

UNICEF
DFAT funding support to COVID-19 Emergency Response
Updated 17.08.2020

Background

With the outbreak of the COVID-19, on 13 March 2020, the Government closed all schools nation-wide announcing that schools would reopen on 20 April 2020. Since then more than 4.2 million students and 241,000 teachers¹ have been at home. The loss of structured education time is immense.

Subsequently, the period of school closure was extended to 11 May, followed by another extension until further notice. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Provincial Departments of Education (PDE) at national and sub-national levels have taken certain initiatives to provide continuous education for students. The MOE, in partnership with internet service providers, has activated its web-based learning platforms and two public television channels are devoted to air curriculum-based educational programmes.

However, there were critical gaps remaining to address the immediate needs of children. Those web-based and TV programmes are primarily focusing on the secondary level and Grade 5 (primary final grade) for preparation for their exams. Other primary grades (Grades 1-4) were left behind without access to any modes of programmes for their continuous learning.

The MoE then announced the school reopening plans in a phased manner:

- 1st stage 29 June 2020 – teachers and school principals (to prepare for school reopening)
- 2nd stage 6 July – Grade 13, 11 and 5
- 3rd stage 20 July – Grade 10 and 12
- 4th stage 27 July – Grade 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9
- 5th stage 10 August – Grade 1 and 2, and preschool

While the 1st and 2nd stages were activated as scheduled, the MoE subsequently announced the closure of all schools and grades nation-wide from 13 July 2020 onwards due to the prevalence of covid-19 including among teachers and children. All the public schools were finally reopened from 10 August 2020.

During the ongoing school closure, with UNICEF's support, MoE in coordination with the Ministry of Health (MoH) developed and issued Safe School Operation guidelines to set out national standards and protocols which each school need to follow as essential conditions for school re-opening and continuous operations post-school closure. MoE has also disbursed some funds to schools to help equip them with necessary facilities and supplies to meet the standards.

In addition, UNICEF has been supporting the MoE's Back to School communication campaign which was launched on 6 August 2020 in line with the school reopening schedule. The campaign targets students, parents and caregivers across the country with six key messages on COVID-19 prevention behaviours and associated stigmatization and discrimination in local languages. Different media, including, radio and TV adverts via national media in multiple languages, digital versions, in-class posters, signboards and mini-bus stickers, will be used to maximize the reach.

¹ Department of Census and Statistics, Education Statistics 2017

Proposed Activities and Funding Gaps

To address the urgent and priority needs for those under-served children in continuous learning, UNICEF has worked with the MOE and the National Institute for Education (NIE) to develop learning materials targeting Grade 1 and Grade 2 students, both in Sinhala and Tamil languages (local languages). The materials were prepared with simple parental guides so that students will be better supported at home and their work done using those materials will be recorded and submitted to teachers for feedback after the schools are re-opened. The original targets were Grade 1 and Grade 2 students of Type 2 and Type 3 schools (around 430,000 children) who are in rural/hard-to-reach areas and are often overlapping with those without access to online learning. However, considering equity in providing this important service, the MOE subsequently decided to provide the printed materials to all children in Grade 1 and Grade 2 nation-wide (total of 663,000 children). The decision was based on the fact that either *all* children in G1 and G2 were provided with materials or *none* were, despite the fact that the materials had been finalised and were ready for printing. This required additional funding. After additional fundraising efforts made by UNICEF which had mobilized some funds from the NGO partner community, including Save the Children, Room to Read and ChildFund, there still remained a gap of AUD 56,000. Without filling this critical gap urgently, children's learning had to stop.

In addition, there was a critical financial gap identified for the above-mentioned MoE's Back to School communication campaign. The campaign carries out the following six (6) Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) messages. In light of the proven importance of highlighting non-discriminatory messages, which is particularly critical in the Sri Lankan contexts where social cohesion and inclusion is a key subject of the society, with UNICEF's advice, MoE also agreed to add one particular message (the last one) to promote mutual understanding, support and non-exclusion under the covid-19 situations.

1. Maintain at least one-meter distance from each other both inside and outside the school.
2. Regularly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand-rub before and after engaging in any activities including play and sports.
3. Cover your nose and mouth with a face mask during and after school.
4. Sneeze or cough into your bent elbow or use a tissue and ensure that you dispose of the used tissue into a bin with lid immediately and wash your hands with soap thereafter.
5. If experiencing cough, cold or fever symptoms, stay at home and consult a doctor.
6. School, classrooms and all surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized regularly.
7. Do not discriminate against anyone because of the Coronavirus. Let's be kind...and support each other...to STAY SAFE.'

In order to ensure those essential messages are delivered in a child-friendly manner, and hence well-understood by children especially by young ones, the MoE decided to add the development of a cartoon book which will be distributed to all primary schools. The cartoon book, designed by a well-known Sri Lankan artist in local languages as well as in age- and context-relevant, and culturally sensitive forms, will facilitate easy access and understanding on those key messages by young children in their primary school settings. Further, the cartoon book will serve as a supplementary reading material which can be used to promote reading habit among primary-aged children. For this activity additional AUD 67,000 will be required, and so far UNICEF has secured AUD 45,000 from its own and other funding sources, leaving a shortage of AUS 22,200. Due to the severe financial constraints of the MoE, without the financial support from UNICEF, distribution of the cartoon book will be suspended or severally scaled-down in distribution which will not be so effective.

Therefore, UNICEF requests a total of AUD 100,000 to fill those immediate financial gaps and support:

- 1) **the printing, packing and distribution of the printed learning materials for Grade 1 and Grade 2 students nation-wide. The contribution from DFAT will directly reach around 330,000 students in Grades 1 and 2.** Beyond that, these funds will serve as catalytic funds, helping go beyond the original targets of marginalized children to now reach all Grade 1 and Grade 2 students across the country.; and
- 2) the development, printing and distribution of the cartoon book with the key messages on IPC and non-discrimination to all primary schools nation-wide The contribution from DFAT will directly reach estimated 33% of all the primary schools, covering around 560,000 primary students in 3,300 primary schools.

Expected Impact

With the contribution from DFAT, around 330,000 Grade 1 and Grade 2 children will have continuous learning opportunities during the school closure. This will not only help sustain the progress of learning of those affected children, but also support a semblance of routine and normalcy in the home environment, which has known positive psychological impacts on children. Furthermore, thanks to the DFAT contribution, the original plan of providing these learning materials to children who are not reached by other online forms of learning programmes will be achieved, along with an extended scale of reach covering the whole country.

In addition, around 560,000 primary students in 3,300 primary schools will have the opportunity to learn from the cartoon books on the key messages on essential hygiene practices and positive attitudes towards maintaining harmonized, non-discriminatory society. The DFAT contribution will enable a nation-wide coverage of this important initiative at primary education level. Furthermore, the cartoon books will be a powerful tool to support the teachers in promoting learning culture among young children in schools and communities, which can bring about significant positive effects in children's learning and holistic development.

Time Frame

The development and distribution of the Grade 1 and 2 learning materials to children was completed by June 2020 through the PDEs. Distribution to households and use of the distributed materials at home, and its monitoring by local authorities continued until the schools were re-opened with UNICEF's support. UNICEF is also working with MoE to embark a national survey to assess the continuity of learning (primary grades) during the school closure period to generate the evidence (financed by other funding sources).

The draft design of the cartoon book is being finalised by MoE with UNICEF. The printing and distribution is expected to be completed by September 2020.

Cost estimation

A total of AUD 100,000 is required.

Activity	AUD
Printing, packing and distribution of Grade 1/ Grade 2 learning materials	56,000
Printing and distribution of the cartoon books	23,508
Monitoring, Documentation and Communication/Advocacy	8,370
Indirect Programme Support Costs	5,580
7% HQ recovery	6,542
TOTAL	100,000



Tim Sutton
Representative
UNICEF - Sri Lanka

Standard Joint Programme Budget

JOINT PROJECT BUDGET*

Total Resources for the transfer (US\$)	83,333.74
% of Indirect Costs	7.00
Total Indirect Costs	5,451.74
Total Direct Costs	77,882.00

PROJECT BUDGET			ESTIMATED UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES (US\$)	
	CATEGORY	Total Amount USD	[UN AGENCY]	[UN AGENCY]
1	Staff and other personnel costs	20,833		
2	Supplies, Commodities, Materials	0.00		
3	Equipment, Vehicles and Furniture including Depreciation	0.00		
4	Contractual Services	50,732		
5	Travel	1,667		
6	Transfers and Grants to Counterparts	0		
7	General Operating and Other Direct Costs	4,650		
	Total Programme Costs	77,882	0.00	0.00
8	Indirect Support Costs**	5,452	0.00	0.00
9	MPTFO AA (1%)			
	TOTAL Pass-Through Amount Approved	83,334	0.00	0.00

* This is based on the UNDG Harmonized Financial Reporting to Donors for Joint Programmes approved in 2012.

** Indirect support cost should be in line with the rate or range specified in the Joint Programme Document and MOU and SAA for the particular JP. Indirect costs of the Participating Organizations should not exceed 7% of Total Programme Costs

All other costs incurred by each Participating UN Organization in carrying out the activities for which it is responsible under the Fund will be recovered as direct costs, in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution 62/209 (2008 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review principle of full cost recovery).

Approved by: Tim Sutton
Title: Representative

Signature:

Project budget by Outcome, Output and Activity

Outcome/ Output number	Outcome/ output/ activity formulation:	Budget by recipient organization in USD	Percent of budget for each output reserved for direct action on gender equality (if any):	Level of expenditure/ commitments in USD (to provide at time of project progress reporting):	Any remarks (e.g. on types of inputs provided or budget justification, for example if high TA or travel costs)
OUTCOME 1:					
Output 1.1:					
Activity 1.1.1:	Printing, packing and distribution of Grade 1/ Grade 2 learning materials	46,667			
Activity 1.1.2:	Printing and distribution of the cartoon books	19,590			
Activity 1.1.3:					
Activity 1.1.4:					
Activity 1.1.5:					
Output 1.2:					
Activity 1.2.1:					
Activity 1.2.2:					
TOTAL \$ FOR OUTCOME 1:		66,257			
TOTAL \$ FOR OUTCOME 4:					
Project personnel costs if not included in activities above					
Project operational costs if not included in activities above		4,650			
Project M&E budget		6,975			
SUB-TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET:		77,882			
Indirect support costs (7%):		5,452			
AA Costs (1%)					
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET:		83,334			

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