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# Project Information Document (PID)

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Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 04-May-2020 | Report No: PIDC28538



**BASIC INFORMATION**

**A. Basic Project Data**

Country Central African Republic	Project ID P173103	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Central Africa Republic - Education Sector Plan Support Project (P173103)
Region AFRICA	Estimated Appraisal Date May 19, 2020	Estimated Board Date Dec 08, 2020	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation	Implementing Agency Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education	

**Proposed Development Objective(s)**

The Project Development Objectives (PDO) are to: (i) improve conditions for teaching and learning, (ii) increase access to basic for vulnerable groups (girls, children with disabilities and children living in regions with low primary education access rates) and (iii) strengthen the systems governing the recruitment, deployment, and management of teachers.

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

**SUMMARY**

<b>Total Project Cost</b>	31.60
<b>Total Financing</b>	31.60
<b>of which IBRD/IDA</b>	0.00
<b>Financing Gap</b>	0.00

**DETAILS**

**Non-World Bank Group Financing**

Trust Funds	31.60
EFA-FTI Education Program Development Fund	31.60

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Concept Review Decision



High

Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

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Other Decision (as needed)

## B. Introduction and Context

### Country Context

Central African Republic (CAR) has been caught in a downward spiral of internal conflicts for years leading to a political, social, and organizational instability. Since its independence in 1960, CAR has experienced a succession of military coups, mutinies and armed rebellions<sup>1</sup>. The last coup that drove the country into an unprecedented humanitarian and economic crisis was a factional civil war that lasted between December 2012 to March 2013. On the African Union's initiative and with the military support of France<sup>2</sup>, a peacekeeping mission was deployed to CAR in December 2013. After a transitional period, in February 16 Fausting Archange Touadéra became commander in chief.

Although the signing on February 6, 2019 of a political agreement for peace and reconciliation<sup>3</sup> between CAR's government and the fourteen main armed groups of the country reinforced efforts to a gradual recovery, the humanitarian situation of the country remains dire. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance and protection increased from 2.5 million to 2.9 million in 2019, which means that two-thirds<sup>4</sup> of the population depends on humanitarian assistance for survival; more than 70 percent of the population has no access to drinkable water; and 1.8 million of Central Africans suffer from food insecurity<sup>5</sup>. The risk analysis summarized in the 2020 Index for risk management (INFORM) shows that CAR is the second most risk hindered country<sup>6</sup>. The country's natural risk exposure score is relatively low (2.8 out of 10), but its score for man-made risks is at the maximum (10). Also, its scores for socio-economic vulnerability (9.0) and population groups (9.0) are very high while the country lacks adaptive capacity (8.7), both at the institutional and infrastructure level.

According to the UN population (the last census of the population in CAR took place in December 2003), the estimated 2020 CAR population is 4.830 million and is projected to be 5.817 million by 2029. The population is young with the primary and secondary school age population (6 to 18 years old) representing a little more than a third of the total population in 2019 (35.5 percent). This ratio is expected to decline slightly until 2029 (estimated at 31.6 percent), as the fertility rate is expected to fall from 5.3 for the period 2005-2010 to 4.75 for 2015-2020 and to grow to 6.2 for the period 2025-2030. However, the ratio of young people to the population would continue to increase over time<sup>7</sup>. Social indicators in CAR are weak and supply for education is low as most people live under fragile conditions and lack basic services. Not surprisingly, CAR ranked 188<sup>th</sup> out of 189 on the human development index (HDI) of the United

<sup>1</sup> IIEP-Pôle de Dakar (2018)- [https://poledakar.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/fields/publication\\_files/analyse\\_du\\_secteur\\_de\\_leducation\\_rca\\_2018.pdf](https://poledakar.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/fields/publication_files/analyse_du_secteur_de_leducation_rca_2018.pdf) ), p.26-27

<sup>2</sup> Operation Sangaris from December 2013 to October 2016

<sup>3</sup> This peace agreement is often referred to as "Accord de Khartoum" since it was negotiated in the Sudanese capital. It's, therefore, the thirteen CAR peace agreement since 2007.

<sup>4</sup> ONU Info, 4 September 2019

<sup>5</sup> Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ursula Mueller, in September 2019 ONU Info September 4, 2019

<sup>6</sup> Inform Risk value for CAR is 8.6 and it ranks 2 after Somalia (8.9).

<sup>7</sup> (+156,000, or +9.3%)



Nations Development Program (UNDP); its ranking on HDI has been in constant decline since 2010, when the country was in 159<sup>th</sup> position out of 196.

### Sectoral and Institutional Context

The formal education system in Central African Republic uses the 3-6-4-3-4 system: the first three years are pre-primary, the following six years are primary; four years for lower-secondary, three years of upper-secondary, and four years for tertiary education. The official school age for preschool is 3–5, primary 6–11, lower secondary 12–15, upper secondary 16–18, and tertiary 19–25. The education sector falls under four ministries which makes it more challenging to have a coordinated sector reform. These include: (a) Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MPSE), (b) Ministry of Higher Education (MHE), (c) Ministry of Technical Education and Literacy (META), and (d) Ministry of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation (MSRTI),

MPSE is characterized by a decentralized managerial and organizational structure, which is divided into 8 administrative entities called academic inspections. Each academic inspection is subdivided into school districts consecutively divided into school sectors that oversee the direct supervision of schools. Moreover, each academic inspection has at least one Regional Pedagogical Center (RPC) to provide in-service training for teachers; RPC is also responsible for the initial training of teachers due to the lack of available structure.

The 2010-armed conflicts have resulted in a sharp deterioration of the security situation throughout the entire country<sup>8</sup>. This deterioration led to the problems of access to education (closed, insecure, and costly schools; displacement of the population) and challenges in the governance of the education system (non-deployment of teachers; non-functional administrative structures; loss of funding)<sup>9</sup>. The security situation still remains precarious today. . According to the Humanitarian Response Plan (PRH) in CAR for 2020, "despite the hopes raised by the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR) in February 2019 and the consequent decrease in confrontations between armed groups, the violence continued throughout 2019, causing human loss, suffering, and displacement".

The Central African Republic, like other countries on the continent and around the world, has been faced with the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>10</sup>, which forced the Government to declare the closure of all schools in the country, as of 27 March 2020, for a period of 15 days, renewable according to the evolution of the situation, in order to reduce the risks of propagation and protect pupils. However, as stipulated by UNESCO, the closure, even temporary, of schools entails high social and economic costs.

This closure has impacted 3,679 functional schools (preschool, primary and secondary education including TVET, Literacy and Higher Education), both public and private, and deprives the entire school and student population of their learning activity. These schools cater for 1,416,969 learners distributed as follows: 36,997 children aged between 3 and 5 years (including 18,908 girls), 1,168,377 children and adolescents (6-18 years) from primary education (including 512,567 girls) and 165,288 students (62,840 girls) from post-primary and secondary education, 6, 503 students from in technical and vocational education and training, 24, 741 in literacy, and 15, 063 students in higher education who are deprived. The disruption caused by this school closure affects all communities, but the consequences and protection risks are

<sup>8</sup> "Unpaid teachers have left their posts, school structures have been looted or destroyed and thousands of children have lost years of schooling. The recruitment and training of teachers have been interrupted, which has further slowed the deployment of qualified teachers. (Central African Republic Peacebuilding Plan (RCPCA 2017-2021, p.7).

<sup>9</sup> These refer to 2013 and 2014. Then "a few schools gradually started to resume their activities in early 2015", but "the surge of violence that swept Bangui in September 2015 triggered new disturbances" (RCPCA 2017-2021, p.7).

<sup>10</sup> At the time of this concept note, GPE is proposing to finance an education response to COVID-19 in CAR in the amount of \$US10 millions and the World Bank is positioning as grant agent to work with UNICEF and other partners.



particularly serious for disadvantaged children, especially girls, and their families

#### Relationship to CPF

The project is fully aligned with the World Bank's twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. Education is a reliable tool to fight poverty, a powerful driver of development, and a strong instrument to improve health, gender equality, peace, and stability. It provides children and young people with the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills to live healthy, productive lives and to secure meaningful employment. Likewise, the project is closely aligned with the World Bank Education Strategy 2020 of achieving learning for all. According to the World Bank Group's Fragility, Conflict and Violence (FCV) strategy, addressing the challenges of fragility, conflict, and violence is critical to achieving the goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. Two main pillars of this strategy are: (i) Helping countries transition out of fragility by promoting approaches that can renew the social contract between citizens and the state, foster a healthy local private sector, and strengthen the legitimacy and capacity of core institutions and (ii) Mitigating the spillovers of FCV to support countries and the most vulnerable communities impacted by cross-border crises, such as forced displacement or shocks resulting from famines, pandemics, and climate and environmental challenges. Furthermore, the WBG would place special emphasis on high priority issues in FCV settings including investing in human capital.

The project is aligned with the CAR Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD), and the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) is currently being finalized. The focus area 1 of the CPF is human capital and connectivity to boost inclusion by improving basic services and connectivity, mostly in regions affected by violence; to rebuild confidence in Government while anchoring stabilization and strengthening social cohesion. The project contributes to these objectives in several ways to renew and improve the confidence in the Government and institutions through strategic interventions—rehabilitation and extension of school infrastructure, teacher training, second-chance opportunities, and institutional capacity building both at the central and regional level.

This concept note is also supporting the implementation of the Education Sector Plan (2020-2029), which is expected to be endorsed in April 2020. This plan is aligned to the National Plan for Recovery and Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic for the period 2017-2023. The ESP develops ambitious short and long-term objectives: (i) achieve universal primary education and equitable access to education for girls and boys, as well as skills training for young people and adults; (ii) train, recruit massively, and deploy teachers throughout the country; (iii) improve the quality of teaching and learning conditions; and (iv) improve efficiency and decentralize system governance. In addition, the Government is committed to rebuilding the education system through fostering social cohesion and peacebuilding; enabling equitable economic growth; and reducing territorial inequalities.

### C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

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Key Results (From PCN)

#### D. Concept Description

The proposed Education Sector Plan Support Project would use an Investment Project Financing (IPF) lending instrument. The project is designed under condensed procedures following a standard IPF approach for fragile countries in situations of urgent need of assistance or capacity constraints. As such, the scope and implementation of activities, as well as the budget allocation, would judiciously follow a flexible adaptive schedule.

The design of this project supports the implementation of the Education Sector Plan (ESP), which covers the period 2020-2029. The ESP is part of the strategic priorities of the National Plan for Peacebuilding and Consolidation (2017-2021). Education is one of the major determinants of Pillar 2 of this plan, which aims to renew the social contract between the State and the populations by promoting (i) regional equity, and (ii) the provision of basic services in disadvantaged areas. The ESP is also directly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) for 2030 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (2016-2025). The project concept also takes from the lessons learned from the 2018 education sector country status report (RESEN 2018), as well as the results, recommendations, and lessons learned from the 2014-2017 Transition Plan and its 2017-2018 extension.

Through an integrated approach to the question of education quality, the project would focus on several aspects of teacher training and management, which constitute an essential quality input. These problems relate to i) the reinforcement of reception capacities for the initial training of staff, ii) the significance of training programs, iii) the review of teaching staff allocation system, iv) the incentive system for retention in posts and in profession, and v) strengthening social dialogue with this category of stakeholder in the education system.

The project would also build on the successes of the "Alternative Learning" program developed with the support of the World Bank through the Emergency Basic Education Support Project (EBESP), which highlights what an alternative model brings to the system, in particular by offering training and socio-professional integration opportunities to several categories of children who have not been able to access the classical system or complete normal schooling.

The project design is based on improving the supply of basic education and improving the quality of education. The project would focus on:

- a) The construction and rehabilitation of school facilities to allow more children, especially girls' access to school and
- b) Based on the harmonized curriculum for the training of primary school teachers developed through the Emergency Basic Education Support Project, strengthen the skills of teachers both in pre-service training and in-service training (particularly community teachers). All of which might lead to improved retention in primary, especially for girls.

Project activities would be funded by a GPE grant of US\$ 31.6 million over four (4) years, with three interconnected components: (i) Component 1: Increasing access to basic education; (ii) Component 2: Enhancing the quality teacher training; and (iii) Component 3: Strengthening institutional capacity, monitoring and evaluation at the central and decentralized levels, and project management.

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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

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The environment risk is rated as Moderate at this stage. The nature and scale of anticipated adverse environmental risks and impacts of the project activities are related to the construction/rehabilitation of classrooms in all the seven administrative regions, and the construction of two regional teaching training centers and one secondary school (collège de proximité). The construction and rehabilitation of classrooms will also include the supply of other school-level infrastructures such as toilets, water, sports equipment, and classroom materials. Potential adverse risks and impacts on the environment are mainly linked to construction phase and may include environmental, health, and safety (EHS), occupational health and safety (OHS), community health and safety, and pollution due to solid waste, dust, noise, and vibration. These risks and impacts are expected to be managed through application of appropriate mitigation measures. Risks are also related to: (i) Subproject siting: uncertainty on the location of the subproject investments and thus their environmental sensibility and (ii) Low capacity of Borrower: an overall low capacity in CAR, and especially regarding the MPSE-PCU which will be implementing the project under ESF.

The Social risk is rated as High at this stage and justified by: (a) High risks of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) as assessed through the preliminary SEA/H risk rating tool at concept stage; (b) limited capacity and experience of the client for: effective stakeholder engagement, the assessment of SEA/H risks and development of an associated SEA/H action plan with appropriate proportional accountability, response framework and monitoring and evaluation measures; (c) limited capacity for the overall Environment and Social Framework (ESF) compliance necessary for this project that will be implemented by a PCU with first practical experience on the ESF.

Additional social risks may include those arising from land acquisition which may be required for the construction of the two regional teacher training centers and one secondary school (collège de proximité), for which locations have yet to be determined. Labor influx is likely to be minimal as most rehabilitation works of schools will mostly rely on local labor. Other additional risks may include overcrowding in classrooms and insufficient washing and toilet facilities if there is an increase of children/students trying to access the new pre-primary services and expanded primary education. Finally, given the national scope of the project and the high presence of non-State armed groups over the territory, security risks are identified for project workers and beneficiaries. No activity under this project is expected to have an adverse effect on Indigenous Peoples. However, the Stakeholder Engagement plan will include outreach programs to ensure that indigenous communities, especially those living in remote areas, are aware of the availability of new or expanded access to basic education under the project. The potential social impacts can be adequately managed/ mitigated through the development, implementation and monitoring of appropriate measures.



Overall, the project will have positive impacts given that planned activities aim at improving quality and equitable access to education for the most vulnerable children, including girls and the disabled.

A thorough environmental and social risks and impacts assessment will be carried out before the appraisal.

The PCU attached to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MPSE), has never implemented projects under the new World Bank Environmental and Social Framework. Thus, the client has no experience or capacity in applying the expanded ESF beyond aspects that are generally included in the Operational Policies. As a result, significant efforts will be required to guide and reinforce capacities of the PIU during the project preparation and implementation. The Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) will be prepared at appraisal stage to reflect the relevant actions and measures that will ensure the project compliance to the relevant environmental and social standards.

**Note:** To view the Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts, please refer to the Concept Stage ESRS Document.  
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**APPROVAL**

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