## Cover Note for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Request

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OVERVIEW</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country:</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant agent(s):</td>
<td>UNICEF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinating agency:</td>
<td>UNESCO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program name:</td>
<td>Myanmar COVID-19 Education Sector Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Accelerated Funding amount requested:</td>
<td>USD15,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency fees amount (additional to COVID-19 Accelerated Funding amount requested):</td>
<td>USD1,050,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency fees as % of total COVID-19 Accelerated Funding requested:</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Accelerated Funding application date:</td>
<td>5/11/2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated COVID-19 Accelerated Funding program start date:</td>
<td>6/1/2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated COVID-19 Accelerated Funding program closing date (must be last day of the month, e.g. June 30, 2021):</td>
<td>12/1/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expected submission date of completion report (At the latest 6 months after program closing date):</td>
<td>6/1/2022</td>
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**Grant modality** - (please enter ‘X’)  

| X | Project Pooled/ Co-financed  
| X | Project/ Stand-alone

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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

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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>Basic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCT</td>
<td>Conditional Cash Transfer</td>
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<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>Coronavirus Disease-2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAE</td>
<td>Department of Alternative Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>DBE</td>
<td>Department of Basic Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>DDTS</td>
<td>Digital school-based distance training system</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEO</td>
<td>District Education Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>DERPT</td>
<td>Department of Education Research, Planning and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Development Partner</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSW</td>
<td>Department of Social Welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>East Asia Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBEP</td>
<td>Ethnic Basic Education Providers</td>
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<td>ECCD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDPCG</td>
<td>Education Development Partners Coordination Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>EGMA</td>
<td>Early Grades Mathematics Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETVSCG</td>
<td>Education Technical and Vocational Sector Coordination Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>Grant Agent</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPE</td>
<td>Global Partnership for Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
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<tr>
<td>KECD</td>
<td>Karen Education and Culture Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>KG</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDEP</td>
<td>Myanmar Digital Education Platform</td>
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<td>MHPSS</td>
<td>Mental Health and Psychosocial Support</td>
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<td>MNEC</td>
<td>Mon National Education Committee</td>
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<td>MNHL</td>
<td>Myanmar’s National Health Laboratory</td>
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<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
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<td>MoHS</td>
<td>Ministry of Health and Sports, Myanmar</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSDP</td>
<td>Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>NESP</td>
<td>National Education Strategic Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFMSE</td>
<td>Non-formal Middle School Education</td>
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<td>NFPE</td>
<td>Non-Formal Primary Education</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>PSS</td>
<td>Psychosocial Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Association</td>
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<td>SED</td>
<td>State Education Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSWG</td>
<td>Subsector Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEO</td>
<td>Township Education Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLC</td>
<td>Temporary Learning Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>US-CDC</td>
<td>United States Centre for Disease Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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1. Strategic Context

COVID-19 and Regional Context: The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was declared by WHO as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) under the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) and a pandemic on March 11, 2020. There are currently no licensed treatments or vaccines for the COVID-19 virus. Experimental treatments and vaccines are under development. The epidemiology of COVID-19 is dynamically evolving with confirmation of the disease in different countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic is profoundly affecting East Asia Pacific (EAP) region economies, but the depth and duration of the shock are unusually uncertain. Growth in the region is projected by the World Bank to slow to 1.3 percent in the baseline and to negative 2.8 in the worse-case scenario in 2020, from an estimated 4.7 percent in 2019. Containment of the pandemic would allow recovery, but the risk of durable financial stress is high even beyond 2020. Most vulnerable are countries that have poor disease control and prevention systems; that rely heavily on trade, tourism, and commodities; that are heavily indebted; and that rely on volatile financial flows.

Households linked to economic sectors affected by COVID-19 will face a substantially elevated risk of falling into poverty, at least in the short-run. In China and other countries, the risk of falling into poverty is particularly high among informal sector and self-employed workers who lack paid sick leave or other forms of social protection, as well as migrant workers who may have more precarious employment status and may have been unable to return to their place of work due to lockdown measures. Across the region, those linked to sectors experiencing strong demand shocks, such as tourism, or value chain disruptions, as in manufacturing, will also face an increased risk of falling into poverty.

The COVID-19 shock will also have a serious impact on poverty and welfare, through illness, death, and lost incomes. Under the baseline growth scenario, nearly 24 million fewer people are estimated to escape poverty across developing EAP in 2020 than would have in the absence of the pandemic. Under the worst-case scenario, poverty is estimated to increase by about 11 million people. Households linked to affected sectors will suffer disproportionately. While these estimates for GDP and poverty are projections, they reveal the magnitude of potential economic distress and the need for urgent action.

In the long-run, the COVID-19 outbreak could impact the accumulation of human capital, particularly among worse-off children. There is vast literature on the effects of price shocks and or economic crises on nutritional status of children in the first three (3) years of their life, which could impact life-long development prospects. In cases where the relative price of food with high content of protein (such as eggs and meat) rises, households may modify the diversity of diet away from these items with a potential long-term impact on children’s nutritional status. While there is no evidence that such sizeable price hikes are occurring, closer inspection may reveal pockets of such effects in the region or sectors vulnerable to the shock. In addition, school closures may compromise nutrition for students relying on free or discounted meals provided at educational establishments.

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2 Original text (with minor edits) sourced from East Asia and Pacific in the Time of COVID-19 (April 2020), World Bank, page XVI.
4 Ibid, page XVI.
5 Ibid, page 68.
**COVID-19 and Education:** As the COVID-19 pandemic has spread across the globe, a majority of countries have announced the temporary closure of schools, impacting more than 91 per cent of students worldwide – around 1.6 billion children and young people (UNICEF, 2020). Never before have so many children been out of school at the same time and had their lives and learning disrupted, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised. The adverse effects of school closure may affect more disadvantaged students, for which alternative arrangements for care and instruction may be more limited. Beyond school feeding, an even higher cost comes from the disengagement of students with learning disadvantages (academic or socioeconomic) who may not cope effectively with remote learning strategies. Many countries are experimenting with distant education programs. Yet, access and effectiveness may vary across geographic areas and socioeconomic groups, depending on access to technology and network coverage, quality of the design of the online instruction, and support that parents can provide at home. Despite progress in internet usage in the past decade, about one billion people in developing East Asia and the Pacific are still not online; the gains in expanding access to education and improving the quality of education risk being permanently compromised. The loss of protection and other forms of support that schools provide including school-based health, nutrition and school-feeding are also compromising children’s well-being. Vulnerable children, including girls, migrants, refugees, internally displaced person, persons affected by conflicts, persons with disabilities, poor and other marginalized groups are the most affected.

**COVID-19 in Myanmar:** Myanmar, the second largest country in Southeast Asia, with a population of more than 53 million continues to experience rapid political, economic and social changes, while facing deep rooted humanitarian and development challenges. The country where majority (around 70%) of the population lives in rural areas is one of the region’s lowest per capita spenders in terms of public health. The ongoing internal conflict and Myanmar’s vulnerability to natural disasters, particularly earthquakes, floods and cyclones, necessitates provision of assistance using a flexible and sustainable approach that not only addresses emergency/immediate unmet needs of the people but builds resilience to recover from shocks.

After the WHO declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, Myanmar had its first confirmed case only on March 23. As of May 10, a total of 11,222 people have been tested, of which 180 cases and 6 deaths were confirmed. With support from WHO, US-CDC, Thailand and Japan, Myanmar’s National Health Laboratory (NHL) began testing on Feb 20, 2020, and prior to this capacity, the Ministry of Health and Sports (MOHS) relied on Thailand. Despite the apparent low number of confirmed cases in Myanmar, the government and development partners (DPS) recognize and acknowledge a major risk of a national outbreak and rapid spread, given long and porous borders and vibrant trade and migration with China and Thailand.

Given the considerable likelihood of COVID-19 taking root in Myanmar, the government began intensifying public health measures in mid-March 2020. The measures include closing of borders, suspension of visa on arrival, screening incoming travelers at all point of entries, including three international airports, quarantining individuals with travel history to affected countries and/or contact

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6 Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan 2018-2030
7 2020 Asian Development Bank
history with confirmed cases, and isolating suspected cases at designated hospitals. The government has made a public appeal to avoid crowds and not to organize sizable events (not more than five people). All the ministries and government offices have been instructed to cancel or postpone large meetings, workshops, events and ceremonies, including hosting/sponsoring of water festival activities. Since March 16, 2020, movie theatres and entertainment venues, except for restaurants (take away services only), have been shut down until further notice, and all state and private educational institutions from preschool through university remain closed at the time of this proposal submission.

Upon the declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, Myanmar formed the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019. Created by the Presidential Order (45/2020) dated March 13, 2020, the Committee subsumes all the functions of the earlier central committee led by two Union Ministers. The primary objective of the Committee is to spearhead the national response effort and coordinate within the public sector and with private sector and civil society to control and manage an outbreak of COVID-19 in Myanmar. It demonstrates commitment from the highest political level to tackle the COVID-19 outbreak. Chaired by the State Counselor, the committee consists of the Union Ministers from many key ministries, Chairperson of Nay Pyi Taw Council, Social Affairs Ministers of Regions/States, and Permanent Secretaries from Ministries of Health and Sports and Office of Union Government.

Several coordination mechanisms are functioning for internal and external stakeholders. Internal coordination focuses on close collaboration and communication between the different geographic and political levels of the government—central, region/state (R/S), district and township. As for external coordination and in accordance with the International Health Regulation’s requirement, Myanmar continues to report the situation of COVID-19 to WHO and is working closely with the international community through existing mechanisms in the health sector, such as the Myanmar Health Sector Coordinating Committee’s Health Cluster. In addition, WHO regularly convenes the development partners involved in supporting the emergency response. UN partners are also developing a Country Preparedness and Response Plan to further coordinate the provision of assistance.

The extent of the negative impact caused by COVID-19 on the people, health system and economy of the country will depend on the duration and severity of the outbreak and response in Myanmar, the region and globally. Immediate impacts are however already visible with several key sectors affected including, tourism, transport and manufacturing units, because of transmission reduction initiatives. With approximately 40% of households in Myanmar living close to or below the poverty line, long term social distancing models especially work from home seem unsustainable. This challenge is further compounded in the case of displaced populations living in camps or camp-like settings that remain overcrowded and overstretched in terms of access to basic services. As per the latest report of the World Bank (East Asia and the Pacific in the Time of COVID-19, April 2020), Myanmar’s gross domestic product growth is projected to slow to between 2 and 3 percent in the current fiscal year due to the

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COVID-19 pandemic, with increased hardships and sufferings for the poor and vulnerable across the country. Among these, displaced populations living in overcrowded camps with limited access to basic services remain the most at risk.

**Impact of COVID-19 on children’s education in Myanmar:** The education sector of Myanmar remains complex given the numerous systems and providers. While the Ministry of Education (MOE) has implemented and completed several important reforms, such as stipends for poor and vulnerable children; revision of the curriculum; recruitment and training of teachers to improve access to quality and inclusive education, the education sector continues to face numerous serious challenges including:

- Low learning outcomes and retention rates (dropout rates are especially high among children and youth from poor households and more for girls than boys)
- Increasing number of out of school children
- Varying competencies of teachers, uneven availability and quality of education and different approaches to human resources and public financial management across the States/Regions

While the country is finding ways to deal with the above-mentioned challenges to ensure equitable and quality education for all, the outbreak of COVID-19 has further added to the complex challenges at hand. As the school year in public basic education schools in Myanmar ends in March normally, many of the government schools were finishing the 2019-2020 school year with students taking year end examinations, when COVID-19 was becoming a serious threat globally. The MOE managed to conduct Matriculation exams which is the biggest and only national exam in Myanmar in mid-March. However, with the announcement of the first COVID-19 case in Myanmar, the MOE called for the closing of all schools and trainings as a precautionary measure. The year-end tests of the Non-formal Primary Education were cancelled as well. The Non-formal Middle School Education centres, which normally run from August to April, had to be closed. Private schools, whose academic year normally ends in June, were closed. Additionally, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement ordered the closure of all pre-schools.

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is committed to realize ‘no one left behind, no drop out, and no discrimination’, as outlined in the MOE’s National Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021. The Government’s commitment and priority to education is also outlined in the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP). In order to realize the ‘no one left behind’ policy the MOE is focused on sustaining the education system during this COVID-19 emergency period to ensure continuity of learning among all children, and providing special support to the most vulnerable children, especially children affected by this crisis, children affected by protracted crises, children of some ethnic groups, and children with disabilities, who are exposed to greater risks as a result of the crisis.

**Methodology and evidence base for the MOE’s Project Proposal:** The MOE has developed a National COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan for the Education Sector May 2020 – October 2021. The Plan

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9 The national exam at the end of high school also linked to access to universities
development was led by the MOE, with development partners’ inputs including types of support that partners offer to provide. The MOE’s Plan is the main basis for this present proposal. The MOE and DPs, including development partners who are supporting children in COVID-19 emergency situation, have been working intensively and remotely over the last three weeks to research, widely consult and systemically draft this proposal. UNICEF, as the GPE COVID-19 Accelerated Fund Grant Agent recommended by EDPCG members and appointed by the MOE, as endorsed at the Education and Technical Education and Vocational Training Sector Coordination Group (ETVSCG) meeting on 29 April, has been working closely with Ministry Departments, led by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), to prepare this project proposal. UNICEF’s approach to supporting the MOE has been guided by an international ‘readiness’ policy agenda focusing on most vulnerable children impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., girls, poorest wealth quintiles, internally displaced persons, children with disabilities, etc.,) who are at risk of being left behind in learning, dropping out of school or being exposed to greater risks as a result of the crisis, such as domestic abuse, violence or exploitation. UNICEF has been able to bring additional knowledge to the drafting of this proposal through its role as the designated agency within the UN Crisis Management team for monitoring issues and actions of the social impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak, which includes education as a response priority.

DPs have been working closely with senior Ministry officials and Department officers over a number of weeks through different well-established, sector coordination mechanisms, such as the ETVSCG, EDPCG and Sub-sector Working Groups (SSWGs), to support the MOE to: (i) mitigate social impacts of COVID-19 during the emergency period by ensuring continuity of learning and well-being for children and youth, especially for the most vulnerable affected by the outbreak; and, (ii) identify evidence to inform the identification of proposal priorities and strategic interventions. Furthermore, UNICEF has actively networked with DPs to receive their advice in drafting of the different sections of this proposal.

As part of the EDPCG, a coordination structure led by UNESCO and Finland, DPs, including the development partners who are supporting children in COVID-19 emergency situation, have held a series of virtual meetings to analyze the ongoing situation and make recommendations to the MOE for priorities that addresses short-term needs, while also establishing service delivery and management systems that will realize long-term improvements in teaching and learning at all levels of the national education system. UNESCO has been providing strategic technical support to the MOE to support the drafting and launch of the MOE COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan 2020-21.

One of the education coordination groups, co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children, established in Myanmar, as per the Global Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), is also responding to COVID-19 through engagement in systems-level planning as well as developing and adjusting on-going programing, as part of the DPs’ concerted effort to the MOE. The group has developed its COVID-19 response strategy, which complements the MoE’s plan, and informs priority activities in the COVID-19 addendum to the 2020 Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and this proposal. The overall objectives of the group’s strategy include providing quality and inclusive continued learning opportunities to girls and boys, providing capacity building to formal and non-formal teachers, including in alternative learning modalities, psychosocial support (PSS) for children, youth, teachers and caregivers, and improving the awareness and supplies required to prevent and control COVID-19.
The MOE, supported by UNICEF and DPs, has prepared this proposal based on an in-depth analysis of the following information sources:

(i) the latest available information on the COVID-19 crisis in Myanmar, including projections of impacts on the education sector, economy and society in Myanmar
(ii) analysis of lessons learned from countries in the region and internationally at more advanced stages of the COVID-19 pandemic cycle
(iii) analysis of research evidence on education sector impacts and recovery challenges and achievements from countries affected by similar epidemics, such as the Ebola crisis in Liberia and Sierra Leone, West Africa
(iv) GPE Guidelines for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Window, related documents and policy statements announced by GPE
(v) minutes from consultation and coordination meetings held by DPs
(vi) notes from meetings between senior MOE officials, DPs and GA to reach consensus on the likely short- and medium-term impacts of COVID-19 on the education sector and economy in the coming 18 months
(vii) MOE statistics, reports and the National Education Sector Plan, 2016-21
(viii) MOE official documents outlining the most urgent priorities to support the recovery of Myanmar’s education system from the COVID-19 crisis and

This draft proposal was widely circulated among development partners. The proposal has been updated based on comments received from development partners.

2. Strategic Approach to Project Design

The design of the MOE GPE COVID-19 Project has been informed by the Program Standards for Assessment listed in the GPE Guidelines for COVID-19 Accelerated Funding and the strategic framework for selection of high potential impact interventions shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Strategic framework for selection of high potential impact project interventions
The strategic framework above shows a four-stage methodology that the MOE has used to select high potential impact interventions for listing in the MOE GPE Project Proposal. All Subcomponents listed in this proposal, which are MOE identified priorities, have met all four conditions of the strategic framework. Each stage of the framework is explained below.

**COVID-19 response**
The first stage of the strategic framework involves the MOE examining the immediate COVID-19 situation in States/Regions and Townships and identifying strategic priorities that will respond to the most urgent needs. For example, COVID-19 government policies for people to stay at home and avoid all travel meant that the annual new Basic Education (BE) curriculum training program could not be implemented in May. Therefore, the MOE identified a Distance Teacher Training Program for BE teachers in Grades 4, 7 and 10 using multiple delivery channels for offline and online learning as a strategic priority to respond to this situation.

**Best-practice lessons**
The second stage of the strategic framework involves the MOE reviewing best-practice lessons in Myanmar, or countries in the ASEAN Region, to support implementation of each identified strategic priority. For the Distance Teacher Training Programme, the MOE quickly adapted the Myanmar Digital Education Platform (MDEP) design that was being developed under the Transformation and Innovation in Distance Education (TIDE) Project. This approach saved the MOE a great deal of time, realized better value for money and reduced implementation risks compared to the development of a completely new distance training system.

**MOE capacity**
Under third stage of the framework, the MOE reviews existing human resource capacities and systems to successfully implement the identified strategic priority. This will greatly increase the chances of successful implementation, reduce risks and achieve better value for money. For the Distance Teacher Training Programme, the MOE identified good leadership and expertise across several Departments. Certain measures have already been in place, such as a quality mobile network, with high mobile telephone ownership among teachers.

**Partner support**
The fourth stage of the strategic framework involves the MOE reviewing what national and international partners (DPs, NGOs and private sector companies) might be available to help implement the identified strategic priority. If there are potential partners ready to help, then this will improve the quality of new interventions. The MOE was quickly able to get support from several long-term partners to support the Distance Teacher Training Programme, such as UNICEF who quickly secured seed funding to start MDEP. Catalytic funding from GPE was also used to support this initiative. Other partners quickly came on board and rapid progress was made over a short period of time. The MOE

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10 The TIDE Project is being implemented under the Department of Higher Education and Rectors’ Committee with technical support from the Open University, UK. The project is funded by DFID.

11 UNICEF is the Grant Agent at the global and country levels. For Myanmar, the allocation is $140,000. UNICEF in Myanmar consulted with the MOE to understand MOE’s priority areas for this funding. UNICEF then consulted development partners.
reached out to Telecommunication companies and asked them to provide free data access to the MDEP website. These companies quickly agreed to donate free digital access.

The design of the proposal was informed by the following principles:
1. Learning should continue
2. Be realistic, prioritize subjects and learning content
3. Focus on both immediate response and mitigation actions and the recovery phase
4. Focus on the most vulnerable, including those not currently in school. This is part of overall equity considerations in targeting
5. Ensure support across Basic Education Systems (including Alternative Education, Monastic Education, Ethnic Education and for children studying in temporary learning centres within IDP camps and conflict affected villages in Myanmar)
6. Support response to keep in mind the following four scenarios (with b or c more likely to occur):
   a. Schools open as per normal school calendar in June, but require careful safety measures
   b. Partial closure of schools over the next 6 months and require careful safety measures
   c. Schools are closed for around 4 months and open in October 2020
   d. Schools are closed for around 6 months and open in January 2021

Based on the application of the strategic framework for selection of high potential impact project interventions, combined with a mapping of priority interventions against eligible expenditure areas listed in the GPE COVID-19 Guidelines, the MOE has identified the following Overall Project Objective and Strategic Objectives.

**Overall Project Objective**
To sustain learning of children, especially the most disadvantaged, during and after the CVOID-19 pandemic through supporting their well-being and strengthening the education system and making it more resilient.

**Strategic Objectives**
1. Support continuity of learning at scale, during school closure if school opening is delayed, and after schools reopen by strengthening the capacity of teachers, non-formal education facilitators and education officers to retain student learning achievement following the COVID-19 crisis.
2. Ensure healthy, safe and inclusive school operations after reopening, including psychosocial support and communication for children, parents and teachers
3. Provide targeted support to vulnerable and disadvantaged children to retain them in school and improve student learning.
3. Project Theory of Change

A Theory of Change for the project, listed in Figure 2 below, explains how expected results under the eight Sub-Components contribute to three high-level Component results (Strategic Objectives), which will contribute to the achievement of the Overall Project Objective. The Project Theory of Change is informed by the following assumptions.

If the capacity of teachers and education officers is strengthened to support students, schools and communities to recover from the COVID-19 crisis; and

If home-based distance learning for students is developed and delivered,

Then continuity of learning is supported at scale during the school closure period if school opening is delayed and after when schools reopen (See Component 1 in Figure 2 below).

If schools are prepared and supported to keep students and teachers safe and healthy; and

If effective two-way communication with teachers and parents is established and awareness among parents and participation in their local school is improved; and

If psychosocial support and referrals provided for students, teachers and parents in schools and communities in disadvantaged areas,

Then healthy, safe and inclusive school operations are ensured after reopening, including psychosocial support and communication for children, parents and teachers (See Component 2 in Figure 2 below).

If targeted support is provided to children living in COVID 19 affected Townships and those affected by COVID-19 to return to school and remain in school; and

If student learning is improved in BE schools, Monastic schools and NFPE/NFMS, TLC-IDP in Myanmar through catch up and remedial education; and

If targeted support is provided for continuity of learning and retention in MOE recognized schools through implementation of an EBEPs Support Program

Then targeted support is provided to vulnerable and disadvantaged children to retain them in school and improve student learning (See Component 3 in Figure 2 below).

Overall, if the capacity of teachers and education officers is strengthened, safe and inclusive school operations are ensured and targeted support is provided to vulnerable and disadvantaged children, then the well-being of children, especially the most disadvantaged, will be supported, and education system will be strengthened and made more resilient, and learning of children will be sustained during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
Figure 2: Results Framework to achieve the Overall Project Objective and Targets

**Overall Project Objective**

To sustain learning of children, especially the most disadvantaged, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic through supporting their well-being and strengthening the education system and making it more resilient

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**Component 1: Continuity of learning supported at scale during school closure if school opening is delayed and after schools reopen by strengthening the capacity of teachers, non-formal education facilitators and education officers to retain student learning achievement following the COVID-19 crisis**

- SC 1.1: Capacity of teachers and education officers strengthened to support students, schools and communities to recover from the COVID-19 crisis
- SC 1.2: Home-based distance learning for students developed and delivered

- 250,000 BE teachers, volunteer teachers, community teachers, non-formal education facilitators and Township education officers complete a school-based, multi-module COVID-19 Recovery Training Program (RTP)
- Improved digital contents of the new curriculum training for Grades 4, 7 and 10 and Grades 5, 8 and 11 available
- Improved distance-based pre-service teacher training systems in Education Colleges available
- 9.7 million children supported with one or more forms of home-based distance learning during school closure
- Out of above, 30,000 children categorized as “disadvantaged” reached with complementary support
- 1,200 teachers in selected remote locations reached through mechanisms to inform them on how to support students’ home-based learning

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**Component 2: Healthy, safe and inclusive school operations ensured after reopening including psychosocial support and communication for children, parents and teachers**

- SC 2.1: Schools prepared and supported to keep students, teachers and school staff safe and healthy
- SC 2.2: Effective two-way communication with teachers and parents established and awareness among parents and participation in their local school improved
- SC 2.3: Psychosocial support and referrals provided for students and teachers in schools and communities in disadvantaged areas

- 1,000 schools disinfected
- 80,000 children provided with learning kits
- 2,000,000 children provided with hygiene and sanitation materials for COVID-19 prevention
- 50,000 schools supported with COVID-19 prevention measures
- 3,000,000 parents reached with bulk text messages sent through the PTA Com. Network
- 160,000 PTA parent leaders trained in PTA Student and School Improvement Guidelines
- 45,000 teachers attending psychosocial support and referral training
- 125,000 children reached by psychosocial support

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**Component 3: Targeted support provided to vulnerable and disadvantaged children to retain them in school and improve student learning**

- SC 3.1: Targeted support provided to children living in COVID-19 affected Townships and those affected by COVID-19 to return to school and remain in school
- SC 3.2: Student learning improved in schools, education and learning centres through catch up and remedial education
- SC 3.3: Targeted support provided for continuity of learning and retention in MOE recognized schools through implementation of an EBEPs Support Program

- 25,000 children in covid-19 affected townships schools benefit from stipend support
- 6,000 persons in covid-19 affected townships receiving conditional cash
- 250,000 children benefitting from remedial teaching
- 10,000 teachers trained to provide catch up and remedial education
- 25,000 children in disadvantaged COVID-19 affected locations benefitting from early literacy and numeracy program
- 150,000 children and 2,000 teachers in MOE recognized schools supported
4. **Beneficiaries**

This project will target all school children at the basic education level. These will include children in formal schools, non-formal education programmes, monastic schools, community schools, non-state schools and temporary learning centres (TLCs) in camps for internally displaced persons (IDP) and conflict-affected areas. The project will prioritize children residing in townships that have been affected by COVID-19 crisis, including but not limited to townships with confirmed COVID-19 cases. Some of the townships without confirmed cases have had their schools used as temporary quarantine centers and thus will be supported. Children affected by conflict and enrolled in government schools and temporary learning classrooms beyond the townships with confirmed cases will also be targeted, so that they will not become further disadvantaged. Degree of ‘being affected’ by COVID-19 varies substantially and further targeting will be done in the coming time. Interventions will also cater for children with disabilities and those with special needs, including ethnic children whose ethnic language is not Myanmar.

Some interventions by their nature and relevance e.g. distribution of Guidance on COVID-19 prevention and control in schools, will benefit other children in the rest of the country. At the same time, other interventions are targeted to specific groups of children, depending on their increased risks and vulnerability. Equity will be the underlying principle in the targeting. Likewise, all teachers will benefit from system support interventions, while teachers in townships affected by COVID-19 will receive additional support.

The proposed interventions aim to support continuity of learning of all children in all types of schools, education and learning centres throughout the country. To achieve this, all teachers and education facilitators in all types of schools, education and learning centres will be supported.

The proposed interventions pay specific attention to disadvantaged children, given that COVID-19 will have worse impact on children of poor families, children affected by protracted conflict, children learning in non-government schools, migrant children, children learning in non-formal education centres, children with disability, children who are out of school and those who are at risk of becoming out of school.

5. **Key Intervention Areas**

There is strong alignment between the MOE identified, and DP supported, priorities listed in the MOE Response and Recovery Plan 2020-21 for the Basic Education Subsector and the MOE GPE Project Components and Subcomponents as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Alignment between MOE Response and Recovery Plan 2020-21 and GPE Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOE Response and Recovery Plan 2020-21 – Basic Education Subsector</th>
<th>GPE Project Components and Subcomponents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority programme 1 (phase 1-response): Education continuity during school closures if school opening is delayed - Distance Learning Material Development; Distance Learning Deployment/ Distribution of Learning Materials; Completion of the Academic year</strong></td>
<td>1. Support continuity of learning at scale (during school closure if school opening is delayed and after schools reopen) by strengthening the capacity of teachers, non-formal education facilitators and education officers to retain student learning achievement following the COVID-19 crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE Response and Recovery Plan 2020-21 – Basic Education Subsector</td>
<td>GPE Project Components and Subcomponents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority programme 2 (phase 1 - response): Pre- and in-service Teacher Training and Support - New Curriculum Rollout Teacher Training Teacher Training in Distance Learning Support</td>
<td>1.1: Strengthening the capacity of teachers and education officers to support students, schools and communities to recover from the COVID-19 crisis 1.2: Development and delivery of home-based distance learning for students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority programme 3 (phase 2 - recovery): Training and support to teachers and township education officers for COVID-19 recovery</td>
<td>2: Ensuring healthy, safe and inclusive school operations after reopening including psychosocial support and communication for children, parents and teachers. 2.1: Preparation and support to government schools, non-formal education centres, monastic schools and temporary learning classrooms to keep students, teachers, and school staff safe and healthy 2.2: Effective two-way communication with teachers and parents and improved awareness among parents and participation in their local school. 2.3: Provision of psychosocial support and referrals for students and teachers in schools and communities in disadvantaged areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority programme 1 (phase 2 - recovery): Return to safe learning environments while ensuring the wellbeing and protection of students, teachers and staff in schools - Defining and implementing a school reopening sanitary protocol in line with IASC Guidance on COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools; School-based preventive and life-saving messaging School staff and teachers training on COVID-19 prevention; Wellbeing and protection of students, teachers and staff in schools including School and Community Counselling Programme</td>
<td>3: Providing targeted support to vulnerable and disadvantaged children to retain them in school and improve student learning 3.1: Provide targeted support to children living in COVID 19 affected Townships and those affected by COVID-19 to return to school and remain in school. 3.2: Improving student learning in schools, education and learning centres through catch up and remedial education. 3.3: Improving student learning in MOE recognized schools through implementation of an EBEPs Support Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority programme 4 (phase 1 – response and phase 2 – recovery) : Community engagement and communication at all levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority programme 2 (phase 2 – recovery): Transition towards the resumption of face to face learning for all students, including marginalized and out-of-school children, through remedial education and academic calendar adjustments - Student Stipends Program; Conditional Cash Transfers ; Assessing distance learning progresses; Remedial Education Program in all BE schools for selected students; Restructuring of the curriculum during the recovery phase; administrative &amp; academic adaptations (academic calendar including examinations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following section lists detailed outline of the project subcomponents under each of the three Components.

Component 1: Support continuity of learning at scale (during school closure if school opening is delayed and after schools reopen) by strengthening the capacity of teachers, non-formal education facilitators and education officers to retain student learning achievement following the COVID-19 crisis

Subcomponent 1.1: Strengthening the capacity of teachers and education officers to support students, schools and communities to recover from the COVID-19 crisis
Objective: To provide teachers and Township officers with foundation knowledge and skills to support students, their schools and communities when schools reopen and help the national education system to recover from the COVID-19 crisis

Expected Results:

- 250,000 BE teachers, volunteer teachers, community teachers, non-formal education facilitators and Township education officers successfully complete a school-based, multi-module COVID-19 Recovery Training Program
- Improved online and offline training content of the new curriculum training for Grades 4, 7 and 10 and Grades 5, 8 and 11 available
- Improved distance-based pre-service teacher training systems in Education Colleges available

Key Activities:

i. Development and organisation of COVID-19 Recovery Training
ii. Improving the quality of online/offline contents of the new BE curriculum training for Grades 4, 7 and 10 (ongoing) and for Grade 5, 8 and 11 (next cycle)
iii. Strengthening pre-service teacher training

Background: The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 crisis means that teachers and Township education officers will have to take on new roles and responsibilities during the COVID-19 recovery period. Teachers and officers will have to deal with a much wider range of challenges and demands when schools reopen. Large numbers of students and their parents and caregivers, as well as their teaching colleagues, will be dealing with stress-related conditions from the COVID-19 crisis, such as anxiety, depression, loneliness and relationship problems. Many children and their family members will be suffering from domestic violence and abuse due to trauma from prolonged quarantine, lost incomes, and for many low-income households, looming poverty and potentially homelessness. Based on a review of international literature and media reports, as well the evolving situation in Myanmar at the time of drafting this proposal, many households will experience severe economic shocks as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. The number of children and households living below the national poverty line in Myanmar are expected to dramatically increase following the COVID-19 crisis.

Intervention/approach: The MOE has identified three key priorities to address and overcome the challenges posed by COVID-19 crisis in terms of the capacity of teachers and education officers. These are:

**COVID-19 recovery training**

The MOE has identified the need to implement a well-designed, inclusive and national response training program to build the capacity of teachers and education officers so that they have additional knowledge and skills needed to support students, schools and communities to respond and recover from the COVID-19 crisis and to implement new programs under the MOE Response and Recovery Plan, part of which is funded under GPE COVID-19 Accelerated Funding.

The MOE is planning to design and implement a national COVID-19 Recovery Training Program for all BE teachers, volunteer teachers, community teachers and non-formal education facilitators and Township officers. The training program will emphasize an important principle of working together to help students, schools and communities to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 crisis.

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12 Increased rates of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation have also been reported during previous public health emergencies, such as the Ebola outbreak in west Africa from 2014 to 2016.
Importantly, the COVID-19 Recovery Training Program will provide all teachers and Township education officers with same information at the same time. It will aim to motivate and empower teachers and Township education officers to work together in new ways and to take on new roles outside the classroom.

The program will involve some 30 contact hours of group and individual part-time learning in schools and Township education offices. The training will be divided across several modules, each focusing on critical knowledge and skills across a range of related topics, preliminary, as below:

- COVID-19 health messages and government policies and programs to support the COVID-19 emergency and recovery
- Introduction to the MOE COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan 2020-21 for the recovery of the national education system, with a special focus on the basic education sub-sector
- Key messages relating to student well-being and psychosocial support, and referrals for students and teachers who need help;
- School leadership, coaching and mentoring (for head teaches);
- Introduction to existing and new programs under the MOE Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Project in BE schools to support the recovery of the national education system, such as: WASH in Schools Program; Remedial Education Program; PTA Communication Network; PTA Student and School Improvement Program; Student Stipends Program; and School and Community Counselling Program.
- Child protection and ensuring functioning child protection mechanisms within schools to response to the expected increase in abuse and domestic violence; and,
- Recovery of student learning when schools reopen, including practical, school-based assessment of students;
- Home-based learning and the role of teachers in supporting students and their parents from their local school to learn at home if there is a delay in the reopening of schools.

The MOE is proposing to implement the COVID-19 Recovery Training Program through the following three training delivery systems:

(a) Digital school-based distance training system (DDTS): The DDTS will involve delivery of digital training materials to teachers and officers for school- and Township-based group training

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13 The Covid-19 health messages and policies may evolve over time. Care will need to be taken that teachers are receiving the latest information.
14 It is important to provide teachers and officers with an overall picture of MOE plans and new programs going forward, especially around greater long-term emphasis on complementary digital education and home-based learning.
15 This psychosocial support will include raising awareness about the impacts of COVID19 on individual stress and promoting positive coping skills and identification and referral of students who need more intensive psychosocial support.
16 This module will focus on equipping teachers to make a judgement about how much progress their students have made while at home, and therefore where to restart the curriculum for the majority of the class. In addition, teachers will need to make a judgement about which students have not been able to make sufficient progress to keep up with the majority and identify them for remedial education.
17 It is planned that the training will reach 50,000 schools, education and learning centres: 20,000 BE schools and 330 Township education offices will access the training program materials online through the MDEP website; 26,000 schools, and education and learning centres will access training program materials offline through a DBE sticks (flash drive) issued to each school; and, 4,000 schools will access training program materials offline through tablets issued to each school. The DDTS will involve delivery of digital training materials to teachers and officers for school- and Township-based group training through two digital channels: online through the Myanmar Digital Education Platform (MDEP) website; or offline training using tablets and DBE sticks (flash drives) issued to schools and Township education offices with preloaded digital content.
18 Such as professionally scripted, delivered and produced training videos and interactive digital content, and scripted
through two digital channels: online through the Myanmar Digital Education Platform (MDEP) website; or offline training using tablets and DBE sticks (flash drives) issued to schools and Township education offices with preloaded digital content.19

(b) Print school-based distance training system (PDTS): The MOE will send PDTS materials packages (based on the DDTS materials) to selected schools that face technical challenges accessing and learning from training materials under the DDTS; and,

(c) Blended school-cluster training system (BSCTS): Schools with weak human resource capacities located in remote and disadvantaged areas that may struggle to learn COVID-19 Recovery Training Program content through either the DDTS or the PDTS will be targeted under the BSCTS.20

New BE curriculum training for Grades 4, 7 and 10 (ongoing) and Grades 5, 8 and 11 (next cycle)

The MOE has been implementing a new BE curriculum since 2016, and in the coming school year 2020-2021, the new curriculum for Grades 4, 7 and 10 will be introduced. The MOE is determined to not let COVID-19 crisis interrupt this important national curriculum reform. Normally, the MOE organises nation-wide, cascade face-to-face and school-based in-service teacher training for primary and secondary teachers. This year, this national cascade training has been converted into virtual online/offline distance learning modality because of the COVID-19 crisis. The distance BE teacher training program has been under preparation with other development partner funding, including part of the GPE ESPDG catalytic fund (Myanmar received US$140,000). The MOE is planning to use GPE COVID-19 funding to improve the quality of audio and visual materials that the MOE is currently developing, and to contribute to the next cycle of national cascade training to introduce new curriculum for Grades 5, 8 and 11 in the school year 2021-2022, which normally begins in November of the previous year (i.e. 2021). The MOE is proposing to build upon the achievements and lessons learned to date and improve the design and delivery modality of next year’s national curriculum training for these new grades. This may include development of a comprehensive set of digital training materials for all basic education teachers to access either online (with free digital access through the national mobile network) or offline through the hardware issued to schools under the ongoing initiative supported by multiple partners, including an offline low-tech, low-cost digital learning resource and tool (similar to a portable e-library) called a “DBE Box”. It may also include improvement of the Myanmar Digital Education Platform (MDEP), a key system for delivery of the Digital Education Training Program for BE teachers in the new curriculum for Grades 4, 7 and 10 as well as for Grades 5, 8 and 11.

Strengthening pre-service teacher training

The MOE is proposing to support pre-service teacher education in Education Colleges. This is complementary to the ongoing work being undertaken by UNESCO and the TREE Project team to

Module Lesson Plans, articles and group assignments and other learning materials.

19 Each school and Township Education office is expected to establish small training groups of 15-20 teachers and 8-10 officers to complete all eight COVID-19 Recovery Training Program modules together.

20 The MOE will implement the BSCTS COVID-19 Recovery Training Program through in 15,000 targeted BE schools and all NFLCs when government regulations and policies allow for citizens to participate in group-based training activities.

21 Myanmar Digital Education Platform (MDEP) is something that the MOE has established in recent months: http://mdep.moe.edu.mm/, as a technical platform to host and enable access to learning management systems (LMSs), developed, run and supported by Ministry Departments. MDEP is designed to offer a range of online teaching and learning services that are widely accessible to educators, teachers, student and other stakeholders (see Annex 1 for an MDEP Outline). The overall aim of MDEP is to provide technology-related services that will support the development of high-quality digital education at all levels of the education system to complement existing delivery systems in schools, colleges and HEIs.
strengthen the Pre-service Teacher Training Program with a small amount of funding support under the GPE COVID-19 Project. This funding will be used to address any funding gaps that cannot be covered by the MOE budget, UNESCO\textsuperscript{22}, the TREE Project, or other development partners supporting the pre-service teacher education sub-sector, for example, for minor upgrades of ICT infrastructure to support digital learning.

**Location and beneficiaries:** The new curriculum training targets all 418,000 teachers in basic education schools. The COVID-19 Recovery Training Program, equally, will be implemented in all 50,000 schools, education and learning centres at basic education level for 418,000 basic education teachers, volunteer teachers, community teachers, non-formal education facilitators and Township education officers. The COVID-19 Recovery Training Program will also be implemented in all Monastic schools through an existing digital learning platform, called MEConnect\textsuperscript{23}, established by the Monastic Education Development Group (MEDG), under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

**Subcomponent 1.2: Development and delivery of home-based distance learning for students**

**Objective:** To support learning continuity during school disruption, in particular for the most marginalized children and adolescents.

**Expected Results:**

- 9.7 million children supported with one or more forms of home-based distance learning during school closure
- Out of the above, 30,000 disadvantaged children reached with complementary support
- 1,200 teachers in selected remote locations reached through mechanisms to inform them on how to support students’ home-based learning

**Key Activities:**

i. Development, printing/uploading and distribution/dissemination of guideline for teachers to support students’ home-based learning.

ii. Development of messages and tools to communicate with parents to support their children’s home-based learning (incl. management of expectation).

iii. Communication with teachers and education officers (TEOs, DEOs and S/REOs) to provide complementary support.


**Background:** Myanmar new school year begins in June every. For 2020, this timing is under scrutiny given the current situation and will be confirmed by the Government during the month of May - it may or may not be delayed. In case of delay, children and adolescents will participate in home-based distance learning to ensure their learning continues thus minimizing the learning loss. The expectation on learning gain and loss will be managed through various communication initiatives as mentioned in

\textsuperscript{22} UNESCO, through its STEM project, supports two components under the online learning portal: e-library and e-learning. E-library development was completed and it has been used in Education Colleges since December 2019. It is available online at \url{https://edc.moe.edu.mm/en} and as an Android application named E-Library for Myanmar Education Colleges for sharing MOE’s updates and digital teaching and learning resources to support pre-service teacher training.

\textsuperscript{23} MeConnect is an online learning community for teachers, principals and students in Monastic Schools. It can host online from simple courses to far more complex online synchronous and asynchronous learning programs. The platform allows MEDG to conduct online lectures, organize breakout tutorial groups, and even provide one-on-one tuition or coaching for students. Online timetables can be prepared and sent to students where they will be automatically entered into student’s calendars. Lesson content and resources can be stored online, assignments uploaded, online feedback provided, and student’s progress monitored and all recorded online.
other sub-components such as sub-component 2.2. MOE is planning to distribute textbooks to all schools with its own funding before the school year starts as it is a standard activity.

**Intervention/approach:** For this, the MOE plans to distribute student textbooks and complementary guidelines so that they can start the new school year with some learning activities on their own until schools can open. The MoE will prepare simple guidelines and/or instructions for students as well as for parents/caregivers so that they can use textbooks to begin remote self-learning. The textbooks for 9.7 million students in basic education sector are currently being transported, and they will reach townships around mid-May, followed by distribution to schools before June. Schools will organize sequential distribution of textbooks with the guidelines/instructions to families with students, respecting social distancing. This approach of paper-based learning is something more familiar to students in Myanmar than online-based approach. Complementary assignments on particular subjects or for grades may be provided via online or offline channels. For the most marginalized students in locations with little or weak access to the internet or other forms of technology, this will be done through printed or paper-based option (e.g. worksheets) as part of take-home package together with textbooks. Radio or television were initially considered but will not be used as a medium to deliver remote learning in the current situation given that the rate of possession is relatively low in locations that are considered more vulnerable and marginalized; also, it requires additional cost and time for production.

Parents/caregivers will be provided with messages and tools so that they can support their children’s home-based learning, while maintaining realistic level of expectation on learning loss and gain. Teachers and education officers will be provided with guidance and tools to support students’ home-based learning, e.g. some mobile phone airtime so that they can call students to monitor their participation in home-based learning and be available to receive calls from students or parents to answer their questions or concerns.

Some partners in Myanmar are currently taking a stock of learning materials that may be converted/adjusted/developed into distance learning materials. If school year begins as usual and Myanmar does not experience a school closure due to COVID-19, then these materials will still be used to complement school-based learning and/or remedial programme during the school year 2020-2021.

In any case, the MOE will deploy a mix of approaches to ensure accessibility of instructions for all children and especially the most marginalized, being considerate of the medium of delivery of guidelines/instruction and complementary learning materials to support hardcopy textbook-based learning. For children with disabilities, closed captions, live sign language interpretation and/or large print will be considered; and for ethnic children whose ethnic language is not Myanmar, translated materials/tools will be considered.

**Location and beneficiaries:** In target locations and for target students that are most vulnerable, home-based learning option will ensure to have a complementary support mechanism in place, so that they are not further disadvantaged. Given that home-based learning options usually lacks interaction among students and teachers, teachers will be provided with key messages from the MoE and a simple

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24 Household TV ownership in Myanmar was less than 60% on national average with stark difference between urban and rural and among States (e.g. only 34% of households in Chin and Rakhine States possesses TV); and radio ownership around 40% (Source: Myanmar Living Condition Survey 2017).

25 EiE Sector partners are collecting and identifying materials – such as DAE’s Non-Formal Education materials for literacy and numeracy and psychosocial support activities in use by INGOs – and will select content to form a coherent learning package for primary and secondary levels. These packages can support any further development of distance learning materials.

26 Pending financial inputs to EiE partners (an application is being submitted to Education Cannot Wait), Humanity and Inclusion will provide technical support so that the learning packages can be used by children with disabilities, and will also provide guidance to teachers and caregivers for how to support children with disabilities to learn from home.
guideline to support students’ home-based learning. Parental engagement will be promoted through online and offline communication, with focus on the most disadvantaged locations and students.

Component 2: Ensuring healthy, safe and inclusive school operations after reopening including psychosocial support and communication for children, parents and teachers

Subcomponent 2.1: Preparation and support to government schools, non-formal education centres, monastic schools and temporary learning classrooms to keep students, teachers, and school staff safe and healthy

Objectives: To restore schools and other educational facilities, in particular those used as community quarantine centres, into safe and hygienic places for children and teachers

Expected results:

- 1,000 schools disinfected
- 80,000 children provided with learning kits
- 2,000,000 children provided with hygiene and sanitation materials for COVID-19 prevention
- 50,000 schools supported with COVID-19 prevention measures

Making schools ready to reopen and support students and teachers’ health and wellbeing

Key Activities:

i. Development, printing and distribution of a protocol for cleaning and disinfection of educational institutions;
ii. Cleaning and disinfection of educational institutions in accordance with the official guidelines;
iii. Provision of support to selected educational institutions for infrastructure maintenance;
iv. Monitoring and supervision of cleaning and disinfection exercise by MOHS and Township Education Offices

Background: In a bid to contain the spread of COVID-19, thousands of government schools, monastic schools, colleges, universities, and non-formal education centres as well as other social infrastructure across all States and Regions of Myanmar are being used as temporary quarantine centres. Before these institutes can be used again by children for learning, they will need some thorough cleaning and disinfection to prevent the spread of the disease.

Intervention/approach: This project will support cleaning and disinfection in all government schools, monastic schools, non-formal education centres and temporary learning classrooms used as quarantine centres. While cleaning of educational institutions is a usual hygienic chore, disinfection will be a new practice. Although cleaning will start prior to opening of the school year, it will not be a once-off event but will be repeated fortnightly for the first three months, or at least until the country’s COVID-19 crisis recedes.

Ministry of Education, with support from the Ministry of Health will develop a simple standard operating procedure on disinfection of schools. Cleaning and disinfection will be done by communities and service providers under the organization of the PTAs, with support and guidance from the Ministry of Health authorities. In IDP camps in Myanmar, Ministry of Education will partner with NGOs that are already operating.

Location and beneficiaries: A total of 1,000 government schools, monastic schools, non-formal education centres and temporary learning classrooms in 330 townships will be targeted for cleaning and disinfection, benefitting more than 2 million children. Depending on the requirements, the total
required costs are expected to be as high; as such, the MOE plans also to use funding from other sources.

**Providing learning kits/ hygiene and sanitation materials for COVID-19 prevention**

**Key Activities:**

i. Provision of individual and school kits

ii. Provision of hygiene and sanitation materials for COVID-19 prevention to schools and other learning centres

iii. Orientation of teachers and school staff on how to use hygiene and sanitation materials for COVID-19 prevention

iv. Improvement of ventilation in classrooms and other places of learning

**Background:** The COVID-19 crisis is already having economic impacts on individual and household incomes through closures of companies, constrained markets and limited opportunities in the informal sector. The resumption of school will see children needing stationery and other learning materials, some of which will be difficult for families to procure due to financial challenges.

**Intervention/approach:** Through this project, the Ministry of Education will provide essential learning packages to disadvantaged children learning in government schools, monastic schools, non-formal education centres or temporary learning facilities in COVID-19 affected townships as soon as the Government decides to reopen schools. Individual kits will include backpacks, notebooks, pencils, among other stationery items. Schools and centres will receive school kits that will be helpful to the teachers as well. Tailor made hygiene and sanitation materials for COVID-19 prevention will be procured and distributed to all affected educational institutions in the targeted townships. These will include hygiene items such as buckets, soap, reusable masks for teachers and learners and school staff and hand-sanitizer for teachers and school staff (not for students) with a gender consideration particularly to girls.

Schools and centres in the COVID-19 affected townships will be supported to have the capacity to detect children and staff with symptoms resembling those of COVID-19 (fever, cough) and refer them to health authorities. Each school and learning centre will be provided with a thermometer for taking temperature on a daily basis. Each institution will identify one staff member to take the temperatures of all children, staff and visitors on entrance to the school. The hygiene and sanitation materials for COVID-19 prevention will also include information and messages to reinforce awareness and hygiene and to promote social distancing in schools. Initiatives to improve ventilation in classrooms will be supported and these will include provision of fans and widening of windows where necessary, depending on the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Sports assessments.

**Locations and beneficiaries:** A total of 6,700 government schools, monastic schools, private schools, non-formal education centres and temporary learning classrooms in COVID-19 affected townships, including townships in central Rakhine where TLCs are operated to support disadvantaged children, will be provided with hygiene and sanitation materials for COVID-19 prevention, benefitting more than two (2) million children. This may includes 80,000 children who will receive learning kits.

**Provision of Guidelines of COVID19 prevention and control in schools to all schools and learning centres, both formal and non-formal**

**Key Activities:**

i. Provision of Guidance on COVID-19 Prevention and Control to all educational institutions
ii. Orientation of head teachers, teachers and parents on the Guidance and protocol to promote social distancing  
iii. Monitoring of learner and teacher health

Background: Schools are places of gathering and the likelihood of contagious diseases spreading in such settings is high. Children, parents and teachers must have the confidence and assurance that schools will not unintentionally become centres for the rapid spread of COVID-19 following resumption of schools. At the global level, ‘Interim Guidance on COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools’ has been developed by UNICEF, WHO and IFRC, endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. In Myanmar, the MOE is currently finalizing the Myanmar translation and contextualization of the Guidance with support from UNICEF.

Intervention/approach: The MOE plans to print and distribute the Guidance, once contextualized, to all schools, education and learning centres, including government schools, community schools, monastic schools, non-formal education centres and temporary learning classrooms in IDP camps in Myanmar. The intervention will help teachers to understand and be ready to implement infection control and prevention measures.  

All head teachers will receive an orientation on its use and in turn orient teachers on the application of the Guidance. PTAs will also be made aware of their responsibilities in COVID-19 prevention. Township Education Officers will monitor and support educational institutions in the application of the Guidance. A protocol to promote social distancing will be introduced in all schools. Where class sizes are too big, recruitment and placement of additional teachers and facilitators (volunteers from community) will be done. Shifts will be introduced in schools where they do not currently exist. Hygiene kits will be procured and distributed to institutions in COVID-19 affected townships. Schools will be encouraged to develop or activate school emergency plans.

Location and beneficiaries: This intervention will be nationwide. All government schools, private schools, monastic schools, non-formal education centres and temporary learning classrooms in Myanmar, approximately 50,000 altogether, will receive the Guidance on COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools, benefitting more than 9.7 million children.

Subcomponent 2.2: Effective two-way communication with teachers and parents and improved awareness among parents and participation in their local school

Objective: Establish three widely accessible communication channels for effective communication and long-term behavior change.

Expected Results:

- PTA Network Communication System operational and App software launched
- 3,000,000 parents reached with bulk text messages sent through the PTA Com. Network
- PTA Student and School Improvement Guidelines (V2.0) designed, printed and distributed
- 190,000 PTA parent leaders (50% women) trained in PTA Student and School Improvement Guidelines

Key Activities:

i. Design and launch of the PTA Network Communication System and App and undertake regular communication through bulk text messages and updates on the App
ii. Draft, print and distribute Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Student and School Improvement Guidelines (Version 2.0) and train four (4) parent PTA leaders from every BE school.

**Background:** There is an extensive body of international research that has highlighted the importance of effective communication through multiple channels in order to provide stakeholders with essential information and support both during and immediately following a national emergency. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the need for the MOE to put in place a dedicated communication system to reach majority of the parents and caregivers of basic education students and teachers. Currently, there is no one communication channel solution that can reach all parents, caregivers and teachers. While Facebook is currently the most widely used communication channel in Myanmar, the MOE currently does not have data on the number of users accessing their Facebook page to get information; hence, it is unclear how effective this tool is. Furthermore, many parents with a mobile telephone in their household are not using Facebook. Communication through the Mobile telephone network however has the greatest potential to reach a large majority of parents, caregivers and teachers through complementary channels involving simple text message communication, and for parents with smartphone access in their household, a dedicated, MOE owned and managed communication App.

**Intervention/approach:** To support both the response and recovery stages of the COVID-19 emergency in Myanmar, the MOE will design and launch a cost-effective, efficient and widely accessible communication system, called the PTA Communication Network involving three complementary information dissemination and communication channels. These channels are:

(a) information dissemination through bulk text messages sent through the national Mobile network;
(b) information dissemination that is accessed by registered users of the PTA Network Communication App; and,
(c) information dissemination through monthly meetings and activities organized by PTAs in BE schools under the DBE PTA Student and School Improvement Program.

The three PTA Communication Network channels will be made available for all teachers, volunteer teachers, community teachers and non-formal education facilitators under the Monastic and Alternative Education systems.

**PTA Network Communication Network and App**

The first stage deployment of the PTA Communication Network will focus on sending out bulk text messages to all parents and caregivers of BE students and teachers to provide them with important government and MOE messages about the COVID-19 emergency. The MOE will quickly design and launch a complementary and slightly more sophisticated communication channel, called a Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) Communication Network App, which will enable the MOE to share a much wider range of information (e-library books, home-based learning assignments) and enable two-way communication, compared to what is possible through mobile text communication. Over time the PTA Communication Network App will be a widely accessed tool by majority of parents, caregivers and teachers to get the latest MOE announcements, policies and regulations concerning basic education schools, as well as information about home-based learning and how to use educational materials to support home-based learning. Importantly the PTA Communication Network App will play a key role in terms of achieving the anticipated scale of regular parent, caregivers and teacher users of the PTA Communication Network App the MOE can learn useful lessons from the current use of the Viber communication App. Viber estimates that it has 18 million users in Myanmar – meaning that almost 1 in 2 of all active cell phones in Myanmar have Viber installed on them.
in supporting parents and caregivers to help their children with home-based learning during the current national school closure period and afterwards when schools reopen.

The MOE recognizes that not all parents will be able to access one or both of the PTA Communication Network channels using the national Mobile network or through word-of-mouth messages from existing community-based social networks. However, the establishment of the two Mobile network-based communication channels will enable the MOE to quantify how many parents, caregivers and teachers are currently being reached through the Mobile network through text messages and accessing the App. This data will be used to identify remote and disadvantaged schools who can be given print-based communication materials and other complementary support by the MOE during and immediately after the COVID-19 emergency.

**PTA Student and School Improvement Programme**

The MOE recognises that additional support is needed in schools to help parents and caregivers to deepen their understanding of information they have received and then apply their new knowledge in their homes and communities. Therefore, to complement and strengthen investments made by the MOE under the first two PTA Communication Network channels, the MOE will implement Stage 2 of the PTA Student and School Improvement Program in all BE schools during the COVID-19 recovery period. The DBE designed, piloted and successfully launched the PTA Student and School Improvement Program (Version 1.0) in all 47,445 BE schools in the 2018-19 academic year. Monitoring results indicate many students and parents have benefited from the programme. Under the PTA Student and School Improvement Program (Version 2.0) 190,000 PTA parent PTA leaders will be trained (50% women) to successfully implement the program in their local schools. Over the 2021-21 academic year parent PTA leaders will be involved in mentoring other parents to encourage them to take a more active role in their child’s learning at school and at home.

**Location and beneficiaries:** The MOE aims to reach close to 60 percent of an estimated 8+ million parents, caregivers and 414,491 BE teachers across the country through simple text communication. It is estimated that 40 percent of parents and caregivers will be able to access the PTA Communication Network App, following the design and launch in the coming months. Based on the success of the PTA Student and School Improvement Program (V1.0), the MOE estimates that 4,500,000 parents will attend one or more PTA activities organised under the PTA Student and School Improvement Program (V2.0) in the 2021-22 academic year. An estimated 3,800,000 parents will be directly mentored by 190,000 trained PTA parent leaders during the year (i.e. each trained PTA parent leader will mentor 20 parents in their local school over the school year).

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28 The MOE is aware that dissemination of messages through word-of-mouth can be unreliable and prone to misinformation.

29 Telephone-based surveys of Head Teachers was undertaken by the training company in November 2019 found very strong evidence that the program was being successfully implemented in all BE schools. Based on this data an estimated 5.6 million parents attended Classroom Open Days organized by their PTAs in 2019 and 3.3 million BE students were enrolled in After School Reading Groups. An estimated 3.57 million students participated in Extracurricular activities organized by their PTA.

30 This is an estimate based on the current number of BE students: 9,178,057 million.

31 Based on March 2020 data.

32 However, in the coming years, this figure is expected to grow significantly as the number of smartphone owners continues to grow rapidly along with digital literacy skills.
Objective: To restore hope and confidence and mitigate the social and mental health effects of COVID-19 in children and teachers

Expected Results:

- 45,000 teachers attend psychosocial support and referral training
- 125,000 children provided with psychosocial support

Key Activities:

i. Training of teachers in psychosocial support, including how to identify acute cases and make referrals for specialized services
ii. Support for psychosocial support for parents (i.e. parents support group, community group sessions, etc.)
iii. Support for specialized mental health service (including individual counselling)

Background: The COVID-19 crisis has severely disrupted the lives of children, teachers and families, affecting their psychosocial well-being and holistic growth. The pandemic has instilled fear, anxiety and health and safety concerns among children and adults alike. Children and teachers may experience trauma due to what happened to them in quarantine centres or what happened to people close to them or simply from fear of being sick from any other disease and death. Some children may not be able to return to school due to their family’s economic situation, resulting from loss of jobs by adults in the families. Stigma may not be ruled out, particularly for those children coming from families that had confirmed and known COVID-19 victims. The long period out of school, containment and isolation may have increased possibilities of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect at home, affecting children and caregivers alike. Teachers are often fully occupied with teaching and have limited time or capacity to deal with other issues (i.e. abuse, neglect at home) affecting children.

Intervention/approach: To promote child and family wellbeing, reduce and prevent anxiety and harm, and improve the care conditions that enable children to thrive and learn better, the MOE will provide mental health and psychosocial support and counselling for teachers, parents and children. MOE will discuss the details of interventions further with the Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement so that they are built upon existing related joint initiatives of the two ministries.

Teachers will be trained in psychosocial support and counselling, using tools applied in previous widespread emergencies like Cyclone Nargis. Teachers will be equipped with basic skills to identify, recognize and refer cases that require specialized mental health services or Social Worker’s follow up with the child and his/her family. The same teacher training will include awareness raising on the social, mental and personal effects of COVID-19 and seek to promote positive coping skills. Ministry of Education will collaborate with the Department of Social Welfare, UN agencies, including UNICEF, and qualified non-governmental organizations, that have expertise in planning and delivering effective mental health and psychosocial support and counselling interventions. With support from Department of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education will establish a case management and referral system from schools and school communities to health and social welfare services. Schools will step up age-/gender-appropriate activities for children to relieve their minds of stress and worries. Messages that support the emotional and psychosocial being of parents, teachers and learners will be developed and broadcast on radio, TV and posted on social media in liaison with other government departments from the time that schools reopen and continue for the first three months. The thrust of these messages will be to give hope and discourage stigma. Particular attention will be paid to children with disabilities, orphans and girls. The expected outcome of the interventions is that family, school
and community systems are restored, strengthened, and mobilized to promote child and family wellbeing by reducing and preventing harm, strengthening resilience to recover from adversity, and improving the care conditions that enable children and families to survive and thrive, and children to learn better.

**Location and beneficiaries:** This intervention will be implemented in COVID-19 affected townships. A total of 3,900 government schools, private schools, monastic schools, non-formal education centres and temporary learning classrooms in the COVID-19 affected townships will be covered by psychosocial support and counselling interventions, benefitting more than 45,000 teachers, reaching more than 125,000 children.

**Component 3: Providing targeted support to vulnerable and disadvantaged children to retain them in school and improve student learning**

**Subcomponent 3.1: Provide targeted support to children living in COVID-19 affected Townships and those affected by COVID-19 to return to school and remain in school**

**Objective:** To enable children to retain at school to continue with their learning at grade level and motivating the volunteer staff

**Expected results:**
- 25,000 children in COVID-19 affected townships schools benefit from stipend support
- 6,000 persons in COVID-19 affected townships receiving conditional cash

**Key Activities:**
1. Training of teachers for stipend guidelines orientation
2. Formation of committees
3. Stipend disbursement to students
4. Cash disbursement to volunteer teachers and education officers
5. Monitoring and reporting

**Student Stipends program**

**Background:** Vulnerable children, including girls, migrants, refugees, the disabled, poor and other marginalized groups continue to be the most affected groups from the COVID-19 crisis.

As part of the ongoing education reforms, the MOE has been implementing a student stipends program to increase students’ access to education, reduce drop-out rates, and increase retention, completion and transition rates, with the support of the World Bank and other donors since 2012. The stipends program has been targeting the most disadvantaged and marginalized students to get access to school till the completion of primary, middle and high school level education. The programme is currently operating in 55 townships in Myanmar. Due to loss of jobs in the informal sector, temporary closure of garment factories and businesses in urban areas, the poor and vulnerable population might resort to negative coping strategies i.e. engaging children in child labour when lockdown is over rather than sending them to schools or/and just not sending children to school as they might not be able to afford out of pocket expenditure of children schooling.

**Intervention/approach:** The proposed stipends program will act as an incentive to bring children back to school and help them to stay in school. The Ministry of Education will provide stipends to identified children in the target townships, using the guidelines of the MOE’s existent student stipends programme. This will strongly empower the families to engage children in remote-learning activity
through electronic platforms (radio/tv/social media) and contribute to student’s food/nutrition etc. Once schools are open, the cash will help them to buy uniform, stationary, pay for transportation, meals etc., thus helping their children to not only return to school but also continue to study for continuous learning.

The stipends program is an ongoing activity of the Department of Basic Education with the support of World Bank’s and Myanmar Government’s budget. All necessary operational guidelines are already developed and used by DBE for many years. As per the guideline, necessary committees for selection of townships and identifications of students will be done at central, district and township level with involvement of concerned partners at all level in accordance with the guidelines. The necessary trainings for township and school level representatives for orientation of implantation of guidelines will be conducted at different levels. All necessary student’s data, eligible student identification as per criteria and confirmation, getting commitment of students and parents and stipend disbarment to students will be managed by teachers together with PTAs and student’s parents under close supervision of responsible committees. As part of the guideline, monitoring and continuous supervision supports and real-time action and response, and regular reporting will be in placed under leadership of head teacher, teacher, township education officers and responsible committees.

Through this program, the targeted children will be able to receive stipend support around July and August of the school year, after completion of all necessary steps and procedures as given in the guideline; this will strongly empower the families to engage children in remote-learning activity through electronic platforms (radio/tv/social media) and contribute to student’s food/nutrition etc. Once schools are open, the cash will help them to buy uniform, stationary, pay for transportation, meals etc., thus helping their children to not return to school but also continue to study for continuous learning.

Location and beneficiaries: The stipend intervention will target 25,000 children from the townships with confirmed COVID-19 cases. It will build upon the MOE’s student stipends programme currently in 55 townships across the country by expanding coverage to townships with confirmed COVID-19 cases. Two out of current list of 45 townships with confirmed COVID cases are part of the 55 townships already supported under the current Student Stipends programme. MOE will lead detailed discussions with the World Bank, UNICEF and other concerned parties to agree on details of implementation for those two townships.

**Conditional Cash transfer (CCT)**

Background: As part of the COVID-19 response, the local government is leading the response and working closely with the Ministry of Education and Ministry Health and Sports in all states and regions. At the local level, the government has decided to use many vacant buildings including schools as quarantine centers, to be able to quarantine many people, including returnees in Myanmar. During preparation of the response, many education officers, teachers and community parents are providing their services on voluntarily basis in COVID-19 affected townships as well as to families with school-age children at quarantine centers that are accommodating confirmed COVID-19 cases. These volunteers need to be supported. The number of schools that are identified to be used as quarantine centres stands at around 3,000, while the number of schools that are already used as quarantine centres is just above 1,000. DBE continues to collect the data from the State and Region Education Offices.

Intervention/approach: MOE plans to provide cash to teachers, school staff and education officials who have been volunteering to support quarantine centres as financial assistance to contribute to their living costs, especially ahead of the start of the 2020-2021 school year. MOE is also planning to provide cash support to those who have been confirmed with COVID-19 who are or have school-aged child(ren) as financial assistance.
Location and beneficiaries: The CCT program will support 6,000 persons who are working as volunteers in around 15,000 schools used as quarantine centers across the county. Every family supporting and providing services at the centers and affected by COVID-19 will receive one-off payment of approximately USD 63; this can vary depending on the exchange rate.

**Subcomponent 3.2: Improving student learning in schools, education and learning centres for basic education in Myanmar through catch up and remedial education**

**Objective:** To enable children to catch up and continue with their learning at grade level within basic education

**Expected results:**
- 250,000 children benefitting from remedial teaching
- 10,000 teachers trained to provide catch up and remedial education
- 25,000 children in disadvantaged COVID-19 affected locations benefitting from early literacy and numeracy program

**Remedial Education program**

**Key Activities:**
- Training of teachers in catch up and remedial methodology
- Monitoring of teaching and learning in schools by township authorities to ensure that children are not lagging behind

**Background:** Disruptions to teaching and learning or extended periods out of school can have negative impacts on a child’s ability to learn. It is important to have a strategy to safeguard student progress upon their return to the classroom. Children will lose valuable education time during schools’ shutdown and will return to class at different levels of readiness for their studies dependent on their experiences during the break. Planning for that return is an essential factor in maintaining student learning progress. The impact of not teaching students at the point at which they are ready to learn, is that they will fail to progress.

**Intervention/approach:** The Ministry of Education will introduce catch up and remedial education to compensate for lost instructional time caused by the delay in opening of school year to avoid the exacerbation of learning equalities so that all children catch up to grade level. If schools cannot open at the scheduled time in June 2020, the Ministry of Education will develop a curriculum recovery plan which will consider teaching time lost during school closure and prioritizes content/subjects required for grade progression. This plan will be shared with all Township Education Offices and head teachers.

Catch up and remedial teaching will be introduced in schools, education and learning centres for basic education in COVID-19 affected townships where the needs are greatest. The MOE will tap into international and local best practices, tools and techniques to assess students upon their return to the classroom so that the instructional objectives of the curriculum can be tailored to student achievement levels, as impacted by their absence from formal education studies. The assessment results will provide a picture of current achievement status that will inform remedial programs to be put in place for students. Remedial lessons will help learners to close learning gaps and reconnect with previous learning because they would have been out of class for more than three months, counting from the last closure of schools in February 2020.
Government teachers, non-formal education facilitators and volunteer teachers will be trained in catch up and remedial teaching methodology, which will include pre- and post-assessment of each learner to establish the last point of learning and understanding as well as achievement. The assessments will be designed in a way that contributes substantially to increased expertise and capacity in the Ministry’s personnel in measuring learner achievement.

Teachers will then design specific work for the classes and for each learner. This will be in specific core subjects, namely, Math, English, Science and Myanmar. Additional attention will be on the ‘high stakes’ key transition points of the learning continuum, i.e entry to primary, completion of primary, completion of secondary levels. This may entail more teaching and learning hours, sometimes outside the normal timetable. Teachers will be incentivized with extra allowances. Additional material for learners in the form of workbooks will be produced and supplementary stationery will be provided. Parents will be sensitized to appreciate this additional work and support their children. As part of this intervention, Teacher guides will be designed with end user, the teacher, in mind. The guides will include clear instructions so that teachers will know which tools to use for students in their classes, how to manage the assessments, how to interpret results, and how to link results with remedial program content and strategies. Township Education Office (TEO), District Education Office (DEO), State Education Department and township and regional monitors will supervise and provide professional support to catch up and remedial teaching and learning. Teachers and facilitators will monitor progress of learners arising from the catch up and remedial lessons through periodic assessment.

Location and beneficiaries: A total of 3,900 government schools, private schools, monastic schools, non-formal education centres and temporary learning classrooms in the COVID-19 affected townships will be targeted for catch up and remedial lessons, benefitting more than 250,000 children. Detailed targeting will be done in coming time.

**Early Literacy and Numeracy**

**Key Activities:**

i. Revision/development, printing and distribution of “Guidebook for early reading” and “Guidebook for early numeracy” targeting primary teachers in programme locations.

ii. Training to teachers in target programme locations.

iii. Provision of workbooks, picture books and story books.

iv. Monitoring of students’ literacy and numeracy skills.

**Background:** The MOE’s Department of Educational Research, Planning and Training (DERPT) is undertaking a study on early grade reading and numeracy in collaboration with the IAQE project and World Bank support. This relates to national representative survey of Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) conducted in 2018 and planned to assess students’ early literacy and numeracy skills in 2020. Based on findings of this study, the MOE has developed a Guidebook for early reading targeting teachers, along with training module and operational guideline. A pilot program has been conducted in 10 townships. Building on this, the MOE would like to expand this pilot program to other disadvantaged COVID-19 affected townships.

**Intervention/approach:** Activities will include revision of existing Guidebook and module (on literacy), development of a new ones (on numeracy), training of teachers on these tools, provision of workbooks, picture and story books for KG and Grades 1-3 students, and monitoring their literacy and numeracy skills. “Box library” may be an option in providing reading materials to schools. This initiative
will contribute to research on the impact of COVID-19 pandemics on the students’ learning in COVID-19 affected townships. The implementation will be closely coordinated with the IAQE-supported ongoing initiative.

Location and beneficiaries: Selection of target townships and schools will be done by the MOE in the coming month and shall build upon the existing pilot programme. Townships that have students not achieving minimum learning competency will be prioritized. This intervention will reach 25,000 children.

Subcomponent 3.3: Provide targeted support for continuity of learning and retention in schools through implementation of an EBEPs Support Program

Expected results:

- 150,000 children in schools provided with COVID-19 prevention/learning kits through EBEPs
- 1,500 schools supported with COVID-19 Prevention measures through EBEPs
- 2,000 teachers completing training

Key Activities

i. Strengthening co-ordination for COVID-19 response through consultations.
ii. Implementation of an appropriate EBEP-support program.
iii. Monitoring of design and implementation of the EBEP-support program.

Background: Children in conflict-affected areas of Myanmar are amongst the most vulnerable children in Myanmar. They already face significant challenges in accessing quality education, and the COVID-19 crisis will place additional constraints on access to and continuation of education. In all areas of Myanmar, and particularly conflict-affected areas that are home to non-Bamar, ethnic minorities, the longer children are out-of-school, the risk that they will not return to school increases. For those children in conflict-affected villages and towns, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis is likely to extend past education disruption, with increased risks to family and community cohesion and economic hardships, resulting in secondary risks to children. Community teachers, who often assume broader leadership roles in remote communities, are likely to face additional pressures related to the need to ensure the safety and security of children and implement alternative modalities of teaching, alongside individual livelihood concerns. With large numbers of migrants returning to border areas (and now unemployed), existing safety nets, such as community contributions for school and teacher support, will likely be disrupted.

Intervention/approach: In view of the above, the MoE proposes the development of a program of support to address the unique needs of children in conflict-affected communities, to be implemented in collaboration with Ethnic Basic Education Providers (EBEPs) across the country. The proposed program will ensure coordinated resourcing for the design and delivery of a COVID-19 response plan to ensure continuity of teaching and learning for children in schools administered by EBEPs through the recovery phase.

The proposed sub-component will provide targeted support for continuity of learning and retention in schools managed by EBEPs through implementation of an EBEP-support program. Technical and

33 The term ‘community teacher’ refers to teachers supported through EBEPs in MoE recognized schools, or teachers supported in mixed-administered schools, or schools in areas of mixed administration. Community teachers are paid a stipend by EBEPs and are supported through community contributions and international assistance. Community teachers differ from Language/Teaching Assistants supported by MoE/MoEA and teach subject content across the whole curriculum from Math to Science to Ethnic Languages.

34 Further detail on the intervention is accessible in Annex
material assistance will be provided to EBEPs in order to reach vulnerable children through a jointly
designed and implemented program that recognises the most urgent EBEP priorities in mitigating
harmful impacts of the crisis on children’s well-being and in improving recovery. Key activities will
include:

i. **Strengthening co-ordination for COVID-19 response through consultations.** MoE will engage
in consultations with MNEC, KECD and wider EBEPs to identify core areas of priority for the
provision of support to children in MoE recognized schools. Through the consultations, EBEPs will engage in the analysis, design and planning of responses. The EBEP-support program will be co-designed and will seek to utilise EBEP established models for delivery of education service provision with suitable, conflict-sensitive modalities. The consultation phase will run in line with the provision of support through the Emergency phase, if
appropriate, for example through the provision of Covid-19 kits.

ii. **Implementation of an appropriate EBEP-support program.** The program will provide support
in the following indicative areas, to be confirmed through the process of consultation and co-
design.
   - Providing COVID-19 prevention kits
   - Supporting Remote Learning Programs, including Essential Learning Kits
   - Planning for Safe Re-Opening
   - Teacher subsidies
   - Support for community teachers’ continuous professional development

iii. **Monitoring of design and implementation of the EBEP-support program.** Through
consultations, a joint framework for joint monitoring and documentation of the component
will be developed. Data on key successes and points of learning will be generated to support
parallel process of partnership framework development referenced above, where innovations
employed during the crisis will be utilised to improve access for children in EBEP-administered
systems into the future.

**Location and beneficiaries:** Five Ethnic Basic Education Providers working across 3,000 schools under
EBEP, directly reaching 150,000 children (of the 420,000+ children in EBEP’s supports school systems)
and 2,000 EBEP-supported community teachers in Mon, Kayin, Kayah, Shan, Kachin and Taninthayri
Regions.

**6. Financing**

The MOE requests US$15 million from GPE to contribute to its overall COVID-19 response and
recovery plan. For the Programme Components in GPE proposal, Development Partners contribution
come both through financial and technical assistance to the MoE, as summarised below. Full GPE
budget table is in a separate file.

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35 Schools, including community schools, operating in Myanmar
<table>
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<th>Programme Component in GPE proposal</th>
<th>Budget requested for GPE (USD)</th>
<th>DP support</th>
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| 1: Support continuity of learning at scale and after schools reopen by strengthening the capacity of teachers, non-formal education facilitators and education officers to retain student learning achievement following the COVID-19 crisis | 4,114,000 | • ADB and EU/EYE project: In-service teacher training for introducing new curriculum of Grade 8 & 11, US$7,529,400; Retooling the contents to be used online and offline for teacher training of new curriculum Grade 7 and Grade 10\(^{36}\)  
• JICA/CREATE project: In-service teacher training for introducing new curriculum of Grade 4 (2020) and Grade 5 (2021); development of training modules  
• UNESCO, Finland, Australia, DFID, through STEM program: Strengthening the use of e-library for teacher education for sharing MOE’s updates on COVID-19 and digital teaching and learning resources to support pre-service teacher training; Designing and delivering CPD modules on the effective use of simple ICT tools on smartphones for distance teaching, learning, communication; Delivering training manual and videos through printed copies, DVDs and online means.  
• Denmark: Capacity Development Fund, US$125,000 to design and establish a BE schools e-library under MDEP for parents to access offline and online materials to support home-based learning  
• DFID/Towards Results in Education and English (TREE) project: Pre-service teacher education in Education Colleges, e.g. support Teacher Educators and others in ECs on the new EC curriculum implementation through remote teaching and learning plan and delivery, using Zoom and Facebook.  
• VSO (as part of TREE): Support Teacher Educators and EC leadership teams through remote training and mentoring on inclusion and inclusive practice.  
• UNICEF, with GPE ESPDG fund for COVID-19: Establishment of online communication mechanism of MoE and development of online and off-line learning training for G4, G7 and G10 in collaboration with Myanmar Mobile Education (MyME); (e.g. video editing), US$140,000  
• Finn Church Aid: Counseling curriculum to the teachers training  
• NRC: Provision of DBE Box devices for offline learning in displacement locations  
• People in Need (with JRS and KBC): Developing teacher training videos for teachers in crisis contexts.\(^{37}\) To be distributed by USB/SD/social media.  
• United World Schools: support to community teachers in UWS-supported schools |
| 2: Ensuring healthy, safe and inclusive school operations after reopening, including | 4,894,000 | • UNICEF: WaSH in schools  

\(^{36}\) This includes: (a) Distance teaching and support for students through mobile communication (new curriculum Grade 6, Grade 7 and Grade 10); (b) Development of Distance Learning Materials & Learning Platform (new curriculum Grade 6, Grade 7 and Grade 10); (c) Distant Teacher Training (new curriculum Grade 8 and Grade 11)  

\(^{37}\) Training topics include: 1) Pedagogy, 2) Curriculum and Planning, 3) Child Protection and Wellbeing, 4) Teacher’s Role and Wellbeing, 5) an intro to PSS and 6) basic subject training.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Programme Component in GPE proposal</th>
<th>Budget requested for GPE (USD)</th>
<th>DP support</th>
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| psychosocial support and communication for children, parents and teachers                         |                                | • Swiss Development Cooperation: Provision of Information Boards  
• WFP: Provision of take-home rations, home delivery of food or provision of High Energy Biscuit (HEB) or cash or vouchers  
• Denmark: Capacity Development Fund, US$100,000 to design and launch the PTA Communication Network and App |
| 3: Providing targeted support to vulnerable and disadvantaged children to retain them in school and improve student learning | 5,416,500                      | • DFID/AERS: Development of the quality assessment tools required for effective remedial programs in primary to middle school.  
• DFID/TREE: Support Education Colleges to develop an after-school tutoring programme to support disadvantaged primary students.  
• UNICEF: Support alternative way to deliver training and support to NFPE/NFMSE facilitators.  
• MEC: Support with coordination and engagement with EBEPs                                          |
| Other COVID-19 response & recovery support (specific allocation to be decided)                    |                                | • EU budget support                                                                                                                             |
| Monitoring and Evaluation                                                                         | 99,500                         |                                                                                                                                             |
| Knowledge generation                                                                              | 76,000                         |                                                                                                                                             |
| UNICEF financial, operational, administrative and quality assurance support                        | 400,000                        |                                                                                                                                             |
| Total                                                                                             | 15,000,000                     |                                                                                                                                             |
7. Geographic Focus

The COVID-19 Pandemic and related economic strains created on communities and children is fast-moving, has the potential to affect all regions with the country, and thus requires a rapid response at scale in affected areas. As the impact of COVID-19 is across the nation, the focus of system strengthening interventions are nation-wide as well. To address equity and ‘no one left behind’, special measures focusing specific target population are planned. Priority geographic areas that will be reached via this proposal include children living in COVID-19 affected townships and children living in townships where quarantine centres have been set up. The focus is also placed on other disadvantaged children, such as children learning in temporary learning centres in IDP camps in Myanmar and crisis affected villages and children learning in ethnic basic education programmes.
8. Operational/implementation arrangements

This GPE project will make use of the Ministry of Education’s structures at central and subnational levels and the Education Sector’s existing governance and coordination mechanisms through the Education Technical Vocational Sector Coordination Group (ETVSCG). The proposed operational and implementation arrangements recognize the leadership role of Ministry of Education’s in directing the planning and provision of education services in Myanmar, including in emergencies, through processes that reflect national priorities and strategies. The Ministry of Education is organized into Departments, each of which has a specific mandate and is led by a Director General. With the support of UNICEF, each Department will provide technical guidance to the relevant subcomponents and will ensure that activities are implemented in a way that compliment and strengthen existing capacities. MOE also plans to optimize selected and relevant in-house expertise to ensure smooth implementation of the project within MOE’s overall COVID-19 response and recovery plan.

State Education Departments will be the main subnational implementing structure to reach schools, in liaison with Township Education Offices. They will also play an active monitoring role, reporting to central level through the Department of Basic Education. Where necessary, Ministry of Education and UNICEF as the Grant Agent will set up component or subcomponent-based committees, comprised of personnel from both entities to drive implementation. Such committees will be co-chaired by focal persons from the MoE and UNICEF and will have defined terms of reference. MOE and UNICEF may also decide, as appropriate to engage specialized technical assistance to support specific activities under each subcomponent. The ETVSCG, which is chaired by the Minister of Education, brings together Government and Development partners to regularly plan, share and deliberate on educational policy and education delivery in Myanmar. UNICEF will provide monthly updates to ETVSCG while Director Generals will give regular briefs to the Minister of Education through existing Executive Committee meetings.

UNICEF as the Grant Agent will be responsible for overall financial management and reporting. UNICEF has a long-term presence in Myanmar and works with all actors — government, ethnic organizations, UN, local education groups and other partners including WHO, IFRC, CDCs INGOs and CSOs partners through the UN Country Teams, under the leadership of Country Resident Coordinators — to ensure that assistance is provided impartially and by those with a solid analysis and understanding of the situation. UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and our Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action and strives to establish children’s rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children. With experienced national and international colleagues at both the national and sub-national level, staff can digest and understand the difficult and dynamic context of the country. UNICEF’s partners are chosen based on their ability to access the targeted populations willingness to support all people. UNICEF is active in local education groups, Education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training Sector Coordination Group (ETVSGC), Education Development Partners Coordination Group (EDPCG) and among others and will manage the funds utilizing its normal policies and procedures.

UNICEF’s financial risk management is aligned to the UN standard Framework Harmonized Approach of Cash Transfers to Implementing Partners. HACT is based on an assessment of the risks associated with transferring cash to implementing partners, including the risk that cash transferred to implementing partners may not be used or reported in accordance with agreements between the agency providing the cash resources and the implementing partner. The adoption of the new harmonized approach is a step in implementing the Rome Declaration on Harmonization and the Paris
Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which call for a closer alignment of development aid with national priorities and needs. The approach allows efforts to focus more on strengthening national capacities for management and accountability, with a view to gradually shift to utilizing national systems.

UNICEF will support the MOE, EDPCG and the EiE group to identify activities within the options that have the maximum impact for the response, map out sources of funding available and determine how best the resources made available through this grant can be optimally utilized. In working with the EDPCG and EiE group, UNICEF will ensure that GPE funds are used in a complementary manner with resources made available by other partners. UNICEF will also engage with GPE to leverage the GPE platforms and other platforms such as INEE for sharing best practice and capacity development.

9. Risk Management

Given the unpredictability of the COVID-19 impact at country and community levels, the MOE has undertaken an assessment of the key risks across various risk categories that could impede implementation of project activities. In Table 2 below the mitigation measures to overcome/reduce the adverse impact of these risks are outlined.

Table 2: Potential project implementation risks and mitigation measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macroeconomic risk - due to decline in revenue and debt servicing, there is a risk of decline in investment in social sectors, including education, which will damage MoE’s ability to sustain the system. Due to the economic hardship, some teachers with low payment might be driven to look for other economic activities, especially if the school reopening is delayed and their salaries are withheld.</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>MoE to make a stronger case for securing at least the same level of government budget allocation to MoE through budget analysis and analysis of impact of COVID-19 on education, as well as impact of education loss on the society, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Planning, Finance and Industry, with DP assistance, building further upon MoE’s ongoing work on public finance management. MoE to engage with parliamentarians, especially the education committee to advocate for a high level of government budget allocation to MoE, in partnership with DPs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid spread of COVID-19</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>MoE to continue close collaboration with MoHS, and participation in the national COVID-19 task force to be ready for education response in case of rapid spread. As for GPE funding and proposed activities, MoE will immediately initiate a review of relevance of the planned activities and target population and geographic areas for re-programming as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitation in movement and physical interactions as measures to prevent spread of Coronavirus</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>MoE will use ICT platforms such as Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, texting, phone calls, to carry out meetings, training workshops, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Likelihood</td>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Mitigation Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay in fund transfer down to support the activity implementation,</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Risks associated with transfer of funds to implementing partners will be managed according to the UNDG’s Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT). As part of the HACT procedure, Macro Assessment of the MoE, as well as Micro Assessment of MoE Departments that receive US$100,000 a year from UNICEF, including DBE and DAE, will be carried out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including DBE having a budget line to receive funds from UNICEF to</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>support activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay in procurement of goods and services, including distribution</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>MoE and UNICEF will determine cost effective and rapid procurement modality, including use of UNICEF’s Long-Term-Agreement contracts with sets of pre-approved/pre-assessed service providers and suppliers (supplies, consultancies and other services). Procurement will be fast-tracked from the LTA list, where possible and relevant, and other procurement activities will also be guided by emergency Level-3 fast track procedures. As for distribution, MoE and UNICEF will use a wide range of transportation companies to choose ones to secure value for money. MoE will coordinate with GA at sub-national level to facilitate local distribution, through State/Regional and Township Education Offices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moe</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There is a continual risk of natural disaster that can disrupt</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>MOE will continue the initiative supported by UNESCO IIEP to strengthen the institutional capacity on emergency preparedness and planning, to develop a plan, and focus on utilization of the strengthened capacity and implementation of the plan. MOE to upgrade the DBE warehouse where education preposition items are in stock, to improve preparedness, in close collaboration with UNICEF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children’s learning. It can also cause displacement or affect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children. All these will affect planned implementation of activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mentioned in this period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk of partners’ misconduct, particularly related to sexual</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>MOE will work closely with UNICEF who, as part of the UN approach for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), has mechanisms in place to strengthen partners’ capacity on PSEA. UNICEF will orient implementing partners on PSEA and safeguarding to prevent and respond to harm caused by sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment or bullying. This will include the need to report any safeguarding issue to the donors, as required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exploitation, abuse, harassment or bullying.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
10. Monitoring and evaluation

During the start-up phase of the project, all Subcomponent Implementation Teams (SCTs) will draft SC Monitoring Plans that will list indicators, data collection methods, frequency of data collection and roles of Department officers, etc. All Plans will be submitted by SC Focal Points to the TWG for approval. All SCTs will be responsible for implementation of their SC Monitoring Plans and reporting on project implementation achievements and challenges, and monitoring results data every quarter.

The MOE through UNICEF will utilize UNICEF’s global monitoring tools for the COVID-19 response which covers core indicators related to children being supported with continuity of learning measures and ongoing programmatic responses. UNICEF’s high frequency performance monitoring indicators are tracked every two weeks and reported in the East Asia and Pacific COVID Situation Reports. In addition, upon approval of the overall ESPDG to UNICEF, UNICEF will leverage monitoring and reporting mechanisms of the local Education Cluster to support rapid monitoring of activities being implemented by partners.

The MOE will mobilize State/Region and Township Education Offices for monitoring on the ground. To support this, UNICEF, through its staff based in the Yangon and field offices will ensure monitoring of the proposed activities. For hard-to-reach areas, UNICEF will assist State/Region and Township Education offices to employ remote means to verify and ensure that support and supplies are reaching the targeted people. Additionally, UNICEF’s funds transfer mechanism allows UNICEF to track disbursement and usage in a timely manner. Reporting, both formal and informal, will provide needed updates from partners.

In addition to the above, UNICEF has established accountability measures, which promote community acceptance and engagement, including the use of an anonymous complaints and feedback mechanism. Corporate rules and procedures for quality assurance and due diligence, including the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers approach, will be observed. Good practices and lessons learned from programme implementation will be systematically captured, for example, through case studies and human-interest stories. These lessons will be disseminated and used to inform advocacy, research, and relevant policy and programmatic action. UNICEF is also working with OCHA and Ground Truth Solutions to develop an overarching approach to expanding accountability to affected populations (AAP), community feedback, and monitoring of perceptions of humanitarian assistance. While awaiting confirmation of that programme, UNICEF has hired a national officer to focus on AAP and community engagement and is looking to improve and harmonize how our partners engage on this issue with beneficiaries.

In areas where direct monitoring by UNICEF staff is a challenge (due to issues related to access, security, travel authorizations), UNICEF avails the services of Third Party Monitoring (TPM) to:
- Assure progress towards achievement of planned results independently
- Verify progress as reported by partners
- Identify gaps in service delivery
- Improve quality of interventions through communicating engagement (AAP) and taking correction actions

The TPM is locally based and makes use of real-time monitoring tools, using a combination of data collection methods including:
- Observations
- Key informant interviews (KIs)
- Focus group discussions (FGDs)
- Situation Monitoring

Given the COVID-19 situation and limited access, specific guidelines and tools have been developed by UNICEF for conducting remote programmatic visits by both UNICEF staff and TPM, as relevant and appropriate. This approach will help UNICEF to remotely monitor programme implementation and ensure that activities are conducted as planned, with corrective actions taken to achieve results, as needed. Data will be collected using Kobo-tool to seek evidence from partners and telephonic interviews with beneficiaries shall be conducted, with the aim of triangulating information provided by the partner and to seek inputs on quality of interventions. Together with this, increased attention will be paid to ensuring accountability to the affected population.
11. M&E Framework (Results Framework)

All the interventions presented in this proposal will be monitored and assessed with the below Results Framework. The types of indicators and its levels of disaggregation are guided by the *Guidance on monitoring and evaluation of grants financed through the GPE COVID-19 Accelerated Funding window*, especially the set of core indicators in the document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Subcomponents</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
<th>Reporting frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Support continuity of learning at scale (during school closure if school opening is delayed) and after schools reopen by strengthening the capacity of teachers, non-formal education facilitators and education officers to retain student learning achievement following the COVID-19 crisis</td>
<td>1.1: Strengthening the capacity of teachers and education officers to support students, schools and communities to recover from the COVID-19 crisis</td>
<td>(a) Number of teachers** and education officers completing COVID-19 Recovery Training Program (RTP) under the distance, school-based system</td>
<td>(a) 0 (b) TBC (c) TBC</td>
<td>(a) 250,000 teachers (b) TBC (c) TBC</td>
<td>MoE and UNICEF monitoring report</td>
<td>Annual (upon the completion of the intervention)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Availability of improved digital contents of the new curriculum training for Grades 4, 7 and 10 and Grades 5, 8 and 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Availability of improved distance-based pre-service teacher training systems in Education Colleges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2: Development and delivery of home-based distance learning for students</td>
<td>(a) Number of children (and % of children in the relevant age-group in the program area) supported with distance/ home-based learning</td>
<td>(a) 0 (b) 0 (c) 0</td>
<td>(a) 9.7 million children; (b) 30,000 children (c) 1,200 teachers</td>
<td>MoE and UNICEF monitoring report</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Components</td>
<td>Subcomponents</td>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Means of Verification</td>
<td>Reporting frequency</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Ensuring healthy, safe and inclusive school operations after reopening including psychosocial support and communication for children, parents and teachers.</td>
<td>2.1: Preparation and support to schools to keep students, teachers, and school staff safe and healthy</td>
<td>(a) Number of schools*** disinfected</td>
<td>(a) 0</td>
<td>(a) 1,000 schools</td>
<td>MoE and UNICEF monitoring reports</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Number of children provided with learning kits</td>
<td>(b) 0</td>
<td>(b) 80,000 children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Number of children provided with hygiene and sanitation materials for COVID-19 prevention</td>
<td>(c) 0</td>
<td>(c) 2,00,000 children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Number of schools supported with COVID-19 prevention measures</td>
<td>(d) 0</td>
<td>(d) 50,000 schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(a) 0</td>
<td></td>
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<td>(b) 0</td>
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<td>(c) 0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(d) 0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2: Effective two-way communication with teachers and parents and improved awareness among parents and participation in their local school</td>
<td>(a) Number of parents listed in the PTA Communication Network receiving regular text messages</td>
<td>(a) 0</td>
<td>(a) 3,00,000 parents</td>
<td>MoE and UNICEF monitoring reports</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Number of PTA parent leaders trained in the PTA Student and School Improvement Program</td>
<td>(b) 0</td>
<td>(b) 190,000 parents</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3: Provision of psychosocial support and referrals for students and teachers in schools and communities in disadvantaged areas</td>
<td>(a) Number of teachers attending psychosocial support and referral training</td>
<td>(a) 0</td>
<td>(a) 45,000 teachers</td>
<td>MoE, DSW and UNICEF monitoring reports</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Number of children reached by psychosocial support</td>
<td>(b) 0</td>
<td>(b) 125,000 children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Providing targeted support to vulnerable and disadvantaged children to retain them in school and improve student learning</td>
<td>3.1: Provide targeted support to children living in COVID-19 affected Townships and those affected by COVID-19 to return to school and remain in school</td>
<td>(a) # children at COVID-19 affected townships schools benefiting from stipend support</td>
<td>(a) 0</td>
<td>(a) 25,000 students</td>
<td>MoE and UNICEF monitoring Report and payment records</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) # of persons in COVID19 affected townships receiving conditional cash</td>
<td>(b) 0</td>
<td>(b) 6,000 persons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2: Improving student learning in schools,</td>
<td>(a) Number of children benefitting from remedial teaching</td>
<td>(a) 0</td>
<td>(a) 250,000 children</td>
<td>MoE and UNICEF</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Components</td>
<td>Subcomponents</td>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Means of Verification</td>
<td>Reporting frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>education and learning centres for basic education through catch up and remedial education</td>
<td>(b) Number of teachers trained to provide catch up and remedial education (c) Number of children in disadvantaged COVID-19 affected locations benefitting from early literacy and numeracy program</td>
<td>(c) 0 (b) 10,000 teachers (c) 25,000 children</td>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3: Provide targeted support for continuity of learning and retention in MOE recognised schools through implementation of an EBEPs Support Program</td>
<td>(a) Number of children provided with COVID-prevention/learning kits (b) Number of MOE recognised schools supported with COVID-19 Prevention measures; (c) Number of teachers completing training</td>
<td>(a) 0 (b) 0 (c) 0 (a) 150,000 children (b) 1,500 schools (c) 2,000 teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Implementing partner reports</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Project Work Plan (separate file)
Annex 1: Myanmar Digital Education Platform: Overview of Vision, Plans and Technical Considerations

Vision

The Myanmar Digital Education Platform (MDEP), http://mdep.moe.edu.mm/, is a technical platform including learning management systems (LMSs), developed, run and supported by the Ministry of Education. MDEP is designed to offer a range of online teaching and learning services that are widely accessible to educators, students and other stakeholders working in the Education Sectors.

Its services will support the development of high-quality digital education at all levels of the education system in Myanmar, and will complement systems being developed within schools, colleges and HEIs. Courses, taught and unsupported, can be provided on the platform by public and private sector institutions, and by international partners.

Courses offered can reflect a flexible range of qualifications, and may align with Myanmar curricula at different levels, or focus on further study and professional development that falls outside the National curriculum.

System Overview

MDEP is organised into LMS components designed for teacher and student groupings at Basic, TVET, Alternative Education and Higher Education levels (see Figure 1 below). These LMSs initially operate independently of each other, but a key requirement is that they are designed to support longer term interoperability and integrate into an overall system that supports lifelong learning. Components that support lifelong learning, training and further education for government officials, and to support online requirements for a Myanmar National Open University could also be added to the design if required.

MDEP is an ambitious modular project that will be developed in phases.

MDEP Phase One Overview

The first phase coincides with, and responds to, the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Phases. It develops a platform that involves making study materials available to teachers in a digital format, initially prioritising Basic Education. The overall design will be scalable so that other modules for different levels within the Education Sector can benefit, and users are familiar with common design elements, that contribute to the usability of the overall system.

Figure 1: MDEP Homepage Screenshot
The content for Basic education is currently held on the MOE server, but the 100Mb/s connection from that server to the Internet presents a user bottleneck; hence, Phase 1 work is currently being completed to secure and set up cloud-based services to support platform components. The future components for HE (including distance education), TVET, Alternative Education etc will all have cloud-based MOODLE installations, that can support engagement with teachers and learners.

The initial content being made available online is providing teachers with access to digital versions of course materials and teaching guides relevant to the curriculum. Some of these materials already exist, and some new resources will be developed. Digital library services will also be added providing relevant e-library content for each education component level.

One idea being explored to develop content in response to COVID-19 is the recording of lectures, initially to support a ‘rotational hybrid classroom (RHC)’ approach to support reintroduction of face to face teaching to small groups of students. Under this model for a period of time, small groups of students would take turns in receiving limited face to face classes, and additional teaching sessions would be recorded, with the best quality materials eventually being made available on MDEP, enabling them to become more widely accessible to students when they are away from their educational institutions.

Due to the urgent need to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, and to provide immediate online access to course content for teachers and students, the system development approach being taken is one of rapid and iterative prototyping, using agile approaches to systems development. This approach informs and contrasts with the Phase 2 systems design approach under discussion within the MOE now.

Departments currently contributing to the MDEP development are Department of Education Research, Planning and Training (DERPT), Department of Myanmar Examinations (DME), Department of Technology Promotion & Coordination (DTPC), Department for Basic Education (DBE), Department of Alternative Education (DAE) and Department of Higher Education (DHE).
There is potential to also work with other Ministries, such as MOPFI, MOLU and MOTC.

**Future Phases**

Plans for future phases in the development of MDEP, are yet to be specified and agreed, but will be reflected in the National Education Strategic Plan for 2021-2030.

These phases are likely to focus on scaling up of:

- Courses offered online by a growing range of National and International partners. This could include the offering of MOOCs and other flexible qualifications via the MDEP platform
- Range of services offered in relation to support for online teaching and learning to support student lifecycle management
- Range of services offered that enhance employability, e.g. through careers advice services, and advertising of job opportunities, internships and so forth
- Development of data policies to support education policymaking and planning and to support needs of teachers, learners and other users
- System interfaces between MDEP and online teaching and learning systems developed at Schools, Colleges and Universities
- Enhanced system features related to fee payment and financial transactions

**Annex 2. List of townships with COVID-19 confirmed cases, as of 6 May 2020**

*Source: MoHS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Region</th>
<th>Number of townships with COVID-19 confirmed cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bago</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chin</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kachin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magway</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandalay</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPT</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sagaing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan (East)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan (North)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan (South)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangon</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 3. Additional Detail on Subcomponent 3.3

Objective: Provide targeted support for continuity of learning and retention in schools managed by EBEPs through implementation of an EBEPs Support Program

Children in conflict-affected areas of Myanmar are amongst the most vulnerable children in the country. They already face significant challenges in accessing quality education, and the Covid-19 crisis will place additional constraints on access to and continuation of education. In all areas of Myanmar, and particularly conflict-affected areas that are home to non-Bamar, ethnic minorities, the longer children are out-of-school, the risk that they will not return to school increases. For those children in conflict-affected villages and towns, the impact of the Covid-19 crisis is likely to extend past education disruption, with increased risks to family and community cohesion and economic hardships, resulting in secondary risks to children. Community teachers, who often assume broader leadership roles in remote communities, are likely to face additional pressures related to the need to ensure the safety and security of children and implement alternative modalities of teaching, alongside individual livelihood concerns. With large numbers of migrants returning to border areas (and now unemployed), existing safety nets, such as community contributions for school and teacher support, will likely be disrupted. Through the Covid-19 emergency and recovery phases, additional support is required to help ensure that vulnerabilities are mitigated, that vulnerable children are not left further behind nor educational inequalities exacerbated. Through the crisis it is imperative that safe, quality and inclusive learning opportunities reach all children, including those living in fragile socio-political contexts, that children and education facilities are safeguarded, and that mechanisms for education service delivery in fragile areas are strengthened in support of a safe return to school.

In order to address these considerations, MoE proposes the development of a program of support to address the unique needs of children in conflict-affected communities, to be implemented in collaboration with Ethnic Basic Education Providers (EBEPs) across the country. The proposed program will ensure co-ordinated resourcing for the design and delivery of a Covid-19 response plan to ensure continuity of teaching and learning for children in schools administered by EBEPs through the recovery phase.

There are an estimated 420,000 children in Myanmar accessing education in schools administered by EBEPs in conflict-affected areas that are often the hardest-to-reach. The term EBEPs encompasses a broad range of actors including a) education departments of the NCA- signatory Ethnic Armed Actors (EAOs), for example the Mon National Education Committee (MNEC) and the Karen Education and Culture Department (KECD) who deliver services to children in Kayin and Mon states respectively, either jointly with the MoE or individually; b) education departments of the non NCA- signatory EAOs (for example, the Kachin Education Department) and c) a broader pool of local organizations supporting education service delivery in hard-to-reach areas (e.g. Karen Teachers Working Group, Rural Indigenous Sustainable Education). There are substantial differences across EBEPs in the modalities for delivering education services, with a range of curricula and teacher professional development support models in place, developed in line with community, linguistic and geographical contexts. At present, approximately 12,000 community teachers deliver education (most often in ethnic languages) in schools in Mon, Tanintharyi, Kayin, Kayah, Shan, Kachin and Chin States. There

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38 The term ‘community teacher’ refers to teachers supported through EBEPs in non-state schools, or teachers supported in mixed-administered schools, or schools in areas of mixed administration. Community teachers are paid a stipend by EBEPs and are supported through community contributions and international assistance. Community teachers differ from Language/Teaching Assistants supported by MoE/MoEA and teach subject content across the whole curriculum from Math to Science to Ethnic Languages.

39 The figure includes children supported by EBEPs in mixed-administered schools, or schools in areas of mixed administration.
are already examples in place of MoE collaboration with EBEPs, for example in the provision of textbooks or teacher training, but this varies across the EBEP-landscape, and requires a formal framework for agreements to guide engagement further. With a nationwide ceasefire in place, the development of an EBEP-support program provides an opportunity for collaboration between Myanmar authorities and the education departments of NCA-signatory EAOs in support of education recovery from Covid-19, which would be implemented in accordance with the NCA Interim Arrangements.

The Myanmar Education Consortium was established in early 2013 to support the provision of education services for vulnerable children in conflict-affected areas through support for complementary education providers across ethnic and monastic education. Currently in its second phase, the MEC is supported by the Governments of Australia, Denmark and the United Kingdom. The program works with established monastic and education providers (EBEPs) to place a focus on developing the quality and inclusivity of education in Myanmar for improved retention, completion and learning outcomes for hard-to-reach children; and works with a broader range of diverse stakeholders to address key policy barriers to effective education for all children in Myanmar. Through its theory of change, key partners aligned with selected ethnic and monastic education systems are provided with financial and technical resourcing support to engage in annual education planning across seven transformation domains (‘Change Areas’). Each year, EBEP partners are supported to take tailored strengthening action for a focus on the education and management of teachers, the strengthening of curriculum and school and community leadership, along with human, financial and resources management, monitoring and evaluation and policy engagement and advocacy. Each academic year, MEC reach supports on average 350,000 learners across complementary ethnic and monastic schools.

MEC partners include two of the largest ethnic complementary education providers in Myanmar, the Karen Education and Culture Department (KECD) and the Mon National Education Committee (MNEC). Through networks of administration, field offices at township level in Kayin state, Mon state, Bago region and Tanintharyi provide support for schools, for example the distribution of teaching and learning materials across mixed and non-government-controlled areas, covering both MoE/EBEP jointly administered schools and community/EBEP schools. Over 6,000 EBEP teachers across the systems are provided with stipends and in-service continuous professional development, through for example the use of mobile and central trainings. In addition to in-service support modalities, providers have developed pre-service training programs for new student teachers, along with methodologies for support for head teachers, parents and communities including, for example community mobilization events, school improvement planning and the development of Parent Teacher Associations/School Management Committees. A key feature across the majority of EBEPs is a focus on the provision of education across all subjects in the mother-tongue, with an MTB-MLE approach, and the development of materials in respective ethnic languages. Alongside support for KECD and MNEC, MEC engages in partnership with broader EBEPs in Kachin, Kayah and Shan states to support the strengthening of quality across complementary education provision, and to place a focus on the contribution of mother-tongue based, multi-lingual education for children’s learning.

Under the EU-supported Case2Learn initiative, a broader network of EBEPs are supported by ADRA Myanmar, in partnership with the Rural Indigenous Sustainable Education (RISE) across Mon, Kayin, Kayah, Shan, Kachin, Chin and Tanintharyi. Working with 12 ethnic minority partners, RISE implements a variety of education programs, including pre-and inservice mobile training, parent education and awareness, and school management capacity building, and reaches over 3000 schools, 18,000 students and 280,000 students. Through collaboration and co-chairing of the Ethnic Education in States and Regions Forum (EESR), MEC and ADRA Myanmar promote joint dialogue and co-ordination.
on the provision of education for children in conflict-affected areas, bringing together interested agencies to ensure and promote a collaborative approach.

In line with educational reforms, MoE has recently initiated actions aligned to the commitment to the develop formal partnership agreements with EBEPs, as outlined in NESP Chapter 5, Strategy 2.2 (Component 1). Following an initial period of research through Phase 1 of the Myanmar Education Partnerships Project (MEPP), supported by MEC and the World Bank, the MoE was able to gain a deeper insight into potential partnerships with EBEPs and to explore barriers to engagement. Through Phase 2, DBE has initiated dialogue with two of the largest EAO education departments, the MNEC and KECD who expressed willingness to engage in partnership for strengthened access to education for ethnic minority children. An MoE taskforce has been developed and dialogue has commenced on the core elements of the partnership framework. Through this work, and in line with the GPE-supported IAQE (Component 2.2), the MoE will develop innovative partnerships with EBEPs to develop a policy and regulatory framework that supports continuing access to education for children in conflict-affected areas. It is envisaged that through the development of partnership agreements with MNEC and KECD, further agreements will be developed with other EBEPs who have expressed a similar interest. Whilst recognising that, although underway, an over-arching regulatory framework is not yet in place for engagement between EBEPs and the MoE; thus, support for the welfare of the hardest-to-reach children through the Covid-19 recovery phase will require an interim flexible and conflict-sensitive approach that will complement and provide insight for the on-going development of the framework under MEPP.

The proposed sub-component will provide targeted support for continuity of learning and retention in schools managed by EBEPs through implementation of an EBEP-support program. Technical and material assistance will be provided to EBEPs in order to reach vulnerable children through a jointly designed and implemented program that recognises the most urgent EBEP priorities in mitigating harmful impacts of the crisis on children’s well-being and in improving recovery. Key activities will include

a) **Strengthening co-ordination for Covid-19 response through consultations.**

The MoE will convene three workshops with EBEPs to examine and discuss planning in depth, and to develop an over-arching program design. It is envisaged that the workshops will be held with the KECD, MNEC, RISE and other members of MEC’s network of local organizations. The workshops will seek to bring together the broad range of experiences of education provision in conflict-affected areas and set an equal footing for participants from which shared designs will be developed, and the outcomes co-designed. Through the consultation phase, MoE will explore most optimal modalities with EBEPs in order to ensure children can be reached, and in line with previous successful practise or new models of practise. The workshops will provide a dialogue platform to ensure sharing of clear information on initial plans, to secure the participation of EBEPs and seek their views on the program design and modalities for delivery. EBEP senior leadership will be provided with the opportunity to present data on the impacts of Covid-19 on the delivery of education services specific to conflict-affected areas and to make recommendations on most optimal designs for meeting needs in line with established EBEP mechanisms for subsidy delivery or teacher training. Through initial pre-consultations facilitated by MEC and RISE, EBEPs have expressed willingness to engage in collaboration for design and implementation of the program. A successful consultation phase is critical to ensure continuing willingness across all stakeholders to play an active role in designing a suitable EBEP-support program.

At the end of the consultation phase, a design for the program will have been agreed and finalised, along with a joint framework for monitoring the progress of the collaboration. The design will include
an outline of methodologies for at-interval documentation of lessons learned (e.g. joint or individual reflection sessions), to input into the broader MoE work on the development of partnership mechanisms. Given the sensitivity of the process, technical assistance for the facilitation and development of the program design will be provided by MEC, as a co-funded component. Workshops will be facilitated on-line and depending on the in-country restrictions on travel/meetings, with pre-consultations conducted by MEC to ensure efficiency and conflict-sensitivity. The consultation phase will run in line with the provision of support through the Emergency phase, if appropriate, for example through the provision of Covid-19 kits.

The EBEP-support program will seek to utilise EBEP established models for delivery of education service provision with suitable, conflict-sensitive modalities. EBEPs differ in their previous experience and/or readiness levels for engagement with MoE, with readiness levels in many cases determined by broader processes of dialogue on-going through the NCA and the Interim Arrangements. For example, in Mon state, there is precedent for joint activity at township level through the MNEC and MoE township education offices, where support was provided directly by the MoE to MNEC’s education department (See below: Building on Best Practises). In Karen areas of Myanmar, there is no such precedent however, and in line with interim arrangements, and until a full framework is in place through MEPP, KECD may in the interim access support only through an intermediary agency. It is anticipated that modalities for the administration of resources will be a critical area of discussion through the consultation phase, and in line with differentiated nature of previous MoE-EBEP engagement. Through the consultations, most optimal, conflict-sensitive modalities for implementation will be identified on a state-by-state basis, and in line with previous history of engagement and current readiness for direct engagement.

**b) Implementation of an appropriate EBEP-support program.**

Through the consultation process, MoE will work with EBEPs to establish the core program components that will support continuity in learning and retention in EBEP schools, in line with EBEP identified priorities and respective modalities. In recognition of the challenges in setting forward specific components before this aforementioned consultation phase, indicative areas are set forward here, based on the pre-consultations with EBEPs supported by MEC. The activities themselves or the respective targets may be subject to change, as in-depth discussion is initiated, in a situation for example where MoE learning packages align with those needs identified for learners in the EBEP schools, or where remote teacher training content may need to be developed anew.

*The provision of MoE Covid-19 prevention kits;* Through the emergency phase, where appropriate, the MoE and EBEPs will conduct early exploration of feasible supply chain lines for the distribution of hygiene supplies to 3000 EBEP-supported schools (for example, disinfectant, masks, soap and antibacterial hand gel, and factual information about Covid-19 in local languages). The provision of the kits will reduce community anxiety around the virus, promote safe behaviour, and support the ability of children, teachers and parents to deal with any secondary impacts. Feasibility of distribution and dissemination in non-government-controlled areas will be considered, along with a review of existing lines in place, including for the distribution of broader teaching and learning materials in mixed and non-government-controlled areas.

*Supporting Remote Learning Programs, including Essential Learning Kits;* In line with planning for school re-openings (or in the case of extended closures) EBEPs will provide support for an appropriate remote learning program. Through the EBEP-support program, at minimum five EBEPs will be provided with resource allocations that enable access to technical support for the planning, design and delivery of appropriate distance education or an accelerated learning program, with a reach target of 150,000
children. This may include support for educators to develop paper-based learning materials and activities, utilising existing EBP curricula and tools for take-home activities, the provision of resources for the development of interactive radio instruction, or resources for peer-to-peer learning, provided in the language of instruction used in each EBP system. Where feasible and deemed appropriate, MoE-designed Essential Learning Kits will be utilised or adapted with the support of translators or EBP education personnel.

Planning for Safe Re-Opening: Through the EBP-support program, resources will be provided for the safe preparation and rehabilitation of 1500 EBP-education facilities, where logistically feasible and appropriate, including the development and dissemination of policies and procedures for maintaining a safe environment, for example through community/village sensitisation meetings or events, and/or investment in WASH facilities for schools that do not have adequate facilities.

Teacher subsidies: Through the program, 2,000 community teachers will receive top-up support incentives, including, for example, cash transfers, in line with existing teacher stipend distribution modalities. In cases where teacher stipend distribution is not feasible, due to travel restrictions for example, mobile data packages and/or telecommunications subsidies will be provided. Through the support, community teachers will benefit from incentives that offset costs associated with managing remote learning, and/or additional strains on livelihoods.

Support for community teachers’ continuous professional development: Through the program, and where relevant and appropriate, approximately 300 community teachers from EBP systems will participate in Grade-level MoE-trainings, for example in Mon state. Where this is deemed not appropriate, the program will provide support for EBP-led teacher trainings, including where relevant providing mobile data top-ups, or hardware for EBP-township education offices to facilitate the delivery of trainings for a further 2000 teachers in the absence of village-level (mobile teacher in-service training) interaction.

c) Monitoring of design and implementation of the EBP-support program.

Through the consultations and design phase, a framework will be developed for joint monitoring and evaluation of the EBP-support program, drawing to the extent possible on existing MEL modalities in place across the EBP-base. Given the sensitivities around engagement, the final design for the EBP-support program will be appraised prior to implementation, facilitated and led by MEC and UNICEF, and to incorporate a key focus on significant insights for future partnerships. Similarly, through the development and implementation of the joint monitoring plan, a MEL focus on innovations in MoE-EBP collaboration will be employed, in order to ensure that successful modalities are utilised in further partnership planning, and successful models retained for the provision of access for children in EBP-administered systems into the future. A core component in the monitoring of design and implementation will be a continuous focus on risks identification. An initial risk analysis will be undertaken through the consultation and design phase, with continual updating of the risk register and mitigation strategies, through which core learning will be generated to inform broader discussion on partnership mechanisms.

The DBE will lead the sub-component in close collaboration with other relevant departments. Given the sensitivities regarding the program, and to ensure a conflict sensitive approach, UNICEF, the Myanmar Education Consortium will support the consultation phase, and the development and delivery of unique modalities in the most appropriate manner deemed relevant by MoE and EBEPs. Broader co-ordination with DPs, the Ethnic Education in States and Regions Working Group and other interested parties will be emphasised throughout in order to ensure MoE and EBEPs are supported to deliver the component in a conflict-sensitive manner.
The sub-component will contribute to the over-arching objective of reaching the most vulnerable through the engagement of EBEPs. This will lead to targeted, appropriate support provided to learners in non-state schools through the emergency and recovery phases and will ultimately contribute to the further development of working relationships between MoE and EAOs in support of the peace process. Through capturing lessons learned, partnership mechanisms under development will be strengthened, which will lead to increased access to education for all children in Myanmar into the future.

**Building on Best Practises**

Through extensive experience in implementation over decades, EBEPs have developed unique modalities for the provision of support in hard-to-reach, vulnerable communities, across community schools in areas often not accessible by MoE education offices. In line with annual education planning, EBEPs have tested and refined modalities for the provision of education services with minimal resources and challenging terrain and circumstances, including for example the provision of teaching and learning materials across remote areas prior to monsoon season, or the assessment of teacher competencies by mobile teacher trainers to guide professional development. Through cycles of implementation across the academic year, EBEPs administer schools, implement curriculum and learning standards, deliver teacher subsidies, collate data and provide training in as cost-effective manner as possible, and in line with established policies to ensure compliance, including institutionalised anti-fraud measures. EBEPs engage education personnel at central and field level in training across the academic year to strengthen their competency levels as education officers, and in line with documented protocols and quality assurance mechanisms in place. Through direct community engagement, EBEPs utilise trusted relationships to prioritise areas of need, and inform programmatic plans. Engagement with EBEPs for delivery of the program will ensure that the hardest to reach children in Myanmar are supported by the MoE in a structured, cost-effective manner.

Through the collaboration and use of EBEP modalities already in place for delivery in remote and fragile communities, the MoE will ensure a conflict-sensitive approach to Covid-19 planning. The EBEP-support program will build upon MoE initiatives in support of the development of ethnic minority languages undertaken through implementation of the NESP 2016-2021. Through a collaboration between the State/Region MoE and MoEA offices, LCCs and UNICEF, curricula for 25 ethnic languages in Mon, Kayin, Kachin and Kayah for Grades 1,2 and 3 have been produced in line with the development of local curriculum, along with story-books for KG in 66 local ethnic languages. The introduction of the Local Curriculum component falls in line with its inclusion into the National Basic Education Curriculum Framework and represents an important step in making curricula more relevant across States and Regions. Through the formation of Local Curriculum Implementation Teams in States/Regions, the development of local curriculum was initiated to place a focus on local ethnic languages, histories and cultures, local business situation and agriculture through the Basic Education curriculum for up to five periods per week. Similarly, in 2017-2018, the MoE and MoEA initiated a program for the appointment of 5,161 Teaching Assistants to support the teaching of ethnic minority languages as subjects, and to support children to overcome language barriers in engaging with the Basic Education curriculum. Through the implementation of such measures, MoE action is in line with one of the nine transformational shifts of the NESP 2016-2021 on Basic Education Curriculum: “All school children develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies that are relevant to their lives, and to the socio-economic development needs of Twenty-First Century Myanmar.” Whilst EBEP-administered schools support the delivery of a full curriculum in L1, and use modalities and techniques to introduce L2 (and later L3) at different stages in a child’s education, MoE will utilise the experience in supporting ethnic minority languages to inform the program design and implementation.
In recognition of the broader complexities around MoE support for EBEPs, the MoE will build upon previous experience in collaboration, drawing for example on lessons learned with MNEC in Mon state. With a ceasefire in place since 1995 in Mon state, the MoE has been able to engage in collaboration with the MNEC, foremost to enable youth from Mon National (Community) Schools to access the State Matriculation exam each year. In the 2014/2015 academic year, through the support of UNICEF, MNEC teachers engaged with MoE Township Offices for joint in-service training via the SITE model as part of the larger Quality Basic Education Programme (QBEP). The joint training model, where MNEC teachers participate in MoE-led trainings, is currently supported by the MEC and MoE jointly, with 211 teachers attending in the 2017-2018 academic year on the G1 new curriculum, 123 in the 2018-2019 academic year G2 training, and 300 planned for the current academic year G4, G7 and G10 trainings. The participation of MNEC teachers in MoE trainings on the new curriculum provides for trust-building at township-level, and the orientation of MNEC teachers to the MoE curriculum. The model presents an appropriate mechanism for a system that adopts an MTB-MLE approach where the MoE curriculum is used in later grades and in support of a transition from mother-tongue Mon language to Myanmar language. Similarly, in Mon state in 2015, through the distribution of UNICEF PBEA-supported school grants to 94 MNEC schools across four Township Education Offices, a precedent for collaboration was established for MoE support to EBEP schools. Through joint reflection on the modalities employed at the consultation phase, the MoE will identify components to be utilised in the co-design of the Mon state component with MNEC. Given the complexities associated with an on-going peace process in other states/regions, such modalities are likely not be appropriate across the broader EBEP landscape, and with technical assistance from MEC, MoE will seek to design alternative suitable modalities for engagement through the consultation process. Finally, and where relevant, MoE will utilise lessons learned from Mon and Kayin State Education Co-ordination Meetings, where state education departments and EBEPs have engaged in dialogue to establish mechanisms for addressing bottlenecks at community level since 2015.