



**THE WORLD BANK**  
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Report No: PIDIAF0021

# Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 02-Oct-2024



**BASIC DATA**

**A. Product Information**

**Main: Education Emergency Response in Afghanistan (EERA) (P178758)**

Operation ID P178758	Product/Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing (IPF)
Beneficiary Country/Countries Afghanistan	Geographical Identifier Afghanistan
Practice Area (Lead) Education	
Borrower(s) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Implementing Agency United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

**Additional Financing Request 1**

Estimated Appraisal Date 23-Sep-2024	Estimated Board Date 29-Nov-2024
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**Development Objective**

Current Development Objective (Approved as part of Restructuring package on 27-Jun-2023)

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to support access to learning opportunities for girls and boys and improve learning conditions in project-supported schools

**Components**

- Support Access to Learning Opportunities
- Improving Learning Conditions at project-supported schools
- Strengthening Monitoring and Ensuring Accountability

**COSTS & FINANCING (US\$, Millions)**

**SUMMARY**

	Last Approved	Proposed	
		Addition	Total



Total Operation Cost	100.00	125.00	225.00
Total Financing	100.00	75.00	175.00
Of which IBRD/IDA	0.00	50.00	50.00

**FINANCING DETAILS**

World Bank Group Financing	Last Approved	Additional Financing	Total
<b>International Development Association (IDA)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>50.00</b>	<b>50.00</b>
IDA Grant	0.00	50.00	50.00
<b>Non-World Bank Group Financing</b>			
<b>Trust Funds</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>25.00</b>	<b>125.00</b>
Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund	100.00	25.00	125.00

**IDA Resources**

	Credit Amount	Grant Amount	SML Amount	Guarantee Amount	Total Amount
National Performance-Based Allocations (PBA)	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>50.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>50.00</b>

Other Decision (as needed)

**B. Introduction and Context**

Country Context

1. In response to the events of August 15, 2021, in Afghanistan, the World Bank Group (WBG) has found pragmatic ways to provide essential basic services and livelihoods for the Afghan people. The WBG has reached more than 25 million Afghans following a stepwise approach. First, Approach 1.0 (November 2021) provided humanitarian gap financing. Approach 2.0 (March 2022) provided basic services and livelihoods support for critical health, food security, livelihoods and jobs, education, NGO capacity development and water services nation-wide at scale, off-budget and outside of Interim



Taliban administration (ITA) control through United Nations (UN) agencies and international Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) using the “principled approach” of delivery by and to women adopted by the international community. Both Approaches were financed through the Afghanistan Resilience Trust Fund (ARTF), with the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF) joining to support health services. The WBG’s independent third-party monitoring agent verifies all project activities. Approach 3.0 (February 2024) deploys International Development Association (IDA) to complement trust fund financing of the basic services and livelihoods projects. The WBG has led aid coordination and mobilized co-financing of these activities with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Union (EU), and bilateral partners. This has been critical in a situation of multiple global crises and overall declining aid in Afghanistan. The nationwide design allows projects to respond to crises like the Herat earthquakes and the increased repatriation of Afghan returnees.

**2. The international aid response helped maintain core services and livelihoods for the Afghan people at scale and mitigated the humanitarian crisis but will be difficult to sustain in the context of expected aid declines, restrictive ITA policy positions, and a depressed economy.** While economic conditions stabilized after the sharp reduction in international aid following the events of August 2021, employment opportunities and incomes remain inadequate amid depressed demand, disruptions to public services, and a nonfunctional banking sector, with little buffer for natural disasters, returnee and refugee flows or other crises. Conditions for Afghans, and prospects for broader international support, have been worsened by the policy positions of the ITA, including harsh restrictions on women and girls. These challenges have been further exacerbated by the promulgation of the ‘Morality Law,’ which has further aggravated an already difficult situation. Currently, an estimated 12.4 million people are acutely food-insecure while around two and a half million Afghans are on the brink of starvation. This makes continued coordination of aid across the humanitarian-development nexus, with a sharp focus on cost-effectiveness and sustaining services and livelihoods, critical.

#### Sectoral and Institutional Context

**3. Despite strides achieved over the past twenty years, the overall situation in the education sector in Afghanistan remains dire.** Even before 2021, Afghanistan was one of the most inequitable countries in the world in terms of education access, coupled with deep access and quality challenges. Yet today these challenges are further exacerbated. At the primary level, almost half of boys and over half of girls remain out of school.<sup>1</sup> System-wide bans on female secondary and higher education enrollment persist, with girls excluded from attending secondary and higher education altogether and only one in three boys attending secondary school. Boys are at high risk of dropping out at both primary and secondary levels due to the economic crisis. Besides access challenges, Learning Poverty is also the highest in South Asia and one of the highest in the world, with 93 percent of ten-year-olds unable to read and comprehend an age-appropriate text (as measured before COVID-19), and only 13 percent of students achieve minimum proficiency levels at the end of primary school.<sup>2</sup> Interactions and dialogue with the ITA Ministry of Education (MoE) remain limited and focused on addressing key technical aspects impacting project implementation. Aid continues to be guided by a principled humanitarian approach of off-budget support.

**4. Current and historical pressing needs in the education sector include a lack of facilities to provide learning-conducive environments with basic minimum infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, as well as teaching quality.** Half of all schools in Afghanistan lack buildings, while numerous others lack basic facilities like classrooms, boundary walls, water, and toilets - with girls being the most affected. The majority of schools are not connected to the grid or otherwise don’t have access to electricity. Half the student population is taught under tents or in the open air, severely hampering student learning when inclement weather conditions prevent attendance.<sup>3</sup> Students and teachers in classrooms lack textbooks and teaching and learning materials. Less than half of teachers meet minimum qualification standards, while teacher practices are severely

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<sup>1</sup> MICS 2022-2023

<sup>2</sup> World Bank Group; UNESCO. *Afghanistan - Learning Poverty Brief - 2022 (English)*. Learning Poverty Brief Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF School Census 2022



lacking in dimensions of subject knowledge, effective instruction and cultivating socio-emotional skills needed for improving student learning outcomes.<sup>4</sup> ITA MoE spends the majority of operating funds on salaries, leaving little room for investments in teacher professional development. The last national learning assessment was conducted in 2013 with donor support. Due to a lack of systematic assessments at the national level, there is little use of information on student outcomes or teacher performance in teacher training programs, as well as in sector management and decision-making.

**5. Despite these increasing challenges and needs, bans introduced by the ITA in December 2022 have resulted in reduced donor funding and a subsequent scale-down of humanitarian support.** The Humanitarian Response Plan’s education component was 47 percent funded from January to November 2023, but the funding dropped to only 8.6 percent in 2024. Increased poverty, loss of livelihoods, food insecurity, and malnutrition have increased demand-side barriers for children to access education services and to be ready to learn or remain in school once they make it into the classroom. This can negatively impact children’s ability to learn, play, stay awake while in school and increase the risk of dropping out. Due to funding shortfalls, very few humanitarian programs address these barriers through school nutrition or cash assistance. In addition, the sector lacks the funding required to provide minimum basic teaching and learning materials and textbooks to primary or secondary students.

### C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

#### Original Development Objective

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to support access to learning opportunities for girls and boys and improve learning conditions in project-supported schools.

#### Current Development Objective

The PDO is to support access to learning opportunities for girls and boys and improve learning conditions in project-supported schools.

#### Proposed New Development Objective

The PDO remains unchanged: to support access to learning opportunities for girls and boys and improve learning conditions in project-supported schools.

### D. Project Description

**6. An Additional Financing (AF) to the Education Emergency Response in Afghanistan Project (EERA, P178758) is proposed in the amount of US\$125 million, with an estimated financing gap of US\$50 million:** US\$25 million will be financed from the ARTF and US\$50 million equivalent from IDA. A US\$50 million financing gap is expected to be covered by a Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Multiplier Grant or other sources of funding (expected in FY25).

**7. This AF serves as an opportunity to continue and scale up parent project activities,** introduce a focus on the quality of education service delivery and pathways to sustainability, adjust component costs and the results framework accordingly, close a parent project funding gap due to exchange rate fluctuations, and extend the closing date of the project to complete scaled-up or newly added activities. The AF will also contribute to closing a sector financing gap due to shrinking donor funding in a sector heavily reliant on external financing for investments beyond payroll.

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<sup>4</sup> Trako, Iva, Ezequiel Molina, Anahita Hosseini Matin, Eema Masood, and Mariana Viollaz. 2018. The Learning Crisis in Afghanistan: Results of the SABER Service Delivery Survey 2017. Washington, DC: World Bank.



8. **A well-established collaboration between the UN, the ADB, and the WBG ensures strategic and operational synergies and the deployment of harmonized funding flows.** This collaboration is well aligned with the organizations' respective mandates and comparative advantages. Moreover, the WBG has been coordinating efforts with the Education Strategic Thematic Working Group (Ed-STWG), which the WBG co-chairs along with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This partners' platform also ensures that complementarities are pursued, as exemplified by the ongoing dialogue supporting the proposed AF. Project interventions will complement ongoing and planned engagements by the ADB, GPE, EU and other donors.

9. **The AF will maintain the two Entry Criteria for Access (ECAs) on Equitable Access and Curriculum, ensuring equal opportunities in primary education and a general education curriculum focusing on core subjects.** Compliance with ECAs is regularly and closely monitored by UNICEF and ARTF Monitoring Agent (MA) at the sectoral and school levels and reported to the Bank.

### Components

10. **Component 1: Support Access to Learning Opportunities.** The scope of the component is adjusted to (i) continue supporting the current Community-based Education (CBE) cohort and (ii) add new activities to support the transition of CBE students to public hub schools.

11. **Sub-component 1.1: Supporting Community-based Education.** The sub-component will continue supporting the current cohort of CBE students through the completion of the three-year CBE cycle. While the parent project established 5,000 new CBE classes across 25 provinces, resources were only sufficient to finance the first of three academic years of the CBE cycle. To complete the remaining two years, the AF will continue supporting the existing cohort of students (about 162 thousand students, 67 percent girls) for the remaining two academic years. No new CBE classes or cohorts will be supported. Existing implementation arrangements will be retained.

12. **Strengthening linkages between CBE students and primary level schools will be supported through enhancing the capacity of primary hub schools.**<sup>5</sup> This will include training primary hub school principals and community-led School Management Shuras to update CBE-to-hub-school student transition plans. The project will also support a needs assessment in hub schools to identify gaps to support greater absorption of additional students, particularly girls, including rehabilitation needs. Sustainability of CBEs will be guided by a national learning continuity strategy for CBE learners envisaging a phased and managed approach to CBE schools' integration into the public sector.

13. **Sub-component 1.2:** The sub-component title "Innovative Block Grants to promote Inclusion" is renamed to "**Youth Literacy and Skills**". Activities under the parent project for this sub-component, which piloted small-scale interventions, are now completed. Moving forward, this sub-component will support new livelihood skills development and job linkage programs for adolescent youth. The programs (financed through sub-grants) will provide literacy, numeracy, skills, and entrepreneurship support. This sub-component will also expand support to the currently ongoing multi-modal distance learning initiative (financed through sub-grants).

14. **Component 2: Improving Learning Conditions in Project-supported Schools.** The scope of the component is adjusted to (i) continue the provision of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) across all public schools nationwide; (ii) scale up the provision of climate-and-gender-focused facilities and High-Performance Tents (HPTs) to hub schools; and (iii) introduce new activities on teacher professional development and learning assessment to add a dimension of quality for improved learning conditions. Moreover, targeted support will facilitate returnee children's access to project-supported interventions.

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<sup>5</sup> A hub school is a public school serving multiple villages because many communities lack schools. CBE classes are an extension of hub schools and are registered with them. The expectation is that students will continue their studies in the hub school from grade 4.



15. **Sub-component 2.1: Gender-focused Rehabilitation of Schools and Provision of High-Performance Tents.** This sub-component will scale up parent project interventions by supporting an additional 400 existing hub schools linked to CBE classes through the provision of rehabilitation packages (including WASH facilities, boundary walls, solar energy, classrooms, and HPTs to serve as learning spaces). The rehabilitation will aim to create conducive environments for girls. The rehabilitated facilities will be accessible to students with disabilities. A special focus will be placed on supporting CBE students' transition to hub schools, returnee children enrollment, and other emergency responses as needed.

16. **Sub-component 2.2: Distribution of Basic Teaching and Learning Materials.** This sub-component will be scaled up to continue supporting the delivery of TLMs across public primary schools nationwide, albeit at a reduced scale due to funding limitations. TLMs will be delivered across public primary schools nationwide. The TLMs will include student, teacher, and school packages and include stationary, bags, classroom posters, teaching charts, supplies for math and science lessons, and mini-libraries for classrooms. It will exclude textbooks until additional funds are available.

17. **Sub-component 2.3: In-service Teacher Professional Development (TPD).** This new sub-component aims to enhance primary school teachers' pedagogical competencies and subject matter knowledge through in-service professional development. The training will be based on an existing TPD package in complementarity with financing from donors including Korea, Japan, the EU, and GPE to expand geographical coverage, scope, and impact. The program will initially support 5,500 teachers in primary Grades (1-6) in primary hub schools linked to CBE classes. Selected schools will include hub schools targeted under sub-components 1.1 and 2.1 to support the transition of CBE students. A modular training program will be delivered to improve teachers' skills and knowledge in core subjects and enhance foundational literacy instruction. The training will leverage existing teacher training materials and resources to maximize the return on past investments from various donors.<sup>6</sup> No salary or remuneration payments to public school teachers, headmasters, or teacher educators will be financed. To implement the TPD activities, the AF will defray daily subsistence expenses (per diems) of teacher trainers and teachers during teacher training days.

18. **Sub-component 2.4: Learning Assessments in CBEs:** With support from a GPE grant under implementation and in collaboration with UNESCO as a technical partner, UNICEF is currently preparing to conduct a National Learning Assessment for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in public primary schools. The AF will expand this assessment coverage to additional public primary schools as needed and include CBE classes (for students having completed 3 years of education through the CBE program).

19. **Component 3: Strengthening Monitoring and Ensuring Accountability.** The objective remains to ensure that representative, accurate, and timely data is available to assess and improve project performance.

20. **Sub-component 3.1: Monitoring project activities and conducting sectoral surveys.** The AF will continue supporting improvement in the quality of school-level data collection to feed into the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and strengthen the out-of-date EMIS systems to increase resilience and accuracy of sector-level data collection and use. The AF will support another round of EMIS data collection. Continuing the collaboration between the Bank and UNICEF on MICS, the AF will support the scheduled MICS+, a phone-based survey built upon the MICS framework. It will further explore conducting sectoral surveys and improving the geotagged mapping of school facilities in Afghanistan in collaboration with the Social Protection and Jobs team. Furthermore, the sub-component will finance project monitoring and evaluation of the teacher training activities.

21. **Sub-component 3.2: Project Implementation and Coordination.** This subcomponent will cover project implementation and coordination costs related to UNICEF.

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<sup>6</sup> Including IN-SET Courses, Afghan Children Reach materials, Social and Emotional Learning materials, and the WBG TEACH and COACH tools.



22. **Extension of Project closing date.** The proposed AF will extend the Project closing date from March 31, 2025, to December 31, 2026, to enable the project to sustain and scale existing activities and allow for the implementation of new activities.

Legal Operational Policies

Policies	Triggered?
	Current
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Area OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The environmental risks of the project will remain “Moderate” under the AF. Components 1 and 3 are not likely to cause any significant or adverse environmental impacts. The project’s key environmental risks and impacts are related to minor civil works under Component 2. The potential environmental risks include (a) issues relating to on-site storage of construction material; (b) storage and disposal of construction waste; (c) generation of noise and dust during construction; and (d) storage and disposal of wastewater related to WASH facilities. As the works are minor and confined within the existing footprint, they are not likely to generate significant adverse environmental impacts. The potential impacts are predictable, and expected to be temporary, reversible, low in magnitude, site-specific (limited to the immediate surroundings), and can be managed through the implementation of the standard and readily available mitigation measures. The eligible schools will receive the rehabilitation packages (including gender disaggregated WASH facilities, boundary walls, solar energy, classrooms, and HPTs) which would make positive environmental health and safety impacts on teachers, students, support staff, and visitors, and encourage girls' enrolment. The social risks are considered “Substantial”. The key social risks include (a) possible tension and conflicts among beneficiary communities and districts; (b) lack of transparency in implementing Component 2 (CBE); (c) increased exposure to Covid 19 virus to children, teachers, and communities due to lack of masks, social distancing, low vaccine coverage for teachers and students; (d) high SEA/SH risks in schools, education classes and centers; (e) safety risks to building users (students, teachers, visitors, and other support staff) during execution of construction works; (f) occupational health and safety risks to workers during construction; (g) minor labor influx affecting security and mobility of girls and women within the school and larger community; (h) low capacity of NGOs and contractors to manage E&S risks following ESF and (i) exclusion and discrimination of potential beneficiaries. The possible occurrence of conflict (including armed conflict) and/or terrorist attacks on schools/project workers is also an important contextual risk that may affect the safety of the project actors. Furthermore, the project initiative to provide the tents for learning spaces could result in additional life and fire risks. Overall, the project activities are expected to have significant positive social impacts on the education sector in Afghanistan as they will safeguard education achievements obtained over the past 20 years and contribute to future nation-building efforts. This project will also ensure that learning continues in a safe and secure environment for all children.

E. Implementation



### Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

**23. Implementation arrangements as set out in the parent project remain the same.** UNICEF will remain responsible for implementing, overseeing, and coordinating all project components, including procurement, fund utilization, financial management, and compliance with safeguard requirements. UNICEF’s capacity will be strengthened with additional dedicated project staff. UNICEF will sub-contract relevant IPs for the execution of some activities, including teacher training and learning assessments. Both UNICEF and ARTF Third Party Monitoring Agencies will monitor program activities in coordination with the WBG task team. To ensure effective coordination among donors and provide overall project guidance, the EERA Coordination Committee will remain in place. Collaboration with development partners and technical interactions with the ITA MoE will be crucial, especially with regard to the transition of CBE students and teacher training. This will be done in line with the Approach 3.0 paper and consistent with principled approach to aid engagement. There will be no flow of funds to the ITA or through their systems. The WBG will engage with the ITA in line with its mandate and in accordance with its policies and procedures.

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**APPROVAL**

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