for multi-year financing commitments, and the potential benefit (from an implementation perspective) of spacing out procurement and construction activities.

The program is in compliance with GPE’s Private Sector Engagement Strategy. UNICEF will deliver LC activities through NGO implementing partners, which are not-for-profit. The Government of Bangladesh has a regulatory framework that governs not-for-profit non-state providers in the camps. All UNICEF partners are registered and comply with the Government of Bangladesh NGO Affairs Bureau guidelines. The program does not provide direct support to any for-profit education providers.

- **Program Budget**

A detailed budget is included and offers a breakdown by activity as well as Grant Agent implementation support and direct program management costs of US\$1.3 million, or 12 percent of the grant amount. Unit costs are outlined and the use of lumpsums is limited to less than 5 percent of the project funding (excluding lumpsums for program management and implementation costs). The budget is coherent with other parts of the program design. There are no other sources of funding for this program besides GPE.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) arrangements are well described. The Grant Agent will lead the implementation of the program M&E, which is built on the M&E mechanism of the prior program. UNICEF will conduct regular performance monitoring for impact evaluation and will provide technical and supportive monitoring and supervision at project sites. The M&E mechanism is clearly defined and includes detailed information on roles and responsibilities, data sources, data collection and verification processes, types of monitoring (routine monitoring and regular visits), assessment (formative situation analysis, stakeholder analysis, resource mapping, etc.) and reporting activities (monthly reporting through the Education Sector’s 5W database, donor reporting). The project ensures the full participation of all stakeholders in the M&E process, including UNICEF, MoPME, sub-district and local education offices, local community and NGO partners. The prior program produced

substantive annual reports, and the program document confirms doing the same for this one-year grant, with a final evaluation.

The logical framework lays out a clear theory of change with expected results, corresponding activities, baseline data, and targets. Indicators are disaggregated in most cases by gender and by Rohingya or Host Community as relevant. One consideration could be for the results framework to track the number of children with disabilities reached, which is not currently tracked (activity 1.2).

- **Fiduciary, Implementation Arrangements, and Readiness**

Implementation arrangements are well described. UNICEF is directly responsible for activity implementation in the camps with its five NGO implementing partners delivering LC activities and services. Activities in the host communities will be managed through the Government of Bangladesh, with local education offices in Cox's Bazar DPEO and Upazila sub-district offices implementing host community interventions. Funds will flow from UNICEF to implementing partners through the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) funding mechanism. Financial management, auditing, and procurement arrangements are well described and appropriate for the country context. Oversight arrangements are appropriate. Oversight will be through UNICEF's Education Office in Dhaka, Education Manager in Cox's Bazar and from the Chief of Field Office and Emergency Manager.

The program will be ready to be implemented by the anticipated start date of June 1, 2021. The education team in Cox's Bazar is well staffed, and this program is a continuation of the work that UNICEF and partners are already undertaking. However, as of January 2021, educational activities inside camps are still considered non-essential and have not been formally allowed to resume. Due to this continued closure of LCs, UNICEF may seek an extension of GPE's ongoing grant (due to close in March 2021) to the end of June 2021. In addition, the Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC II) project, which is supported by the World Bank will also be closed in June 2021. This proposed program is expected to fill the gap between the ROSC II and the next funding under preparation through the IDA 19 Window for Host Communities and Refugees (WHR)²⁶. In this scenario, the proposed Accelerated Funding, with its start date of June 1, 2021 will dovetail with the ongoing GPE-funded program, the ROSC II project and the next funding from the World Bank.

- **Risk Identification and Mitigation Measures**

The risk matrix is comprehensive and describes various types of risks, their probability, and their impact on the program. This includes the risk of a deteriorating security situation in Cox's Bazar. Conflict sensitivity is considered in the program, particularly through targeting both the camps and host communities and ensuring that interventions are consultative and culturally sensitive. Risks related to girls include safety and security, lack of separate toilets and some socio-cultural norms working against their attendance at school. The program specifically addresses some of these, including rehabilitating 700 LCs and 63 host community education facilities with separate WASH facilities for girls and boys.

²⁶ Informed by World Bank on January 15.

Additionally, the program will support the implementation of a gender sensitive School Effectiveness package, including school grants to 137 schools in the district to improve inclusiveness, COVID-19 preparedness, and support for girls in their school plans. Risks are considered in relation to procurement delays and adequate mitigation measures are arranged. Regarding financial management, UNICEF assesses the implementing partners to verify capacity to deliver and then monitors program implementation and financial management in compliance with HACT procedures.

- **Sustainability**

Currently, all support activities in camps are funded by external resources, with the Government of Bangladesh's hope for a peaceful, safe, and dignified repatriation of the Rohingya to their home country. The established LCs are considered temporary and short term. The introduction of the Myanmar Curriculum for adolescents at grade 6-9 levels in the camps responds to this context. However, it is unclear when the Rohingya will be able to return, and the humanitarian community therefore will need to continue supporting their activities in camps as well as in host communities. Repatriation may take years, as some Rohingya people have already been in Bangladesh for more than four decades. It is also unclear if the current level of external funding can be maintained amid the global economic downturn anticipated due to the COVID-19.

In this situation, the strategy for sustainability is to develop capacities of the Rohingya communities to implement and manage both the quality and inclusivity of education. The program will especially focus on those who are operating learning facilities, such as the management committee members of LCs, and aim to maximize the experience and skills of local CSO partners involved in education. These have been and will continue to be achieved through developing tools and resources for communities to manage their LCs, involving communities (including parents, religious leaders and wider community members) during the design of the LCs at the beginning of the interventions. Once communities and their local partners are sufficiently strengthened, they could take over the management of their LCs.

However, even though the capacity of Rohingya communities is strengthened, they would be only capable of running temporary learning centers. This arrangement should not continue for decades.. Relevant solutions should be explored to ensure that children's rights to quality education are fulfilled.

- **Aid Effectiveness**

The program, in terms of the support for host communities, is aligned with the Eighth Five Year Plan of Bangladesh and the Fourth Primary Education Development Programme. All external resources for supporting activities in camps, including resources from ECW and the World Bank, are coordinated along with the JRP, which harmonize various external resources on common goals and objectives jointly set by the Government of Bangladesh and its partners. The JRP is developed in line with multi-year sector strategy response planning advocated by education partners, including ECW. It is particularly expected that the proposed Accelerated Funding grant would fulfill the interval between the ROSC II, which will be completed in June 2021, and the anticipated new funding support from the World Bank through its IDA 19 Window for Host Communities and Refugees.

The application was consulted with partners in Cox' Bazar, as well as the Government of Bangladesh, MoPME, education partners, and UNICEF as the Grant Agent. The proposal was endorsed by the Education Local Coordination Group (ELCG).

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its final readiness review, the Secretariat 1) deems the proposed program relevant in addressing the needs expressed in the Joint Response Plan; 2) confirms that the country context meets the eligibility requirements for Accelerated Funding; and 3) confirms that the program application meets the standards expected of Accelerated Funding proposals.

The Secretariat recommends that the Grants and Performance Committee approve the request submitted by the Republic of Bangladesh for accelerated funding in the amount of US\$ 10.78 million for a period of 18 months, instead of one year as proposed, with the following observations and report-backs.

Observations

The Secretariat would like to commend the Government of Bangladesh and its humanitarian partners on their efforts to provide learning opportunities to Rohingya children and youth who have been forcibly displaced from Myanmar, while paying good attention and support to those who accept them in host communities. These should be encouraged to continue.

Meanwhile, it took more time than expected in the prior program to secure the Government/ MoPME's approval of all activities in the host communities, including construction/rehabilitation of 100 classrooms. Combined with the COVID-19 restrictions on the program implementation, the delay on construction/rehabilitation works resulted in six months extension of the prior grant, and it may be further extended for another three months. In this context, it is not sure if the planned construction/rehabilitation works in 63 schools in host communities could be completed within one year. To mitigate for the risk that this activity cannot be completed within the proposed program period, the grant period has been extended to 18 months. Nevertheless, the government and the grant agent are encouraged to immediately start the necessary preparation for construction/rehabilitation works, such as on site selection, scoping of work and contracting, even before the program start date.

Report-backs:

- 1) In terms of education rights of Rohingya children and youth who have been forcibly displaced from Myanmar, intensive efforts have been made by the government and the humanitarian community securing spaces for them to learn through the LCFA and GIEP. A pilot project on Myanmar curriculum is also ready for implementation once learning centers are resumed after the COVID-19 pandemic is over. However, despite these efforts, it is yet difficult to assess that education rights of Rohingya refugee children and youth are already fully ensured. Further

efforts are expected to secure their education rights. In this context, it is deemed to be relevant to keep the second report-back requested for the prior program. The Coordinating Agency, the co-chair of the Education Local Consultative Group, is therefore requested to continue to provide an update through an annual progress report and a final evaluation report on efforts made to secure the education rights of Rohingya refugee children.

- 2) The Grant Agent is requested to include the number of children with disabilities reached in the result framework, which is related to Activity 1.2, and track it through an annual program report.