



1. Project Data

Project ID
P174059

Project Name
Kenya GPE COVID 19 LCBEP

Country
Kenya

Practice Area(Lead)
Education

L/C/TF Number(s)
TF-B3336

Closing Date (Original)
31-Dec-2021

Total Project Cost (USD)
10,799,997.49

Bank Approval Date
13-Jul-2020

Closing Date (Actual)
31-Dec-2021

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	10,800,000.00	10,800,000.00
Revised Commitment	10,800,000.00	10,800,000.00
Actual	10,799,997.49	10,799,997.49

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2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

According to the Project Appraisal Document (PAD, page 12) and the Grant Agreement (page 5), the project objectives were as follows:



- **To enhance access to online and distance learning for all students in primary and secondary schools and facilitate a smooth transition in the return to school for targeted vulnerable students.**

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?
No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?
No

d. Components

Component 1: Expanding existing remote learning opportunities for learning continuity for all students in basic education (Appraisal: US\$ 6.25 million; Actual: US\$ 6.25 million): This component aimed to develop solutions that maximized Kenya's existing remote learning resources. Activities included: development of interactive online learning mechanisms and programming for radio, television, digital cloud, and mobile phone platforms (including adaptation for learners with special needs); expansion of radio coverage in all regions of the country; acquisition of supplementary online materials for the Kenya Education Cloud; capacity building for teachers in online and distance learning methodologies; dissemination of simple tips for parents to support home learning; and a monitoring and evaluation system.

Component 2: Facilitate smooth transition back to school for vulnerable students and girls (Appraisal: US\$ 3.0 million; Actual: US\$ 3.0 million): This component aimed to support the eventual transition back to school, following the temporary school closing. Activities included: a top-up grant for the National School Meals Program particularly in informal settlements and arid/semi-arid lands (ASAL); and provision of online psycho-social support services.

Component 3: Project Coordination, Communication, and Monitoring and Evaluation (Appraisal: US\$ 1.55 million; Actual: US\$ 1.55 million): This component aimed to support project implementation and monitoring activities.

e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates
Project cost

- The project cost at appraisal and the actual project cost at completion was US\$ 10.8 million.

Financing

- The project was financed entirely by a Global Partnership for Education (GPE) grant of US\$ 10.8 million, which disbursed in its entirety. The grant was allocated from the GPE COVID-19 accelerated funding window designated to support governments in their efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on their education systems and to help recovery.

Borrower contribution



- There was no planned Borrower contribution.

Dates

- *December 2021*: The project closed as planned.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

In March 2020, in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Kenya announced the closure of the country's 30,000 primary and secondary schools. Approximately 14 million learners had their studies interrupted, and 310,000 teachers needed to adjust their instructional methods. Thus, online and remote learning options were necessary to counter the effects of the school closings, including learning loss, increased dropouts, and higher inequality. The economic impact from the closures was also likely to depress education demand and supply, thereby incurring long-run costs on human capital. Although Kenya's education results at that time were relatively high in terms of Human Capital Index measurements (i.e. expected years of schooling), learning outcomes were overall low, with regional inequalities. The Ministry of Education (MOE) and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) had been making efforts to develop the existing remote learning system (online and distance learning) to ensure that students remained engaged during the extended school closure. These included educational programming disseminated through radio, Education Television channel, Education Television YouTube channel, and the Kenya Education Cloud. Aside from adequate content, additional challenges include limited capacity of teachers regarding remote learning methodologies, limited access of learners and families in rural areas and informal settlements to technology, high dependency on "traditional" classroom teaching and learning methods, inequities between the private and public school systems regarding remote learning systems, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

The project objectives were highly relevant to the MOE's COVID-19 response and recovery plan, which included objectives to provide access to quality, equitable, and inclusive education; facilitate production of learning materials; train teachers; target vulnerable populations; and provide psychosocial support. They were also aligned with the previous 2018-2022 National Education Sector Strategy Plan, which had been developed to guide the government's investment policies on access and equity, particularly related to regional disparities in access, and the current 2022-2026 plan, which also aims to enhance access and equity in education, training, and research. The Bank's Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for FY 14-18 (extended to FY20), in place at the time of project appraisal, identified human resource development as a primary domain of engagement, although there were no specific outcomes for education in the results framework. The new CPF for FY22-27 was being prepared at the time of ICR Review preparation and will include reduced disparities in learning outcomes as part of the second CPF outcome of "inclusion and equality institutionalized" (as reported by the project team). As noted in the PAD (page 12), the project was not conceived as only an emergency short-term response; instead, in line with MOE's COVID-19 plan, it also included a medium-term set of interventions to protect the education system and to build additional resilience for future crises.



Rating

High

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

OBJECTIVE 1

Objective

To enhance access to online and distance learning for all students in primary and secondary schools

Rationale

The theory of change was clear. As articulated in the ICR (page 8), the aim of this objective was to support continuity of learning by expanding the existing remote learning system for all students, building capacity of teachers in remote learning methodologies, and developing a monitoring and evaluation system for the remote learning system. This would be achieved through outputs including working with existing media channels to increase coverage of online and distance learning, acquire and develop online learning content (particularly in core subject areas), develop a digital media facility, and provide training for teachers in remote learning methodologies.

Outputs

- 4,900 interactive online lessons were made available for use by students in grades 1-12 (target: 3,665). Production of the interactive online lessons was financed by both the project and the government. In addition, the KICD partnered with Kenya's main internet provider, Safaricom, to provide free bundles to some learners who could not afford to pay. The digital content included lessons for visually and hearing impaired learners in grade 1 and 2 in the areas of hygiene and nutrition, creative studies, and environmental activities.
- Six broadcast hours per day were provided by media partners for core subject areas (original target: 8; revised target: 6). According to the ICR (page 12), the target was revised downward when schools re-opened in January 2021 and broadcast hours were adjusted accordingly. The broadcast hours did reach eight hours on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation during the school closures period. Radio broadcasts were used to reach refugee children and disadvantaged learners.
- 53 new online supplementary materials were acquired from external partners (target: 20). 56.6 percent of the materials were adapted to learners with special needs in grades 1 and 2.
- Teachers received training and instructional manuals on remote learning methodologies. 163,938 teachers were trained in using remote learning methodologies, surpassing the target of 150,000 teachers. Of these, 95,266 teachers were female. In addition, 650 curriculum support officers and 230 senior education officers based at the county and sub-county levels also received training to facilitate school-based teacher support in the integration of online resources into classroom instruction.
- An integrated M&E system was developed to monitor remote learning interventions, which included five areas: (i) a readiness and decision support tool for remote learning interventions; (ii) upgrading of e-cloud to monitor the level of access to online resources; (iii) a user satisfaction survey conducted in



February and August/September 2021; (iv) tips to support parents and caregivers in remote learning approaches; and (v) establishment of a multiagency technical working team composed of officers from relevant government agencies mandated to promote child protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights.

Outcomes

- The percentage of students supported with remote learning interventions increased from 47 percent in April 2020 to 54 percent in December 2021, falling short of the target of 60 percent. IEG noted that this indicator measured the number of users who accessed online content at any point during the project period, but not other aspects of usage such as frequency or duration, and also that the percentage of female students supported did not change from the baseline of 23 percent (target: 30 percent). According to the ICR (page 14), the shortfall was due to schools reopening for face-to-face learning in January 2021. However, the target was not formally revised due to the uncertainty of the COVID situation, including whether schools would need to be closed again or, if/when reopened, how service delivery would actually be achieved. The ICR also noted that outputs were still being utilized by MOE and teachers to augment face-to-face lessons, particularly for learners who have experienced learning loss and need to catch up, and to support schools that are under-staffed so that learners can have access to the needed lesson material, especially in the ASAL and rural schools.

Achievement is rated Substantial due to the increased availability of online and remote learning, although the target was missed due to the reopening of schools partway through the project period.

Rating

Substantial

OBJECTIVE 2

Objective

To facilitate a smooth transition in the return to school for targeted vulnerable students

Rationale

The theory of change for this objective was clear. As articulated in the ICR (page 8), the aim of this objective was to prepare for and facilitate the transition of the most vulnerable students and girls back to school. In order to achieve this outcome, project outputs included financial support for the school meals program, an online psycho-social support service, a learning assessment to inform actions for lagging students, and monitoring of school attendance.

Outputs



- School meals were provided to 3,475 schools from ASAL counties, urban slums, and special needs education schools.
- Operational manuals and training regarding psycho-social support were developed for parents/guardians, teachers, field-based education officials, and head teachers. A consortium of counselling institutions worked closely with MOE and the teachers' commission to assess different levels of trauma among teachers and learners from the COVID-19 pandemic to establish a baseline for the psychosocial interventions, which informed development of the counselling manuals and provision of psychosocial support services through a hybrid approach, online and face-to face. 2,990 guidance and counseling teachers received training at the school level.
- The National Assessment Centre conducted "re-entry" learning assessments for learners in primary school who re-enrolled in grades 1 to 8. Schools received school-specific analysis reports on the re-entry assessments to inform remedial learning.

Outcomes

- 1,841,555 students were provided access to school meals for at least 151 learning days in a year. This surpassed the target of 1,750,000 students. Of these, 947,216 students were female. The end of project evaluation reported that 76.4 percent of head teachers said the program enabled learners to return to school and helped improve attendance, reduce pupils' absenteeism, and reduce the number of children dropping out of school.
- 13,842,811 previously enrolled students (at preschool, primary, and secondary levels) returned once the school system reopened, representing 98.9 percent of the student population. This nearly achieved the target of 14,000,000 students, or 100 percent. Of these, 49 percent were female. The MOE subsequently organized a multi-agency team to visit the lagging counties to determine the underlying causes for low enrollments, targeting about fifteen counties where the number of out-of-school children was reported to be highest.
- 157,656 students were provided with access to psycho-social support services. This surpassed the target of 100,000 students. Of these, 78,467 students were female.
- 8,233,334 students were assessed to evaluate learning loss during school closure. This fell short of the target of 8,930,000 students. According to the ICR (page 17), the shortfall was due to the fact that the re-entry assessment had to be conducted immediately when schools re-opened to get a "true" baseline, but some students returned to school after the school reopening dates and were not assessed.

Also of note, MOE determined from school-level visits that many girls were not returning to school because of teen pregnancy. Therefore, the follow-up Bank operation, Primary Education Equity in Learning project (P176867), will include a strong focus on girls and require the inclusion of gender targets in the national school improvement plans and remedial actions to prevent dropouts. Analytical work on gender concerns and priorities in Kenya, including girls' education, will also be supported as part of upcoming gender diagnostic analytical work.



Achievement of this objective is rated Substantial due to evidence of access to transition services for vulnerable students.

Rating
Substantial

OVERALL EFFICACY

Rationale

Overall Efficacy is rated Substantial, as both the first objective to enhance access to online learning and the second objective to facilitate a smooth transition back to school were achieved.

Overall Efficacy Rating

Substantial

5. Efficiency

The efficiency analysis at appraisal (PAD, Annex 3) compared the costs and benefits of the project with similar scenarios from other countries' experience with the Ebola outbreak, specifically the ways that increased preparedness and mitigation measures can reduce expected education losses. Benefits were calculated according to private returns to education, where one additional year of education represents on average a 12.4 percent increase in expected income. The expected positive outcomes are higher retention rates due to the project interventions. Costs are the total cost of the project. The analysis assumed that, in the absence of the project, a share of students currently enrolled in either primary or secondary education would drop out. The costs and benefits were compared to the case where project activities resulted in no additional dropouts, without changes in the current completion and transition rates. The PAD estimated the project's impact as the absence of dropouts in primary and secondary schools due to the COVID-19 school closures, compared to three counterfactuals where the pandemic would have caused the permanent dropping out of respectively 10, 20, and 30 percent of children from the two lowest income quintiles. In its middle-case scenario of avoiding a 20 percent dropout rate from the 40 percent lowest-income schools in the country, the estimated net present value (NPV) was US\$ 212 million with an internal rate of return (IRR) of 7.7 percent.

The efficiency analysis in the ICR (Annex 4) updated the cost benefit calculation using the actual number of project beneficiaries, though using a slightly different methodology. The analysis calculated that access to remote learning opportunities was provided to 804,988 children in public primary and secondary education. In turn, this is assumed to have increased their expected years of schooling by one year. Therefore, the activities for Component 1 were calculated to result in an NPV of US\$169 million, with an IRR of 17.2 percent.

Other indications of the efficient use of project resources include: quick preparation given the pandemic context, targeting of areas of highest need (greatest potential impact), and leveraging of existing platforms and materials



to a significant degree. Project activities were completed as planned (with 100 percent of funds disbursed) within the original project period. Some activities were delayed, such as the establishment of new partnerships with privately owned, community, and faith-based radio and television broadcasters, adaptation of the online-based lessons for learners with special needs, and creation of new content, due to capacity constraints. These initial challenges were resolved with the support of the Bank’s EdTech Unit, and project activities were completed as planned.

Efficiency Rating

Substantial

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR) and/or Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation:

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal	✓	7.70	100.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
ICR Estimate	✓	17.20	58.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome

Relevance is rated High due to strong alignment with country conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as education sector and Bank strategies. Efficacy is rated Substantial, as both the first objective to enhance access to online learning and the second objective to facilitate a smooth transition back to school were achieved. Efficiency is rated Substantial due to a favorable cost-benefit ratio and indications of efficient use of project resources. These rating indicate that there were only minor shortcomings in the project's preparation, implementation, and achievement, producing an overall outcome rating of Satisfactory.

a. Outcome Rating

Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

The project was mainstreamed into the institutional structure of MOE, with a view to building resilience in the education system for potential future shocks. The overarching risk of COVID-19 continues to exist, but the online learning infrastructure and capacity to develop online content and utilize the system has been strengthened.



8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

The project objectives were well aligned with education strategy and COVID response plans. The project design drew upon good practices identified by education professionals and policy makers in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, with regards to effective remote learning. These good practices included leveraging existing assets and infrastructure to minimize costs and mobilize quickly, exploring which mediums can be most quickly, cheaply, and effectively harnessed, ensuring teachers play a role in supporting learning, and supporting parents to implement home-based learning. The project design therefore built upon existing structures and systems within the country (such as the Digital Literacy Program, government-run EDU TV channel, radio broadcasts, and the digital cloud), while addressing the need to train teachers and ensure access to education technologies and internet connectivity that were varied across the country. As noted in the ICR (pages 21-22), the project was not viewed only as an emergency short-term response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also as a set of interventions to protect the education system and to build resilience for future shocks.

The results framework and M&E arrangements were sound, with clear measurement indicators for all aspects of the project objectives. Key risks included macroeconomic uncertainty, the technical and operating requirements for the outputs, and low implementation and fiduciary capacity. Mitigation measures centered on the provision of technical support.

Quality-at-Entry Rating Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

Virtual supervision missions were frequent and appropriately staffed with fiduciary and technical specialists. Early in implementation, the project coordinating unit experienced challenges developing the remote learning program, particularly strengthening of the online remote learning platforms and delivery mechanisms. The Bank provided technical assistance through its EdTechHub team, which dedicated three experts to support the remote learning activities. Fiduciary and safeguards aspects of the project were regularly monitored.

The ICR (page 12) reported that at the time of the May 2021 mid-term review, there was a wave of COVID-19 infections within the country, and therefore there was no formal restructuring of key outcome targets (namely the percentage of students with access to remote learning) because of the uncertainty and fluidity of the situation. Instead, the Bank team made minor adjustments to the targets for the intermediate indicators in the operations portal instead of processing a project restructuring.



Quality of Supervision Rating

Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

The M&E design was clear and straightforward. Indicators were measurable and relevant, with baseline and target figures identified, although the key outcome indicator of the percentage of students "supported with" remote learning interventions was somewhat vague. The project team clarified that this indicator measured the number of students who accessed online, television, or radio content at any point in time during the project period, but did not measure other aspects of usage such as frequency or duration of the usage, which would have strengthened attribution to mitigating learning losses. In addition, the target (60 percent) was not set higher because only about 50 percent of learners from poor households had access to electricity and affordable internet, and only about 70 percent of all households had access to a radio. The project design included the key activity of developing a monitoring system for remote learning opportunities, as this did not exist previously. The design also included beneficiary surveys to assess the extent to which the project was meeting the needs of children.

As noted previously, at the time of the May 2021 mid-term review, there was a wave of COVID-19 infections within the country. Although schools had reopened in January 2021, thereby affecting the likelihood of achieving the key outcome target (percentage of students with access to remote learning), the target was not formally revised because of the uncertainty and fluidity of the situation. Instead, the Bank team made minor adjustments to the targets for the intermediate indicators in the operations portal. These included: number of daily broadcast hours for interactive online lessons for core subjects, reduced from 8 hours per day to 6 hours per day (when schools re-opened in January 2021 for all grades, the government adjusted the broadcast hours for online lessons from 8 hours to 6 hours), and number of students provided access to psycho-social support services (data disaggregated by gender, grades, and sub-county) (number). The original definition of the latter measured the number of students accessing online-based psychosocial support services/guidance and counselling services from the service provider. Given that schools had reopened in January 2021, and that some regions still had poor access to internet and electricity, the definition for the indicator was expanded to include students accessing online and face-to-face psycho-social support services/guidance and counselling services.

b. M&E Implementation

The performance indicators were tracked and reported regularly. The evaluative activities to monitor level of access to online resources, to assess user satisfaction through a survey (February and August/September 2021), and to assess learning loss were all implemented as planned.



c. M&E Utilization

According to the ICR (page 24), data were made available regularly to update the results framework and inform supervision. The results of the beneficiary survey were used to improve the interactive online resources, and the learning assessments were used to develop remedial programs for students to catch up on learning.

M&E Quality Rating

Substantial

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project's environmental and social risk rating was Moderate. It was rated Environmental Assessment category "B" and triggered OP/BP 4.01 (Environmental Assessment) because of the purchase of information technology equipment (tablets and smartphones) and related issues with e-waste disposal, and OP/BP 4.10 (Indigenous Peoples) because of coverage of ASAL areas where vulnerable and marginalized communities exist. An Environmental and Social Commitment Plan and Stakeholder Engagement Plan were prepared during appraisal, with remaining safeguards documents and processes prepared before the launch of project activities. No physical or civil works were planned except for possible small-scale interior works, and therefore overall environmental impacts were expected to be limited. Social impacts were mostly positive due to the expansion of learning opportunities for girls and vulnerable groups.

According to the ICR (page 25), safeguards were monitored consistently during project implementation, with safeguards performance rated in the satisfactory range throughout the project period.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial management: Due to the short implementation period, the National Treasury granted Authority to Incur Expenditures for the entire grant to be used in one financial year, because a lack of budget could have jeopardized implementation. According to the ICR (page 25), financial management performance was rated in the satisfactory range throughout the project period, with unaudited interim financial reports submitted of acceptable quality. Audit reports were unqualified. The Bank's fiduciary staff provided capacity development workshops for the project coordination unit on record keeping and reporting.

Procurement: The Bank team conducted regular procurement performance assessment missions, with ratings in the satisfactory range throughout the project period. Bank fiduciary staff provided training to the project coordination unit to ensure compliance with the procurement guidelines.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)



None reported.

d. Other

11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Bank Performance	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
Quality of M&E	Substantial	Substantial	
Quality of ICR	---	Substantial	

12. Lessons

Lessons drawn from the ICR (pages 27-28), adapted by IEG:

- **Crisis situations may reverse previous education gains, but the inclusion of "re-entry" measures in the emergency response can facilitate the return to "normal" conditions.** In the case of this project, these interventions included re-entry assessments for students immediately upon returning to school (so that teachers could determine needed remedial activities for their students), outreach initiatives to mobilize communities and parents to re-enroll out-of-school children, and provision of school meals programs in targeted poor communities (to provide incentive to return to school).
- **A strong M&E system can provide the necessary real-time feedback on efficacy of interventions and allow for quick adjustments during implementation, which can be crucial in unpredictable crisis situations.** In the case of this project, the establishment of a robust M&E system, including developing a new system to monitor remote learning, provided timely information on levels of access to remote learning, the mediums that were being utilized, and user satisfaction with online content.

Also,

- **Even in an emergency situation, the response to the crisis embedded in the broader system can provide both emergency and longer-term solutions.** In the case of this project, the MOE was able to lay a strong foundation for remote/distance learning that addressed immediate needs (by drawing upon existing content and platforms), continued to be utilized for remedial purposes once schools opened, and will remain functional for potential future crises.



13. Assessment Recommended?

No

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

The quality of the evidence was strong, relying on the M&E system that was developed as a key part of project activities. The ICR was internally consistent and concise. The discussion of achievement of the key outcome indicator (students supported by remote online learning) could have been more candid in noting the magnitude of the shortcoming (baseline: 47%, target: 60%; actual: 54%); furthermore, while an adequate explanation for the shortcoming is provided, it could have been even more informative if any demand-side challenges were identified (i.e. explanation for why female students' access to remote learning did not change over the project period). Lessons were informative, particularly for embedding an emergency response in the broader system to ensure sustainability and usefulness beyond the emergency situation.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

Substantial