



Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 25-Oct-2020 | Report No: PIDC29846

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Country Guyana	Project ID P174244	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Guyana Education Sector Program Project (P174244)
Region LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	Estimated Appraisal Date Dec 04, 2020	Estimated Board Date Apr 15, 2021	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Co-operative Republic of Guyana	Implementing Agency Ministry of Education	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The objective of the Project is to: (i) improve learning conditions at the Nursery level in select areas; (ii) increase use of technology-assisted learning at the Primary level in select areas, and (iii) improve functionality of the education management system nationally.

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**SUMMARY**

Total Project Cost	7.00
Total Financing	7.00
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS**Non-World Bank Group Financing**

Trust Funds	7.00
Education for All - Fast Track Initiative	7.00

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Concept Review Decision



Moderate

Track I-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. The Co-operative Republic of Guyana is a small, sparsely populated country with abundant natural resources in South America. Guyana has fertile agricultural lands, bauxite, gold and extensive tropical forests that cover 80 percent of the country; and recently discovered large offshore oil and gas (O&G) reserves. Guyana is an ethnically diverse society, encompassing Indo-Guyanese, Afro-Guyanese, Mixed-Guyanese, indigenous Amerindian and others. Guyana has a low population density, with 90 percent of its 779,004 inhabitants living on the narrow coastal plain, which represents 10 percent of the country's area.

2. Despite natural resources, Guyana had the second lowest gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in South America at US\$4,979 in 2018, and a relatively high level of poverty at 43.4 percent compared to other countries in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region. Resource-based development has created a limited number of jobs and has contributed to low levels of development outcomes and high emigration rates, with 39 percent of all Guyanese citizens currently residing abroad and roughly half of all Guyanese with a tertiary education having emigrated to the United States. With an economy that is heavily dependent upon natural resources, agriculture, and remittances, Guyana is vulnerable to adverse weather conditions, commodity price fluctuations, and economic conditions in migrant destination countries. Economic diversification beyond natural resources and agriculture remain a challenge. Sugar, gold, bauxite, shrimp, timber, and rice represented over 80 percent of the country's exports in 2014. Remittances were equivalent to approximately 11 percent of GDP, mainly sent from the diaspora communities in the United States and Canada. Despite overall declining poverty trends, poverty remains entrenched amongst geographic and ethnic lines. Poverty rates are highest in the sparsely populated interior, in particular in Amerindian populations, where communities have limited access to economic opportunities, healthcare and public services.

3. Due to the recent oil discovery, Guyana stands at the threshold of a new era. The discovery of vast offshore O&G reserves and production is poised to fundamentally transform the structure of the Guyanese economy while generating an influx of fiscal revenue. The rise of the O&G sector poses unprecedented macro-fiscal management challenges while offering new opportunities to address longstanding development constraints. However, for high-income status to reflect meaningful gains in general wellbeing, Guyana must improve its human capital development and health indicators, as well as reduce poverty levels while maintaining macroeconomic stability and environmental sustainability.

4. A highly educated and skilled workforce is a prerequisite to continued diversification of the economy and harnessing of the country's resources in a way that supports sustained growth. The priority in the education sector is to raise learning outcomes to prepare students for obtaining knowledge and skills needed for the labor market. Equipping all school graduates with universal basic skills would also help reduce coastal/hinterland and ethnic income disparities by promoting inclusive growth through increased participation of the poor in the labor market. In addition, inclusive growth, made possible through universal achievement of basic skills, has the potential to help address issues of poverty.



5. **Guyana recently concluded its National elections.** The national elections were held on March 2, 2020 and a new Government took charge in August 2020. The new Government has expressed continued commitment to working with the Bank, including in education.

6. **The outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on January 30, 2020, and, like most other countries, the virus has spread to Guyana.** The crisis is stretching the public health systems and threatening the economy. In line with the international best practice, the Government enacted several mitigation measures, including a shutdown on many non-essential services from April 9, 2020 to the present. The order includes restrictions on travel, social, and economic activities. In addition, the Ministry of Education (MOE) closed public schools nationally during the period of March 2 to the present; with the situation remaining under close assessment by the authorities to determine the timing for return to school.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

7. **Guyana's education sector has made remarkable progress in the last 15 years and continues to be a priority for Government investment.** In particular, Guyana has achieved near-universal primary education enrollment (92 percent in 2018).¹ Access to secondary education continues to lag at 61 percent enrollment in 2018, but the sector is expanding rapidly.² Although not compulsory,³ access to nursery (pre-primary level) is relatively high, at 88 percent (public and private) in 2018. The public expenditure on education as a share of its GDP has increased over time to 5.6 percent in 2019, and is in line with international norms⁴ and higher than in most regional peers. Education spending out of total public spending (excluding debt servicing) shows a recent upward trend as well, with 14.9 percent in 2017, 16.9 percent in 2020, and 18 percent projected for 2022. The largest share of the education budget goes to secondary education at 34 percent, followed by primary education with 31 percent, and nursery at 15 percent.⁵ The per-student spending in nursery education is above the average expenditure in other Caribbean small states and close to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development average, while spending in primary and secondary education is comparatively lower than both of these benchmarks.

8. **Despite improvements in access to education at all levels, learning outcomes remain low.** International and regional assessments of learning outcomes suggest that one of the major bottlenecks of the Guyanese education system is fully supporting the development of foundational skills for its students. The Harmonized Learning Outcomes (HLO), an international database built by the World Bank that compares international and regional standardized achievement tests,⁶ reveals that Guyana had the 17th poorest results among 157 countries/territories across the world included in the database. Furthermore, according to the Human Capital Index, the average Guyanese student is expected to complete 12.2 years of schooling, but this is equivalent to only 6.8 years of learning, as expressed in the Learning-Adjusted Years of school.⁷

¹ Education Sector plan 2020-2024 (draft)

² Including through the construction of schools, such as through the ongoing Guyana Secondary Education Improvement Project.

³ Nursery education is available for children at the age of three years and six months for two years (optional). Primary education starts at the age of five years and six months, with a duration of 6 years. Secondary education lasts between three (compulsory to age 15) and five years (optional).

⁴ Expenditure on education is in line with what was recommended in The Third International Conference on Financing for Development: at least 4 percent to 6 percent of GDP.

⁵ Guyana Public Expenditure Review (draft)

⁶ For details on the methodology see (Patrinos & Angrist, 2018).

⁷ For definition and methodology see <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/human-capital#Data>



9. National assessments bear out similarly low levels of learning across the education system. The Ministry of Education’s (MOE) Nursery Diagnostic Assessment (NDA),⁸ administered in September 2015 to 7,100 first- and second-year nursery students nationwide, showed that only 50.5 percent of students in the coastal regions attained an “approaching mastery” level of emergent literacy, and their peers in the hinterland scored even lower at 39.6 percent. For emergent numeracy, 53.5 percent of nursery students in the coastal regions attained an “approaching mastery” level, versus 41.9 percent of students in the hinterland.⁹ In 2016, only 14 percent of grade 2 students achieved scores indicating they “attained the standard” in literacy and numeracy; 41 percent were “approaching standard” and 45 percent “below standard.” Math is a particular area of challenge; in the 2019 National Grade Six Exam (NGSE), less than 45 percent of students attained a passing grade in mathematics. This poor performance persists through secondary school, with the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate grade 11 exam results for 2018 showing only 50 percent of students attaining a mathematics passing grade. These results indicate low levels of learning across the system, as well as equity challenges both between genders and between the coastal and hinterland regions.

10. Learning outcomes will potentially weaken even further as a result of the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its disruptions on the education system. As a result of the closure of public schools nationally, over 169,743 children, ages 3 years 6 months to 15 years and over who are enrolled in public schools are now out of school. This places at high risk the gains made in access to education, as well as to learning at all levels, and increases the risk of student dropouts. Until schools can reopen, the Government is modifying its approach to the upcoming school year and investing in activities that are designed to support both the current distance learning stage and learning recovery in the medium to long term. These include support to home-based learning through online technology, television, radio, and print materials, as well as continued support to ongoing reforms with longer-term implications, such as the implementation of the new curriculum and management of the school system.¹⁰

Relationship to CPF

11. The proposed Project directly supports one of the three objectives of World Bank Group’s Country Engagement Note (CEN) for the period FY16-18, discussed by the World Bank Board of Executive Directors on May 3, 2016 (Report No. 94017-GY).¹¹ The second of the three objectives is “setting up the foundations for high-quality education.” As per the CEN, “Bank assistance would focus on the development of human resources and capacity for more effective teaching and learning throughout the school system in Guyana.” The proposed Project would support the shared vision of education quality improvement at all levels, which is a necessary precursor to economic growth. The Project would contribute to the Government’s efforts to reduce poverty and increase shared prosperity for the population by investing in human capital. In addition, the activities remain a priority in the World Bank’s Learning for All Education Strategy 2020.¹²

⁸ The NDA, which provides data on children’s preparedness for two years of Nursery-level education, was first administered in September 2014 to a 10% sample of Nursery students. The September 2015 sample was expanded to include 30% of all Nursery students nationwide. This sample was deemed large enough to yield generalizable data for the country.

⁹ NDA results for nursery students in the remote riverine areas spread throughout Guyana’s coastal regions are included in overall coastland results. When separated out, these students have historically performed at the same (lower) levels as children in the Hinterland, and therefore were also targeted by the ECE Project.

¹⁰ Amongst other efforts, the Government has embarked on a project responding to COVID-19 financed by a grant from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), managed by UNICEF, supporting continuity of learning for all children; psychosocial support to children, teachers and parents; and the return to school in safe, protective learning environments. World Bank and UNICEF will work closely together to ensure complementarity of interventions, in particular on learning continuity.

¹¹ Guyana has a CEN rather than a Country Partnership Framework (CPF). A Systematic Country Diagnosis has been finalized and will be submitted to the Board in Q2 FY21. A CPF is expected for delivery in FY22.

¹² World Bank. (2011). Learning for all: Investing in people’s knowledge and skills to promote development. World Bank Group Education Strategy 2020.



12. The Project is aligned with the Government’s Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2014-2018, which aims to improve education quality.¹³ The ESP sets two priorities: (a) to increase learning outcomes for all levels of education and all sub-groups; and (b) to decrease the differentials in learning outcomes between sub-groups, especially between students in coastal and hinterland schools. The Project would assist the Government in achieving its goal by focusing on improving learning outcomes at the pre-primary and primary level, as well as the overall management of the system, all of which would increase future economic opportunities for students. The Project would contribute to four of the six major interventions identified in the 2014-2018 ESP: (a) establishing an accountability system that creates incentives to improve student learning outcomes; (b) further improving the quality of teaching; (c) better alignment of teaching-learning materials/instructional tools/assisted devices to facilitate improved learning outcomes; and (d) increased and better utilization of students’ instructional time. It would also contribute to the goal of decreasing differentials in learning outcomes between students in the hinterland and coastal regions, in both the nursery component and through promoting Educational Technology (EdTech) at primary.

13. The Project is aligned with previous and ongoing Bank projects in Guyana. The Bank has a long-term engagement in Guyana and the projects build on each other towards Guyana’s education objectives. The GESIP is supporting revision of the curriculum across all grade levels, which this Project will support with teacher training at the nursery level. The GSEIP introduces tablets and smart classrooms at the Secondary level; this Project will pick up this initiative at the primary level, to introduce this to students sooner and improve transition to the secondary level. There is also an ongoing Education Public Expenditure Review (P172215) which will inform any adjustments to the Bank’s engagements in the education sector.

14. The Project is also aligned with ongoing COVID efforts, including the Public Education COVID-19 Response and Recovery document,¹⁴ which focuses on continuity of learning for all children through online and non-online modalities, depending on the context of the child. The Project will contribute to the learning continuity and recovery for both modalities through provision of teacher/parental training, materials, and technology. The Project is designed to be impactful in both fully distant, hybrid models, as well as future returns to school, as activities are flexible in all scenarios.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

The objective of the Project is to: (i) improve learning conditions at the nursery level in select areas; (ii) increase use of technology-assisted learning at the primary level in select areas, and (iii) improve functionality of the education management information system nationally.

Key Results (From PCN)

15. The following key results indicators are proposed for the Project:

- PDO Indicator 1 “Percentage of schoolteachers meeting standards in student-centered teaching practices at the nursery level” (as measured by Teach¹⁵)

¹³ An updated document is currently being developed by the Government and the project documentation will be updated when it is published. In the interim, the Bank and the Government have been in communication to ensure consistency.

¹⁴ MOE, April 2020

¹⁵ Teach is a free classroom observation tool was designed by the World Bank to help countries track and improve teaching quality. Teach is currently employed at the Primary level in Guyana. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/brief/teach-helping-countries-track-and-improve-teaching-quality>



- PDO Indicator 2 “Number of students using educational technology at the primary level.”
- PDO Indicator 3 “Open EMIS scaled up to nursery, primary and secondary level and functioning nationwide.”

D. Concept Description

16. The proposed Project would support the Government’s efforts to address longer-term structural constraints in early childhood level, primary education and education sector management, while also supporting continuity of learning and learning recovery in the short- and medium-term. The Project would achieve its development objective through the implementation of three components:

17. Component 1: Improving Learning Conditions at the Nursery level. This component aims to improve teaching and learning conditions in both schools and homes to increase school readiness. This will be achieved through three subcomponents: teacher training at the Nursery level to improve pedagogy and delivery of the new curriculum, provision of accompanying materials to support learning in class and at home, and caregiver education to support home-based learning. Methods of delivery will be adapted as the health crisis unfolds, and activities can be delivered at schools, in the home, online, or through phone as required.

18. Component 2: Promoting Technology-Assisted Learning at the Primary level (Estimated US\$3 million). This component aims to increase access to technology at the primary level to supplement teaching and support student learning in foundational skills in mathematics and literacy. This component has two subcomponents: implementation of tablet programs and smart classrooms. The design of the tablet program will be adapted to the current context as needed, by assigning tablets to students to use at home, exclusively or as part of a hybrid distance/in-person model. The software on the tablets will also include offline capability to ensure ability to use in areas with low connectivity. Smart Classrooms will be equipped with smartboards, tablets, and projectors, and can be used to support a hybrid distance/in person model by linking teachers in classrooms to students at home, as well as provide support to in-person learning once physical schooling resumes.

19. Component 3: Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Project Management (Estimated \$1 million). The aim of this component is to strengthen the management of the education system and support Project management. The component has two subcomponents. The first supports scaling up OpenEMIS to the national level in the nursery, primary and secondary, to enable the MOE to more efficiently manage education sector data and use information for more effective planning and policymaking, and allow principals to inform decision making at the school level. The second subcomponent would finance project management, monitoring and evaluation, and auditing activities.

Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

20. The Environmental and Social Risks Classification (ESRC) for this Project is moderate.



- 21. The environmental risk is expected to be low.** The project does not include any construction activities or heavy machineries procurement. The anticipated environmental risks and impacts to the project interventions are likely to be negligible. Therefore, consistent with the requirements of ESS1, no further environmental assessment has been determined necessary after the initial screening. However, the e-waste to be generated from the tablet program and smart classroom initiative will be managed through developing and implementing e-waste management guidelines, which will be prepared as a standalone document within 30 days of effectiveness. The e-waste guidelines will also be included in the Project Operational Manual.
- 22. The social risk is expected to be moderate.** The social risks identified at this stage mainly relate to social exclusion risks and exacerbating inequalities between the indigenous and non-indigenous students and caregivers, if the cultural adaptation and specific needs of these groups are not taken into account. The social risk of exclusion and inequality could particularly present itself in: i) inadequate trainings and textbooks impeding students, in particular indigenous students, from Nursery 1 and 2 to fully benefit from the project support; and, ii) the risk of having inadequate training impeding the primary caregivers, in particular indigenous caregivers, to fully benefit from the project support. The project activities will only be limited to training, equipment, and consultant services, thus no risks linked to land acquisition, physical and economic displacement are foreseen.
- 23. The project concept shows awareness of this issue and proposes activities tailored to the overall specificities of the regions.** An Indigenous Peoples Framework (IPF) will be prepared prior to appraisal, and an Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP) will be prepared for the development of the training and textbooks adaptation to be financed during the project implementation. The scope and scale of both the IPF and IPP will be proportionate to the scope and scale of the potential social risks associated with the project financed activities under Component 1.
- 24. The MOE will also prepare and disclose several other documents:** a draft Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP), a draft Labor Management Procedure (LMP) including a Code of Conduct (CoC), a draft Stakeholder Management Plan (SEP) and a Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) prior to appraisal. The LMP, SEP and IPF will be finalized within 30 days of project effectiveness.
- 25. Five ESSs are considered relevant to the proposed operations at this stage.** These are: ESS1 Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, ESS2 Labor and Working Conditions ESS3 Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and Management, ESS7 Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities, and ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure. The PIU will include an Environment Officer (part-time for e-waste management) and an experienced Social Development Officer (part time or full time, to be determined).

CONTACT POINT

World Bank

Ingrid Bjerke
Education Specialist

Borrower/Client/Recipient



Co-operative Republic of Guyana

Implementing Agencies

Ministry of Education
Priya Manickchand
Minister of Education
priya.manickchand@moe.gov.gy

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20433
Telephone: (202) 473-1000
Web: <http://www.worldbank.org/projects>

APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s):	Ingrid Bjerke
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Approved By

Practice Manager/Manager:		
Country Director:	Kathryn Ann Funk	26-Oct-2020