

Bangladesh

Education
Thematic Report

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B. Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABAL	Ability Based Accelerated Learning
ALP	Alternative Learning Programme
APSC	Annual Primary School Census
C4D	Communication for Development
CECCD	Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development
CFS	Child Friendly Schools
DPC	Development Partners Consortium
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
DSHE	Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EiE	Education in Emergency
ELCG	Education Local Consultative Group
ICT	Information Communication Technology
LCFA	Learning Competency Framework and Approach
MoCHTA	Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tract Affairs
MoDMR	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MTR	Mid-term Review
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PEDP3	3 rd Primary Education Development Programme
PEDP4	4 th Primary Education Development Programme
PPE	Pre-primary Education
SCBA	School and Classroom Based Assessment
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SLIP	School Level Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach to Programme
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training)
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UPEP	Upazila Primary Education Plan
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene

C. Executive Summary

Bangladesh has achieved remarkable development progress in a comparatively short time, realizing considerable gains for children. Though its Human Development Index ranking has improved, Bangladesh remains ranked at 136 out of 189 countries. Without concerted efforts to accelerate and consolidate social gains, Bangladesh risks missing a unique opportunity to fast-track inclusive economic growth resulting from its demographic dividend.

In 2018, UNICEF's support to the Government of Bangladesh resulted in renewed commitment by the government for delivery of early childhood (ECD) and school readiness services. This was reflected in the approval of the third phase of the early learning and child development project (ELCDP) aimed at strengthening coordination and implementation by different ministries and agencies. Capacity building of the relevant ministry system and mechanism including service delivery in the most deprived districts and sub-districts (upazilas) will be primary areas of support in this phase of the ELCDP.

The newly approved Fourth Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP4) further integrated PPE into primary education and makes provision for all 64,000 government primary schools to provide PPE. This will be a major boost in access for the pre-primary age group (five-year old children). Children below five years will continue to access services through home-based Early Childhood Development and day care centres. UNICEF's support contributed to enrolling 74,600 boys who are now attending 40-day care centers, 462 early learning centres and 4,000 para centers in Chittagong Hill Tracks.

School Effectiveness initiative, through which Child Friendly Schools is modelled, continues implementation in 1,210 primary schools serving over 250,000 boys and girls. School planning and management strengthened in all 1,210 schools with 2,400 School Management Committee members and teachers oriented in areas such as enabling learning environment, inclusiveness, governance, and Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). Pedagogical training was provided for 2,500 teachers and school-based Communication for Development (C4D) interventions conducted in 500 schools aimed at reducing the number of out-of-school children.

UNICEF worked with the Directorate of Primary Education to strengthen national level frameworks and approaches such as the guidelines for school and sub-district planning. Strategic support is also provided to commence revision of the national primary curriculum. This partnership will ensure the National Curriculum and Textbook Board has the requisite support to reform the curriculum. Given the concerns about the low levels of learning across the system, curriculum support is a high priority.

UNICEF and Government of Bangladesh partnerships ensured that the most vulnerable children access their right to education. In the Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar district, UNICEF provided access to education for 132,513 children (boys 66,400 and girls 66,113). UNICEF and partners have also trained 4,125 teachers who are delivering education in 1,412 learning centres and 750 community shared spaces. UNICEF also supported the provision of learning materials to 184,000 children (including those attending schools in the host community). Increasing access will continue to be a priority in 2019 as almost 40 per cent of 4-14 year olds and over 90 percent of 15-18 year olds are not involved in any learning or skills training activities. Simultaneously, there will be increased attention to improving quality.

In other parts of the country, 50,000 children directly benefited from Education in Emergency activities in government primary schools. Simultaneously, support was provided to school districts to strengthen vulnerability assessment and risk informed planning. UNICEF continues to invest in modelling how the system best supports another vulnerable group, out-of-school children. Using the ability-based accelerated learning model, 13,399 out of school children aged 8-14 years were enrolled in learning opportunities while an additional 100,000 children continue to access services with Government of Bangladesh support.

UNICEF worked closely with Government of Bangladesh, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and other partners in the development of the Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) which will guide secondary sub-sector programming for the next five years. The SEDP is critical to the reforms required to improve equity in access and quality of learning in the secondary education. Another area of strong partnership with Government of Bangladesh is to ensure a robust framework for the provision of skills to adolescents. UNICEF and partners have adopted a multi-pronged approach which includes development of an Adolescent Skills Framework, integration of life skills into teachers' training, and development of e-learning course on life skills competencies and piloting models for service delivery. One of the models, the Alternative Learning Program (ALP) was selected as a global solution under the Generation Unlimited initiative for providing skills and employment opportunities to adolescents.

Overall progress towards the targets of the Country Programme Document and the expected education results are on track. With two years left in the programme, the required foundation has been established and implementation should be expedited in the years ahead. One major potential bottleneck is the management of transition, among personnel and new sub-sector strategies, within the government ministries and agencies. UNICEF will use its strong relationship with government to identify and strategize on how to overcome this and other challenges.

D. Strategic Context of 2018

i. Country trends in the situation of children vis-a-vis Education

Bangladesh is a populous and youthful country, with 37 per cent of the population (estimated at 160 million) being under 18 in 2016.¹ As such, it is at cross-roads, with a strong demographic dividend (resultant of a decline in fertility and mortality rates, and subsequent shift in the population's age structure with a larger share of the working-age population, than the non-working age population) within its grasp. The number of school-aged children is large, with approximately 42 million children aged between 6 and 17.² It is estimated that over two million people enter the work force each year and so the potential is extremely large.³ To fully take advantage of this situation, the country needs to translate the impressive gains in access to primary education to increased learning and skills for adolescents, and facilitate their transition to the labour force.

Over the past decade economic growth has consistently exceeded seven per cent per annum, per capita GDP⁴ has increased by 64 per cent, and poverty levels⁵ have been substantially reduced from 40 (2005) to 24.3 (2016) per cent.⁶ Despite the economic and social progress, one in four Bangladeshis (over 40 million people) still lives in poverty, with large variances between urban and rural areas. Sub-national disparities are also evident in the coverage of basic social services between rural and urban locations and geographic regions and by gender and wealth. In particular, the provision of high-quality basic services to the urban poor and areas that are hard to reach or vulnerable to climate change remains a key challenge for achieving the Government's objective to inclusively distribute its prosperity. In addition, since August 2017 over 730,000 Rohingya people have been forced across the Myanmar border and are seeking refuge in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's education system is large and complex with about 40 million students enrolled at different levels.⁷ The system continues to improve through major government initiatives as well as private sector and civil society support. The three sub-sectors of the system finalized new strategies for the next five years in 2018, the Third Phase of the Early Learning and Child Development Project (ELCDP3) at the pre-primary level, the fourth Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP4) at the primary level, and the Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) which is the first comprehensive plan for secondary education in Bangladesh. All three will be critical to building on the opportunities and addressing the challenges faced in the education sector at all levels as reflected below.

¹ Population Project of Bangladesh: Dynamics and Trends 2011-2061, BBS, November 2015

² *ibid.*

³ Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics cited in: <https://www.thedailystar.net/star-weekend/spotlight/employing-our-burgeoning-youth-population-1432747>

⁴ GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2011 international \$)

⁵ Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population)

⁶ World Development Indicators 2018: World Bank (WB) and OECD National Accounts data files.

⁷ Bangladesh Statistics 2017 cited in:

http://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/a1d32f13_8553_44f1_92e6_8ff80a4ff82e/Bangladesh%20%20Statistics-2017.pdf

Pre-primary education: Effective early childhood interventions can significantly improve poor children's ability to learn.⁸ Although pre-primary is not mandatory in terms of provision or of attendance, the new primary sector strategy (PEDP4) requires every government primary school to establish a pre-primary class. This means that all the 64,000 primary schools currently running in Bangladesh will also provide pre-primary access, a major boost for the sector. The number of children accessing pre-primary education (PPE) has tripled between 2010 and 2017 with enrolment reaching 3.6 million in 2017 compared to 1.2 million in 2012. This resulted in the percentage of Grade 1 students who had attended PPE increasing from 50 per cent in 2012 to 88.1 per cent in 2018 (boys 87.9 per cent and girls 88.3 per cent), a marginal increase over the 2017 rate (87.8 per cent).⁹

A study undertaken in 2016¹⁰ found that PPE in Bangladesh is a comprehensive initiative in terms of curriculum, teaching learning materials, teacher recruitment and training and dedicated classrooms. However, the study also identified some gaps in terms of quality of the environment, large number of learners in pre-school classes and poor teacher preparation.

Primary education: A five-year primary education cycle is free and compulsory in Bangladesh starting at the age of six. Net enrolment rates in primary school has increased to 98 per cent for both girls and boys and the primary school survival rate increased from 67 per cent in 2010 to 83 per cent in 2017.¹¹ However, this has not translated into progress in meeting the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The gap is especially concerning regarding target 4.1 to 'ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.' In fact, data available suggests that there is a serious learning crisis at primary level of Bangladeshi education.

In 2017, an estimated 47 per cent of children achieved grade-level competencies in grade III Bangla, 44 per cent in grade V Bangla, 34 per cent in grade III Mathematics and 32 per cent of children achieved grade-level competencies in grade V Mathematics. Data also suggests that students perform better on items that require rote learning compared to those that involve critical and higher cognitive skills. Whilst the national assessment does not measure reading and writing skills per se, the low achievements in both Bangla and Mathematics indicate a poor grasp of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy by an overwhelming majority of primary students.¹² In addition, a 2018 World Bank study on learning identified that children in Bangladesh gain only about 60 per cent of what is expected for the years of schooling they access over 11 years. Put another way, Bangladeshi children gain about 6.5 years of learning after attending school for 11 years, a loss of 4.5 years.¹³

While there are no significant differences in performance by gender — denoting gender parity in learning — geographical inequality persists. Among the eight administrative divisions, Sylhet and Chittagong are lagging behind the most, Sylhet being the consistently lowest performing division since the national assessments started in 2011. Enhancing learning outcomes thus represents the greatest challenge of primary education in Bangladesh.

⁸ World Bank 2018, World Development Report 2018 – Learning to realize education's promise. World Bank Group, Washington DC. Pg. 114.

⁹ DPE, Annual Primary School Census (APSC) 2017

¹⁰ DPE and MOPME, An Assessment of the Implementation of Pre-Primary Education, July 2016.

¹¹ Directorate of Primary Education, APSC 2017

¹² DPE, National Student Assessment 2015 and 2017

¹³ World Bank 2018. Op.cit.

The government's major programmatic response is PEDP4 which is designed to ensure that existing services are strengthened including those related to education quality and system management. It also aims to expand access through large infrastructure development interventions, increase the number and training of teachers, and provide for increased use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in education. Among the efforts to ensure equitable access is the payment of stipends to students. The Government of Bangladesh currently provides monthly stipends to more than 7.9 million primary school children, including the poor and children with disabilities.

Secondary education: The secondary cycle covers seven years, consisting of three years of junior secondary (Grade 6-8), two years of secondary (Grades 9-10), and two years of higher secondary (Grade 11-12). Data from 2017, reveals that the net enrolment rate in secondary education in Bangladesh is 68.8 per cent (girls 74.4 per cent, boys 63.6 per cent), while the completion rate is 63 per cent (girl 62 per cent, boys 64 per cent).¹⁴ The dropout rate at secondary level remains extremely high at 37.8 per cent (girls 41.52, boys 33.43).¹⁵ Almost **40 per cent of secondary school aged children** are out of school. As in primary education, besides the number of children out of school, the most pressing challenge in the secondary subsector is the low and unequal learning levels of students.

More than 40 per cent of the youth population, 15-24 years of age, are not in education, employment or training.¹⁶ The take up of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is low, with about 25 per cent of students or about 891,964 students enrolled in 2017. While there is greater gender parity in enrolment in primary and secondary, the picture is very different for TVET; only 216,376 are girls.¹⁷

According to a 2017 study by UNICEF and Just Jobs Network, the secondary education system is not preparing adolescents and young people for the world of work. It found that less than 10 per cent of students indicated that their schools, formally or informally, provide the skills they think are useful in finding a good job and performing tasks at the work-place. On the other hand, 85 per cent of workers responded that the skills they are using in jobs are not taught in their school.¹⁸

Annually a large proportion of Bangladesh' new workers are out-of-school adolescents who do not have alternate pathways to prepare for the job market. These young people are often involved in hazardous low paying jobs sometime with no pay. They are vulnerable to various forms of abuse including child marriage and often the worst forms of child labour, drug addiction and physical and psychological violence. As Bangladesh is experiencing a demographic dividend which will continue up to 2040 or beyond, without adequate engagement of adolescents and youth (15-24 years), the national goal to achieve middle income country status by 2021 and developed country by 2041 will be hindered.

ii. What changes have been observed within the past year?

General elections at the close of 2018 generated a period of uncertainty due to concerns over transparency. Rivalries between the major political parties periodically lead to strikes or blockades and violence. However, things have remained calm since the elections which returned the ruling party

¹⁴ Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics 2017, Bangladesh Education Statistics 2016.

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ Just Jobs Network and UNICEF, 2017. From Education to Employability – Bangladesh Case Study. Just Jobs Network

¹⁷ Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics 2017. Op.cit

¹⁸ Just Jobs Network and UNICEF, 2017. Op.cit

to power. Since then, there were changes to all of the cabinet ministers with whom the UNICEF Education Programme works, including the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), and the Ministry Women and Children's Affairs (MoWCA).

All sub-sectors of the education system finalized strategies which were approved for or began implementation in 2018. These include the ELCDP3, PEDP4, and the SEDP. Transition to the new programmes was slow, especially for the PEDP4, but they are gradually gaining momentum. The new programmes have new management and coordination structures and with them new personnel.

The new leadership in MoPME and the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) has endorsed the piloting of two-year pre-primary services for boosting the foundational base of learning in early years. It has also increased focus on continuous learning assessment by approving a set of school and classroom-based assessment (SCBA) tools for use in primary schools and requiring SCBA to be included as part of the assessment in the new curriculum.

iii. What are the key challenges and changes that are happening in the country narrative, partnerships, resources

The education system, while enjoying a significant period of strategic redirection, is facing some major challenges. Among these are the following:

Weak management of transitions: The management of the transition from the 3rd Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP3) to PEDP4 has significantly delayed programme implementation. In addition, frequent changes of people in the system, weak institutional arrangement, and capacity gaps have exacerbated the situation.

Restricted space for donors and civil society organizations: The spaces for participation by the non-government partners in education sector are being increasingly restricted. The attitude towards donor and civil society organizations is one of skepticism and a general reluctance to engage. For example, under PEDP4, the government has removed the thematic working groups which used to allow both government and development partners to take strategic decisions and agree on specific implementation approaches.

Centralized decision making: Large investments are being made in the primary education subsector to improve the quality of education accessible to all. However, the overall governance culture and accountability structures are weak, and decision-making processes are highly centralized. As a result, the investments are not efficiently used and there is a lack of ownership over various initiatives at different levels. For ensuring effective use of inputs and processing them to yield results, the overall management environment needs to be enabling. Decentralization of the system to progressively empower the schools and the sub-district level planning processes also needs to be expedited to allow for stronger local ownership.

Weak technical capacity: Lack of technical expertise on some emerging issues or approaches to existing issues among national level officials, stymies education reforms. These weakness in technical capacities contribute to a lack of creativity, poorly formulated approaches, and become a barrier to the work of technical institutions. It also requires a greater investment in building capacity and requires closer working relationships with the partners.

Weak institutional arrangements: Some critical agencies within the education system do not have sufficiently robust mechanisms for institutional coordination. This is a major problem in areas where synergy is required to effectively implement programme and policies. This was noticeable in 2018 among the secondary education authorities at various levels which has resulted in the continuation of private schools dominating the secondary level of the system. If private schools remain the main source of secondary education, the issues of equity will not be addressed, and with weak regulation, it will be difficult to implement the sector wide approach envisioned in SEDP.

Restrictions on Rohingya education: The Government of Bangladesh is focused mainly on meeting emergency needs and supporting the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. On 23 November 2017, the Bangladesh and Myanmar governments agreed on the return of the Rohingya refugees from Rakhine State. The repatriation, planned to commence on 23 January 2018, has not started. However, the general policy towards the refugees remains oriented towards repatriation and this has affected the provision of support for human resource development in education and skills. As such, there continues to be severe restrictions on the language of instruction, the type of skills that can be provided, the type of infrastructure through which the education is provided, and the curriculum that is used. This limits the flexibility and scope of the educational provisions and requires significant creativity to ensure children are given a meaningful education.

iv. How is UNICEF positioned to engage or address these?

Two thousand eighteen marked the completion of the first half of the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Programme (2017-2020). The programme follows a life cycle approach and its outcomes reflect the life stages (0-5 years, 6-10 years, adolescence) of a child and highlights the need for coordinated multi-sectoral programming to holistically address the rights of children. Within this structure, UNICEF will continue to be voice for children in order to ensure all their rights are met. It continues to act in the broad sense of its mandate but with the necessary focus on priority issues that will lead to the greatest change.

UNICEF has a long track record of working with the government with a trusting relationship and high technical expertise. This is recognized by the government and the partners and is reflected in the following additional roles with which UNICEF was entrusted in 2018.

At the request of other development partners and with the support of MoMPE, UNICEF agreed to co-chair the Education Local Consultative Group (ELCG) which is the major forum for all stakeholders across the entire education sector to have strategic discussions.

- UNICEF was invited to provide and coordinate technical support for SEDP preparation.
- Under PEDP4, the Development Partners' Consortium (DPC) asked UNICEF to track, coordinate and report progresses in 13 disbursement-linked indicators that are critical for the programme.
- UNICEF is the major partner to lead the piloting of two years of PPE with MoPME.

While most of the funding for PEDP4 and SEDP are placed into a pool, UNICEF is allowed to use most of its financial support in "parallel" to this pool. This allows UNICEF to support the government in a more customized, flexible and efficient manner while remaining strategic. For example, given the

capacity gaps in emerging issues such as education for adolescents, UNICEF can work with government to ensure it has the technical support to implement as well as leverage resources.

Another way in which this is done is through the network of field offices which UNICEF has across the country. Through work with local education authorities, UNICEF produces evidence as well as provides localized technical support.

In addition to co-chairing the ELCG, UNICEF continues to play a strong role in the DPC. This provides opportunities to strengthen partnerships and ensure a coordinated approach among stakeholders, including the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNESCO and the European Union to not only influence but also leverage technical and financial resources.

To achieve results for children in 2019, the Education Programme will build on its existing partnerships with MoPME, MoE, MoWCA, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tract Affairs (MoCHTA), Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MoDMR), and all relevant directorates and agencies under these Ministries. In addition, UNICEF's traditionally strong partnerships with national and international non-Government organizations (NGOs), will provide additional leverage for it to reach those most marginalised.

v. What are UNICEF specific challenges?

- Lack of proper understanding among the duty bearers on Early Childhood Development (ECD) that hinders programme design appropriately for the young children. Investment in capacity building and institutional strengthening will continue;
- Sustaining investments that are made in capacity development among some partners is difficult due to frequent transfer of government officials, poor accountability and governance system. This contributes to weak or limited attainment of planned results. Going forward UNICEF will continue investing in capacity building but take a more institution wide approach to reduce effect of changes in personnel in some areas;
- Inadequate coordination and engagement of multiple line agencies under MoE, each with different capacity gaps. The same is true for coordination of ECD by the lead agency (MoWCA); institutional weakness and low capacity frustrates the process. Therefore, UNICEF's support is often diverted to deal with management and operational challenges, instead of programme implementation for the achievement of results; and
- Government implementation of activities is very slow due in part to an increasingly bureaucratic structure. Most steps in the processes do not seem to add value and contribute to unwillingness of functionaries to make decisions on simple matters. In 2019, UNICEF will increase advocacy efforts for simplification as a way to expedite implementation.

E. Results in the Outcome Area

This Thematic Report covers results achieved in 2018 and reflects UNICEF's contribution towards the achievement of Education targets outlined in Bangladesh's 7th Five Year Plan, the goals of PEDP4, the Secondary Education Programme (SEDP) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework

(UNDAF) for 2017–2020. All the framing documents and policies share the overarching strategy to improve equity in the delivery of social services, so that each child enjoys his/her basic human rights.

As mentioned above, the Country Programme adopts a life cycle approach through which all programmatic areas contribute to three outcomes related to the three major stages of the life cycle – new-borns and infants (0-6 years but for education, pre-primary), primary school age (6-10 years), and adolescence (11-18 years). Each programmatic area, such as education, contributes an output to each outcome. The information in this section is organized according to the three outcome and the related education outputs under the 2017-2020 Country Programme.

Outcome 1: By 2020, women, infants and young children in Bangladesh, especially the most disadvantaged (with disabilities or living in urban, remote and disaster-prone areas), access and utilize high-quality social services in a safe environment, and their families are empowered to practise positive behaviour.

Output 1.4: By 2020, the quality of integrated service delivery and effective coverage have been strengthened in national and subnational education systems to support the well-being of children under 5 years and their mothers, in emergency and non-emergency situations, including urban.

Successful collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh in the area of ECD and school readiness, resulted in 2018 on the approval of ELCDP3 with a budget of USD 6 million. The new strategy aims at strengthening coordination and implementation by different ministries and agencies of ECD interventions. Capacity building of MoWCA's system and mechanism, including service delivery in the most deprived districts and sub-districts (upazilas) will be primary areas of support in this phase of the ELCDP.

During the reporting period, preparatory tasks for effective implementation of ELCDP, were completed by UNICEF and partners, including: drafting of the Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development (CECCD) policy operationalization resource book and developing training modules with a training plan for the National Resource Team and District Resource Team. Additionally, the district and upazila level coordination committees have been formed and approved by the Ministry. During the project preparation period, MoWCA agreed that the government will establish 16 Upazila Shishu Academy offices at UNICEF recommended targeted upazilas with revenue budget. With UNICEF support, preparation of a National Costed Action Plan, following the ECD Operational Plan, has been initiated engaging the Bangladesh ECD Network.

Additionally, successful advocacy efforts by UNICEF and ECD partners led to further integration of PPE into primary education. The newly designed PEDP4 makes provision for all 64,000 government primary schools and almost 30,000 non-government preschools to provide PPE. This will impact accessing the pre-primary education by five-year-old children. Children below five years will continue to access services through home-based ECD and day care centres. A two-year PPE course under the mainstream primary education is under consideration by the government which, if approved, will greatly contribute to strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy, and school preparedness of young children in Bangladesh.

The Integrated Community Development Project for three Hill Districts had been a long-term project between MoCHTA and UNICEF. Under the project, a total of 4,000 Para-Centres were established as the growth centre for the three districts populations but are used mostly for ECD services. After almost

20 years of programme implementation, the project has been revised and is now known as Sustainable Social Services for Chittagong Hill Tracts (SSS-CHT) to be operated through the hill district councils, conceptualizing the 4,000 Para-Centres as integrated ECD centres. The Government of Bangladesh will gradually turn these centres into permanent centres for ECD and other human development services. These Para-Centres will act as the feeder centre to the nearest primary schools for school enrolment.

In 2018, a total of 74,600 children (at least 50 per cent girls) in 40 day-care centers, 462 early learning centres and 4,000 para centers run by UNICEF's implementing partners in Dhaka, Sylhet, Barishal, Khulna, Chittagong Hill Tract Districts gained access to early education. A total of 80 caregivers of day-care centres and 462 teachers of ECD centers increased their knowledge on ECD practices. Additionally, 30 SSS-CHT project supervisors gained knowledge on how to prepare low cost and no cost ECD materials and 50 trainers and project staff increased their awareness on parenting and early stimulation practices at home to bridge the gap between the education provided at home by parents and the one received in Para-Centres.

Outcome 2: By 2020, boys and girls of primary school age, especially from hard-to-reach and vulnerable areas, are learning equitably in an inclusive, healthy, safe and resilient environment

Output 2.2: By 2020, national and subnational education systems have the technical, management and financial capacities to provide high-quality learning services to girls and boys, including children with disabilities and children in hard-to-reach areas, urban and in emergency and nonemergency situations.

UNICEF and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) are working together on a comprehensive revision of the pre-primary and primary curriculum as part of the government efforts to modernize the education system, ensuring relevance to the current needs of the country. It is expected that the process takes two years.

With UNICEF support, in 2018, NCTB initiated two studies to evaluate effectiveness of the current curriculum, and conduct a situational analysis to identify emerging learning needs. Findings will inform the curriculum review and revision process, offering an opportunity to update content taught in schools, as well as influence other components of the system including pedagogical practices, teacher training, student assessment, learning materials, etc., as per needs and directions identified. As mentioned above, the planned review covers the pre-primary and primary curriculum which offers an opportunity to better align the two levels. Additionally, the secondary level curriculum will also be revised during the same period, thus alignment between the three levels' curriculum will be a priority. Done as a participatory process that allows for engagement of parents and other key stakeholders, the process could serve to energize the country to reimagine and recommit to the education that is desired.

The strengthening of the pre-primary and primary curriculum and materials – in conjunction with other components of PEDP4, such as, strengthening the effective use of formative assessment techniques, the professional development of teachers, improving contact time by reducing double shift schools, increasing access to and quality of pre-primary education – is expected to contribute to improving learning significantly.

At school and sub-district levels, UNICEF continued to support the decentralized planning processes matched with block grants to implement the School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP). Grants were

provided to 1,210 schools serving over 312,000 children to implement their school plans and help schools meet the Child Friendly Schools (CFS) criteria in areas such as access, teaching, safety and school health and sanitation. The support for SLIP is meant to not only further the intended school performance results regarding learning and access but has been a major strategy for improving governance. The governance component is being given stronger focus through strengthening of the planning processes at school and upazila levels and increased linkages to community accountability for student performance. The support is linked with the School Effectiveness intervention supported by UNICEF through a consultative process that fosters stakeholder engagement and builds transparency and accountability.

Under the School Effectiveness intervention, in 2018, in the above mentioned 1,210 schools a total of 2,400 School Management Committee (SMC) members were trained to support schools through the development of SLIPs. 4,500 SMC members and 1,500 teachers were capacitated on C4D and sports components for making schools more child friendly. Lessons learned from the implementation of the School Effectiveness intervention will be consolidated to develop harmonized CFS standards in 2019.

In 2018, UNICEF continued technical assistance to DPE for the revision of SLIP in order to further strengthen the guidance to schools for the use of SLIP. The revised SLIP guidelines have been approved and will be used by the government to guide annual payments of over \$44 million in grants to 63,000 schools. UNICEF supported development of communication materials for creating community accountability for well-functioning of schools.

In 2018, UNICEF continued to promote equity and quality in selected 500 schools serving around 125,000 children through introducing “after school sports clubs” and use of sports to support pedagogy. A total of 1,000 school coaches were developed for 500 schools who were provided with sports guides, including information on engaging children with disabilities and girls. The project end line evaluation reflected that enrolment rate, attendance rate, and primary cycle completion rate increased by 2.14 per cent, 1.51 per cent, and 2.37 per cent, respectively, in 500 project schools compared to baseline survey information.¹⁹ However, a formal evaluation is required to confirm findings. Consistent with this initiative, the government created 1,250 school coach positions under PEPD4.

In 2018, 13,399 out of school children aged 8-14 years gained access to basic education through the Accelerated Learning (ABAL) model implemented by UNICEF and NGO partners in Satkhira, and Dhaka and Gazipur city corporations. At the same time, UNICEF provided technical support to the Directorate of Primary Education which resulted in 100,000 out of school children gaining access to education, of which 30,000 children were covered by the UNICEF sponsored ABAL model. Technical support will be provided to help the government meet its commitment to enrolling 1 million out of school children in next five years under the new primary sub-sector programme.

The Rohingya refugee crisis was a global and Bangladesh Country Office wide priority in 2018. In education 132,513 children (girls 66,113, boys 66,400) gained access to education in 1,412 learning centres and 750 shared spaces (home and community-based spaces used for learning and other purposed). Education quality improvement for Rohingya refugee children was a priority area along with access expansion. Given the political sensitivity around issues of language of instruction for

¹⁹ Calculated by UNICEF based on data collected from targeted schools.

Rohingya children and lack of agreed curriculum for their education, UNICEF and education partners developed a learning competency framework and approach (LCFA) to fill the gap of an authorized curriculum. The LCFA is structured from levels 1 to 5 (with Level 5 currently under development) and is an accelerated learning programme that allows learners to achieve competencies equivalent to grades one to ten in formal education core curriculum areas - English, Burmese, mathematics, science and life skills. Increasing access will continue to be a priority in 2019 as almost 40 per cent of 4-14 year olds and over 90 per cent of 15-18 year olds are not involved in any learning or skills training activities. Simultaneously, there will be increased attention to improving quality as the learning framework is rolled out.

Apart from the Rohingya refugee response, UNICEF supported education in emergencies (EiE) preparedness and response activities in 2018. A total of more than 50,000 children directly benefited from EiE activities in government primary schools in disaster prone areas in 2018. Response activities included facilitating the process of continuation of education disrupted by floods, heavy rainfalls, landslides, river erosion, water logging by supporting construction of transitional schools and distributing EiE kits to the most vulnerable children in Barisal, Chittagong, Khulna, Mymensingh, Rangpur, and Sylhet. Preparedness activities included supporting target schools in identifying local risks and vulnerabilities and development of the school based EiE and Disaster Risk Reduction in education plans, undertaking school wide emergency drills, capacity building events for more than 800 teachers, parents, and school management committee members. A standard procedural approach to risk assessment is yet to be adopted in the education system, but an informal risk assessment system is in place based on observation and estimates of likelihood of damages due to potential natural disasters. Lesson learned from UNICEF supported activities will be utilized in sub-district primary education planning processes for resource allocation and enhancing operationalization of a comprehensive school safety framework.

Outcome 3: By 2020, adolescent girls and boys in Bangladesh, especially the most disadvantaged, utilise quality basic social services in a safe and protected environment, and are resilient and empowered as active agents of change.

Output 3.4: By 2020, the Government and stakeholders in the education sector, at national and subnational level, have increased capacity to expand and deliver a package of quality services for adolescent boys and girls, aged 10 to under 18, in emergency and non-emergency situations, and urban settings.

In 2018, UNICEF supported education for adolescent interventions in three specific areas in a structured way following the programme framework that was jointly developed with the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) based on UNICEF Country Programme 2017-2020 and government priorities under SEDP.

In the area of strengthening systems for skill-based education, a comprehensive skills framework for adolescents has been drafted under the leadership of NCTB involving experts from different thematic areas, sectors, and organizations to influence formal, non-formal and informal education training and learning initiatives for adolescents. The objective of the skills framework is to prepare Bangladeshi adolescents to be adaptive, productive and active global citizens to address 21 century challenges and capitalize the demographic dividend. The framework will also support NCTB to incorporate foundational and transferable skill sets in the secondary education curriculum during the revision

process planned to be held in 2019. Lack of access to global/local resources by the partners, weak guidance, sectoral mindset, and inconsistent understanding on skills were the major challenges to developing the comprehensive framework. These were addressed through the formation of thematic multi-sectoral expert groups that worked together consistently and organized a series of stakeholders and experts' consultations.

UNICEF also supported NCTB to develop an e-learning course for secondary school age adolescents on specific skills from the secondary level curriculum. The competencies, content, structure and creative storyline have been designed involving multi-sectoral experts, including a group of adolescents. The course will be adopted by the mainstream secondary education system as a graded course and it is expected to reach millions of adolescents in schools. UNICEF also supported the Directorate of Madrasa Education to develop a resource book on life skills for the secondary level madrasa students considering the religious context. The resource book was drafted by a technical group comprising of Madrasa principals, Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board, Bangladesh Madrasa Teacher Training Institute, NCTB and MoE. The book will be introduced in 50 selected madrasas in 2019.

In 2018, as part of the demonstration of a system strengthening approach to reduce secondary school dropouts and increase cycle completion, UNICEF supported the roll-out of a school-based planning and implementation intervention at 250 secondary schools which serve 150,000 students in 50 sub-districts. At present, the first-round outcome is under review to reflect and reshape the process for 2019. Preparatory activities, orientation of district and school personnel and development of school level plans, were also completed to introduce the planning and implementation exercise in 50 selected madrasas with necessary orientation and training for officers and teachers.

All preparatory activities for an operational research on keeping adolescent girls in school to prevent child marriage, were also completed in 2018. The research is in partnership with the Population Council and preparation in 2018 included development of theory of change, results framework, research matrix, tools, guideline, baseline data collection and intervention packages development to start implementation in intervention schools from January 2019.

Absence of a culture of bottom up planning in the secondary education system hindered the timely implementation of school-based interventions. This has since been addressed with a series of capacity building initiatives. Alignment of multi-sectoral interventions by different actors to ensure convergence and comprehensiveness at school level is difficult because of inconsistent planning, strategies, approaches and implementation modalities. Furthermore, low institutional arrangement/control/coordination among the authorities at various levels is the key challenge to move forward with the interventions.

In 2018, UNICEF supported 1,750 most disadvantage and vulnerable out-of-school adolescents by partnering with BRAC through the Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) using informal apprenticeship in Satkhira and Cox's Bazar districts. A foundational skills package (literacy, numeracy, digital and information literacy) has also been developed in partnership with BRAC to ensure ALP responds more holistically and address the interests of out-of-school adolescents. The ALP intervention has been identified as one of the nine solutions to ensure that every young person is in education, learning, training or employment by 2030 under UNICEF's global partnership "Generation Unlimited". At present, UNICEF is focusing on the development of a strategy to scale up the intervention in partnership with CSOs, government and private sector.

UNICEF Bangladesh Education Results Framework

Outcome 1: By 2020, women, infants and young children in Bangladesh, especially the most disadvantaged (with disabilities or living in urban, remote and disaster-prone areas), access and utilize high quality social services in a safe environment, and their families are empowered to practise positive behaviour.			
Output 1.4: By 2020, the quality of integrated service delivery and effective coverage have been strengthened in national and subnational education systems to support the well-being of children under 5 years and their mothers, in emergency and non-emergency situations, including urban.			
Output Indicators	Baseline (2017) (% and/or #)	Target (2020) (% and/or #)	Progress (% and/or #)
Existence of an effective early learning policy with clear budget allocation in place - score (1-4)	1	3	2
Number of boys and girls benefiting from early childhood education through alternative approaches (such as home-based provision of ECD, accelerated school readiness models, parent education, among others) with support from UNICEF	341,000 (2015)	420,000 (50% girls)	294,114 (50% girls) Performance was below the baseline. Both baseline and target are to be reviewed as part of Mid-term Review (MTR) in 2019.

Number of boys and girls benefiting from upstreaming interventions of UNICEF on early learning and pre-primary education (input for curriculum, teaching learning package, training etc.)	2.8 million (2015)	3.4 million	3.6 million (APSC 2018) Target met due to government increased focus on PPE as explained in the report. Target to be reviewed as part of MTR in 2019.
Early learning policy and early learning programme ensuring parents' and communities' involvement - score (1-4)	2	3	2.5
Outcome 2: By 2020, boys and girls of primary school age, especially the most disadvantaged, live and are learning equitably in an inclusive, healthy, safe and resilient environment.			
Output 2.2: By 2020, national and subnational education systems have the technical, management and financial capacities to provide high-quality learning services to girls and boys, including children with disabilities and children in hard-to-reach areas, urban and in emergency and nonemergency situations.			
Output Indicators	Baseline (% and/or #)	Target (2020) (% and/or #)	Progress (% and/or #)
Existence of Education Act	No	Yes	Delayed (Advocacy continues with the MoE and the PM Office. UNICEF now providing technical

			support to finalize the draft Act)
Availability, in schools supported by UNICEF, of quality CFS/CFE standards that are consistent with Child Friendly Schools /education or similar models - score (1-4)	2	3	3 Target for 2020 met but needs to be sustained. Target to be reviewed as part of MTR in 2019.
Out of school boys and girls in the reporting year accessing formal or non-formal education with support of UNICEF	18,000	200,000	13,399 (Girls - 7,224, Boys-6,175) (100,000 indirectly)
Active involvement of school management committees at primary and secondary levels in the development of school improvement plans and monitoring of schools - score (1-4)	2	3	2
Outcome 3: By 2020, adolescent girls and boys in Bangladesh, especially the most disadvantaged, utilise quality basic social services in a safe and protected environment, and are resilient and empowered as active agents of change.			
Output 3.4: By 2020, the Government and stakeholders in the education sector, at national and subnational level, have increased capacity to expand and deliver a package of quality services for adolescent boys and girls, aged 10 to under 18, in emergency and non-emergency situations, and urban settings.			
Indicators	Baseline (2017) (% and/or #)	Target (2020) (% and/or #)	Progress (% and/or #)

Life skills and citizenship education embedded in the policy and curriculum frameworks - score (1-4)	2	3	2.5
Number of schools that have included life skills and citizenship education in their school plans with UNICEF support	66	200	250 Work started with 250 schools. The larger target reflects the interest of the government partners. Target to be reviewed as part of MTR in 2019.
Lower secondary school aged out of school children in the reporting year accessing formal or non-formal education with support of the UNICEF programme	5,000	12,000	1,750 (annual enrolment) While enrolment in 2018 was low, agreements were finalized with partners to enrol over 7,000 additional children. They will start in 2019.
Strong engagement of local communities in life skills and citizenship education - score (1-4)	1	3	2

F. Financial Analysis

In 2018, the UNICEF Bangladesh Education Programme had a planned budget of USD 45.32 million comprising USD 16.82 million for its regular programme and USD 28.2 million for responding to the Level 3 Rohingya Emergency. As detailed in Table 1, programmable funds for the regular programme were allocated among the three outputs which are based on the life-cycle.

Actual funding received was USD 28.72 million or 63 per cent of the required funding. Funds available included Regular Resources of USD 1.46 million; Other Resources-Regular (ORR) of USD 9.30 million; and Other Resources Emergency (ORE) of USD 17.96 million. It is important to note that USD 2.67 million ORR supported implementation of the UNICEF's Education response to the Rohingya refugee crisis.

Table 1: Planned budget by Outcome/Output

Thematic Pool 4: Education Bangladesh Planned and Funded for the Country Programme 2018 (in US Dollar)				
Outputs	Funding Type¹	Planned Budget²	Funded²	Shortfall
004 - 1.4 EDU-YOUNG CHILDREN & MOTHERS	RR	600,000	236,455	363,545
	ORR	3,518,000	1,843,486	1,674,514
002 - 2.2 EDU-B&G OF PR-SCHOOL AGE	RR	900,000	981,648	-81,648
	ORR	4,100,000	2,717,420	1,382,580
004 - 3.4 EDU-ADOLESCENTS AGENTS OF CHANGE	RR	700,000	245,032	454,968
	ORR	7,000,000	2,065,397	4,934,603
HAC 2018-Rohingya Response	ORE	28,203,156	17,963,155	7,866,032
	ORR		2,670,813	
Sub-total RR		2,200,000	1,463,135	736,865
Sub-total ORR		14,618,000	9,297,116	7,991,697
Sub-total ORE		28,203,156	17,963,155	7,866,032
Total Budget		45,021,156	28,723,406	16,594,594

¹ RR: Regular Resources, ORR: Other Resources – Regular, ORE: Other Resources - Emergency

² ORR and ORE planned/funded amount exclude cost recovery (only programmable amounts). RR plan is based on total RR approved for the Country Programme duration.

Thematic contributions, including global and country specific, represent 36 per cent of the total funded amount (Table 2). Together these funds were critical to the UNICEF Bangladesh Education programme realizing the results reported above.

Table 2: Country-level thematic contributions received in 2018**Thematic Pool 4: Education****Thematic Contributions Received for Thematic Pool 5 by UNICEF Bangladesh in 2018 (In US Dollars)**

Donors	Grant Number	Contribution Amount	Programmable Amount
Allocation from global Thematic Education funds	SC149905	6,793,915	6,381,112
Allocation from global Thematic Education funds	SC189904	3,034,908	2,843,017
United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF	SC1499050520	268,457	255,673
United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF	SC1899040009	352,951	336,114
Spanish Committee for UNICEF	SC1899040010	20,859	19,866
TOTAL Thematic Contributions		10,471,090	9,835,781

The provision of flexible funding through the thematic funds for the UNICEF Bangladesh Education Programme was essential to the financial and technical support provided to government and other partners. In Bangladesh, there are a number of areas in education programming which are critical to improving education in the country but are not priority for funding for donors. Thematic funds provide some of the resources needed to continue supporting these critical areas as well as help UNICEF to leverage resource or provide matching funding where required by other donors. In 2018, thematic funding contributed to the preparatory activities to operationalize the programming in the first year of implementation of the new sector strategies (ELCDP3, PEDP4 and SEDP) in areas such as access to integrated ECD, curriculum reform, decentralized planning, social and behaviour change communication, developing the national adolescent skills framework, and return children to school.

Thematic funds continued to be used by UNICEF Bangladesh Education Section to support annual school level implementation plans through which families and communities engage with their schools and contribute to improved governance practices. School level grants are provided to fund the plans which allows the schools to take decisions on what is required to improve access and learning in their context.

As in previous years, PPE was a high priority and significant amount of thematic funds were invested in access and advocacy. Investments made in research and advocacy over the years continued to pay off with the government agreeing to pilot two years of PPE. This is a major achievement considering the policy provision has been in place since 2010 but not implemented. It builds on the decision by government to require PPE classes at all 64,000 government primary schools as part PEDP4. These decisions will have implications for the education system and learning outcomes of children more broadly. The flexibility of the thematic funds allows for these investments to be made in a sustained way and the necessary advocacy required over multiple years. It is also through thematic funds that some of the support for building system resiliency to withstand and provide education in emergencies are possible.

UNICEF also invested in building Government's capacity for providing opportunities for out-of-school children to return to mainstream education and for older children to achieve grade 5 completion

through alternative education modalities. The combined results under Second Chance Education were achieved through ORR financing from the German National Committee (Let us Learn Funds) and Global Thematic Funds.

Funds from ORR, particularly contributions from the Italian National Committees, Futbol Club Barcelona Foundation and Reach Out To Asia (ROTA), and Thematic Fund contributions from the United Kingdom and Spanish National Committees, have been used to support non-Rohingya education in emergency, support implementation of gender and inclusive education activities, sports interventions, and Life Skills Based Education for adolescents.

Bangladesh has developed sector plans for all levels of education for the next five years having approved the ELCDP3, PEDP4 and SEDP in 2018. All three were supported in their development by the Thematic Funds and contain critical strategies for the advance of education in Bangladesh which UNICEF is asked to lead. It remains important that UNICEF's Education Programme continues to have access to a reliable source of funding which can be used in ways that push the system to improve by demonstrating what is possible and feasible. In some cases, it is proving concepts while in others it is gathering the research or developing models in an area that is not yet on the national or global radar while in other cases it is a specific intervention required to help fulfil the rights of children. This flexibility allows for strategic positioning of UNICEF and forms the basis from which UNICEF can leverage the resources required for system-wide adoption of effective models and practices. Continued access to Thematic Funds is therefore central to UNICEF continuing to be the Government of Bangladesh's partner of choice in 2019 and beyond.

Table 3: Expenditure in the Thematic Area

Thematic Pool 4: Education

Bangladesh

2018 Expenditures by Key-Results Areas (In US Dollars)

Key-Results Areas	Expenditure Amount			
	Other Resources - Emergency	Other Resources - Regular	Regular Resources	All Programme Accounts
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	11,856,763	5,527,123	962,294	18,346,179
22-02 Learning outcomes	2,164	1,561,460	255,359	1,818,983
22-03 Skills development	1,275	1,008,658	228,187	1,238,120
TOTAL	11,860,201	8,097,240	1,445,840	21,403,282

Table 4: Thematic Expenses by Key-Results Area**Thematic Pool 4: Education****Bangladesh****Thematic Expenses by Key-Results Areas in 2018**

Key-Results Areas	Expenses (USD)
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	1,065,985
22-02 Learning outcomes	922,017
22-03 Skills development	160,625
Grand Total	2,148,628

Table 5: Expenses by specific intervention Codes**Thematic Pool 4: Education****Bangladesh****Expenses by Specific Intervention Codes in 2018**

Specific Intervention Code	Expense (USD)
22-01-01 Provision of (formal and non-formal) early learning / pre-primary education (including in temporary learning spaces)	970,879
22-01-03 Provision of (formal and non-formal) primary education (including in temporary learning spaces)	11,259,095
22-01-07 System strengthening - inclusive education for other vulnerable children poorest quintile, ethnic/linguistic minorities, migrant children, non-citizens/undocumented children etc.	1,130,864
22-01-08 System strengthening - risk informed programming, including climate, resilience, disaster, conflict, and emergency preparedness	79,443
22-01-10 System strengthening - gender-responsive access (excluding SRGBV)	6,534
22-01-11 Other activities for equitable access to quality education e.g. school feeding, school grants	1,146,361
22-02-08 Provision of primary education teacher training	25,580
22-02-12 Provision of training of school communities e.g. parent teacher associations, school management committees	-4,955
22-02-14 System strengthening - early learning / pre-primary policy, leadership, and budget	1,380,042
22-02-15 System strengthening - early learning / pre-primary standards and governance	2,357
22-02-18 System strengthening - learning assessment systems	70,663
22-02-21 System strengthening - community participation and social accountability, e.g. school management committees	-6,774
22-02-22 System strengthening - gender-responsive teaching and learning (excluding SRGBV)	8,638
22-03-04 System strengthening - mainstreaming of skills development within national education/training system	869,135
26-01-02 Programme reviews (Annual, UNDAF, MTR, etc.)	17,807

26-02-01 Situation Analysis or Update on women and children	4,761
26-02-02 MICS - General	104,076
26-02-08 Programme monitoring	92,130
26-02-09 Field monitoring	2,619
26-03-01 Advocacy and partnership-building for social behaviour change	73
26-03-02 Capacity and skills development for social behaviour change	38,236
26-03-04 Community engagement, participation and accountability	330,462
26-03-05 Innovation, multi-media content production and dissemination	115,458
26-03-06 Research, monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management for C4D	9,315
26-03-07 Strengthening C4D in Government systems including preparedness for humanitarian action	101,168
26-03-99 Technical assistance - Cross - sectoral communication for development	151,001
26-04-01 CO/RO Supply - technical assistance and collaboration in supply chain, procurement of goods and services, and logistics	326,850
26-05-01 Building evaluation capacity in UNICEF and the UN system	125,174
26-05-10 Research innovation learning, uptake and partnerships for research	4,254
26-06-01 Parliamentary engagement for policy advocacy	25
26-06-02 Innovation activities	14,285
26-06-04 Leading advocate	33,600
26-06-05 Leading voice	2,854
26-06-06 Supporter engagement	303,851
26-06-07 Leading brand	114
26-06-08 Emergency preparedness (cross-sectoral)	1,079,632
26-06-10 CRC, CEDAW or CRPD - follow up on concluding observations	9,801
26-06-12 Learning	4,940
26-06-13 Joint programmes/pooled funding/inter-agency agreements	6,455
26-07-01 Operations support to programme delivery	1,433,571
27-01-06 HQ and RO technical support to multiple Goal Areas	3,611
28-07-04 Management and Operations support at CO	149,294
Grand Total	21,403,282

G. Future Work Plan

The year ahead is exciting for the education sector given the existence of new strategies for the pre-primary (ELCDP), primary (PEDP4) and secondary (SEDP) sub-sectors. UNICEF, having supported the development of these plans, will plan a strong role in their implementation. One of the most potentially transformative reforms is the revision of the curriculum for the entire system – pre-primary to secondary. This presents an exciting opportunity to support long term reform. There is also sector-wide support in the areas of access for the most disadvantaged, professional development, data for decision making, and education in emergencies. Some of the specific support that will be provided in each of the sectors are listed below.

Output 1.4: Pre-Primary Education

Some of the key strategies and activities for pre-primary education that will be implemented in 2019 include:

- Advocate and support government to prepare and approve a costed action plan for implementation of ECD. This has already been initiated and will oblige the relevant ministries and agencies to allocate resources for ECD in general and PPE in particular in the Annual Development Plan;
- Formation and orientation of sub-national committees for ECD;
- Supporting MOWCA to implement programmes in 16 upazilas targeted by UNICEF;
- Undertake a study on state of ECD in Bangladesh;
- Expand the integrated-ECD services through the Para-Centres in Chittagong Hill Tracts districts;
- Pilot two-year PPE in targeted districts and document the model for national expansion;
- Conduct supervision and monitoring training of the PPE supervisors in 36 districts;
- Revision of GO-NGO collaboration guidelines for expansion of PPE;
- Simplification of PPE standards and follow-up in UNICEF impact areas;
- Continue demonstration in the field of PPE standards, especially in the pilot and targeted areas on 'standard pre-schools' in close collaboration with the primary schools; and,
- Support piloting of two years of PPE including documentation for advocacy for scale up and continue advocacy with the government for the approval of an Education Act.

Output 2.2: Primary Education

UNICEF's support under PEDP4 will build upon the substantial support provided under its predecessor PEDP3, including the Each Child Learns initiative fostering inclusive learning through differentiated instructions, the Diploma in Primary Education for teacher education, and SCBA. In 2019, the expectation is to have a better governed primary education system that holds itself accountable for ensuring learning by enhancing data/evidence generation and decentralized decision-making processes.

The major efforts will focus on:

- Strengthening of the pre-primary and primary curriculum and materials as well as related components of PEDP4 to contribute to improving learning, such as, strengthening the effective use of formative assessment and the professional development of teachers;
- The PEDP4 proposes a revision and strengthening of the Diploma in Primary Education as well as strengthening of professional development. UNICEF intends to provide technical support for both processes as well as to go beyond the training to follow through and support school level application;

- Support strengthening the continuous professional development opportunities available to the teachers and other school personnel. The strengthening of the teacher support system is critical to improving student learning;
- UNICEF will support strengthening the data system so that disaggregated data and evidence are generated to inform the decision-making processes in various ways. This will be coupled with equity focused research, including secondary analyses of existing data, action research by practitioners, and sharing of findings to inform decision making processes;
- Support for revising SLIP and Upazila Primary Education Plan (UPEP) guidelines and training manual and piloting in four upazilas;
- Continue implementation of School Effectiveness model focused on effective support for learning in 1,210 schools of 24 priority districts and evaluate the effectiveness of the model;
- Support operationalizing Gender and Inclusive Education Action Plan, including capacity building of personnel and strengthening system for screening, identification and support for children with developmental delays;
- Provide technical support to government's Bureau for Non-Formal Education to reach one million out of school children in the areas of strategy development, research on out of school children, data management systems, sector coordination, and documentation of the interventions;
- Support for emergency response including scaling up education for the Rohingya refugee children by providing educational services to 320,000 Rohingya children and adolescents, including efforts aimed at strengthening sub-national education system in the affected Cox's Bazar district to provide quality and equitable education for all children; and,
- Provide technical support in implementation of the EiE component of the PEDP4 and strengthen preparedness and response capacity to ensure continuity of education as well as risk informed planning.

Output 3.4. Adolescents (Secondary) Education

The year ahead will be pivotal for the secondary sub-sector. The implementation of the first Sector Wide Approach to Programme (SWAp) for secondary provides a tremendous opportunity for working together and delivering results in a manner that justifies the approach. UNICEF will remain engaged in the process and will support implementation of specific interventions. Among the major priorities for the year ahead are the following:

- Finalization and popularization of skill framework for adolescent to influence secondary curriculum revision and all types of education and training for adolescents;
- Sharpening and strategizing school-based planning and implementation to reduce dropout and increase cycle completion within SWAp with rationale and evidences;
- Support second round of grants for school/madrassa-based planning and implementation of institution level priorities;
- Designing/revising and piloting alternative learning options for Out of School Adolescents girls and boys to bring them back to learning opportunities and generate evidence through piloting interventions in selected areas. Innovative solutions (using technology) to remove barriers that

affect achievement of results, for instance e-learning course, learning apps, ICT based monitoring and mentoring, reaching the unreached using ICT, and ICT in pedagogy;

- Technical support to review and update SDG related WASH indicators in Secondary School Information Management System including benchmarking for SDG baseline;
- Support to DSHE, MoE to design and implement a nationwide adolescent engagement programme to facilitate skill-based quality education through school-based intervention; and,
- Engagement of adolescents, both girls and boys, in design, development, implementation, monitoring and assessment of interventions and building capacity of Student Cabinets from schools and madrasas.

One of the major roles UNICEF will play in 2019 will be to co-chair the Education Local Consultative Group. In this capacity UNICEF will support the Government of Bangladesh in undertaking a comprehensive education sector review as well as country's application to access maximum country allocation of US\$ 53.9 million from the Global Partnership for Education. The role of co-chair provides a critical opportunity to help the Government of Bangladesh shape a strong process of engagement with the education sector and ensure the various efforts and interests are effectively coordinated.

Table 6: Planned Budget for 2019**Thematic Pool 4: Education****Bangladesh****Planned Budget and Available Resources for 2019**

Outputs	Funding Type ¹	Planned Budget ²	Funded ²	Shortfall
004 - 1.4 EDU-YOUNG CHILDREN & MOTHERS	RR	500,000	267,038	232,962
	ORR	3,500,000	1,210,036	2,749,567
002 - 2.2 EDU-B&G OF PR-SCHOOL AGE	RR	500,000	665,095	(165,095)
	ORR	4,067,415	1,562,557	1,774,185
004 - 3.4 EDU-ADOLESCENTS AGENTS OF CHANGE	RR	700,000	286,968	413,032
	ORR	7,100,000	1,422,280	5,665,464
HAC 2019 -Rohingya Response	ORE	47,000,000	3,377,786	18,720,995
	ORR		24,901,219	
Sub-total RR		1,700,000	1,219,101	480,899
Sub-total ORR		14,667,415	4,194,873	10,472,542
Sub-total ORE		47,000,000	28,279,005	18,720,995
Total Budget		63,367,415	33,692,979	29,674,436

¹ RR: Regular Resources, ORR: Other Resources – Regular, ORE: Other Resources – Emergency.

² ORR and ORE planned/funded amount exclude cost recovery (only programmable amounts). RR plan is based on total RR approved for the Country Programme duration.

H. Expression of Thanks

UNICEF Bangladesh remains a major partner in the efforts to strengthening the education system in Bangladesh to improve access to quality and equitable learning and skills for boys and girls. The organization remains flexible to fulfil the relevant needs of the sector but strategic in pursuing the investments that will matter in the long term. This was only possible because of the generous contributions from various donors through thematic funds.

On behalf of the children of Bangladesh, UNICEF BCO sincerely thanks all donors for their contributions. These funds are devoted to ensuring that children have equitable access to quality education, but ultimately contributing to the overall development of the country.

UNICEF would also like to acknowledge the strong collaborative work with the Government of Bangladesh, the National Committees for UNICEF, bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors, NGOs, UN Agencies, and local partners, including communities who play a key role in facilitating the implementation of activities at local level.

I. Annex: Human Interest Stories

Bringing education to the children of the industrial area

Raffat Binte Rashid, UNICEF Consultant

Nazmul Hassan, a 10-year-old, runs to his tin shed classroom in Surabari, Uttarpura ward 5, in Kashempur, Gazipur. It's a foggy morning, and Nazmul, a little tall for his age, is smartly dressed in jeans and a blue jacket, and sporting a biker glove. He has a cool, mischievous look, and enjoys himself at school with his friends. He aspires to be an engineer, however, when his teacher asks him to read out from his grade IV Bangla text book, the hard attitude is compromised when he nervously stumbles at the task given.

Nazmul's brother, Nahid Hassan, 9, is more down to earth, as he wants to be a driver. They are attending the same class, but sitting in different tables, as he writes down his grade III Bangla word meaning task.

This is a multigrade classroom run by UNICEF implementing partner Surovi, solely for out of school children living in urban slums. Here, the colour red corresponds to grade I, green to grade II, yellow to grade III and pink to grade IV.

"There are 17 students in the morning shift, and 14 in the evening session, and my class duration is three hours," says Saima Akter, who has been teaching the class for seven months now.

Accelerated learning in over populated industrial area

10-year-old Mohammad Kabir has five brothers and a sister, and most of his older siblings and his parents are working in the garments factories, and he has the task of helping his mother by cooking rice and washing clothes and looking after the younger ones.

Jannatul Akter Bithi, a 10-year-old who wants to be a nurse, is already a great babysitter. She has to bring her baby brother Sayem, who is three, with her to school. Their parents are at work, and Bithi takes care of the



10-year-old Jannatul Akter Bithi is reading with her fellow classmates at the multi-grade classroom supported by UNICEF at Surabaru, Uttarpura ward 5, Kashempur, Gazipur. 23 January 2019. ©Habib/UNICEF

household chores, which include cooking food, feeding, and bathing the brother. "I do not have to wash clothes, which my mother does during her weekend break," the little one says.

Through this intervention for out of school children, a baseline assessment survey was conducted, and 2,000 children identified as out-of-school, whose parents work in garment factories, and the informal

sector were enrolled in multigrade classrooms like the one described above. In Gazipur City Corporation zone 5, there are 12 wards where 67 Ability Based Accelerated Learning Centre (ABALC) are working to provide these learners education within a duration of June 18, 2018 to 31st December 2020.

“Accelerated learning units are designed to be completed within eight months, our working hours are more because the schools have no holidays, except for the government holidays, and also because children between 8 to 14 years are quick to learn and are quite advanced,” says Md Ayub Hossain Sarker, Area Coordinator, Surovi. The ABAL curriculum used in these slums are broken down into small units called cycles. For each cycle, a series of activities are carried out for introducing the concept, for learning, practice, reinforcement and self-assessment. The teacher acts as a facilitator of the children’s learning processes, sitting on the floor with them, and interacting in a friendly manner. The ABAL Package is designed for out-of-school children aged 8-14 years, with different abilities, having access to a multigrade and multi-ability-based learning opportunity.



Students are happily posing at the multi-grade classroom supported by UNICEF at Surabari, Uttarpara ward 5, Kashempur, Gazipur. 23 January 2019@ Habib/UNICEF

Mosammat Jannatul Ferdousi, a 10-year-old aspiring journalist, is the class leader and is a beautiful dancer. Extremely petite, she reads out loudly from the charts she made while the class repeats after her.

The spacious classroom boasts of new working tables and is colourfully decorated with wind chimes made by paper and plastic

bottles and bottle caps by a student who works in the morning and enjoys class in the afternoon session. “My students have migrated from other districts, and whatever little they learned in their village school, they forgot. I take extra classes to improve their standards to keep pace with the class,” the class teacher says, adding that there is hardly any time for practicing at home.

The 67 learning centres in Gazipur City Corporation where the UNICEF supported out of school intervention is working are providing basic education to children, between the age of 8 to 14, who have never been enrolled in primary school or dropped out before completing the full cycle. At the end of the primary cycle, these children can attend the formal primary completion exam to get a certificate that allows them to transit to the next level of education. It is aligned with the existing non-formal basic and formal primary education curriculum. It is now possible for all non-formal schools, second chance education schools, or private school students to sit for board exams because the

government has made it mandatory to follow the national curriculum using the national curriculum text books (NCTB) only.

This is a unique opportunity for kids whose parents are working, and the entire load of managing the siblings and household falls on their tiny shoulders. This non-formal setting of a school is their chance to enter into mainstream education. It's never too late for these charming kids who have seen life from a hard perspective. These kids get a stipend of Tk 100 each month, which is given to their parents during the parent-teachers meeting. This acts as an incentive for parents who are reluctant to spare the child for his or her daily chores.

A much-needed project for the urban slum children in Gazipur

"Gazipur City Corporation has an estimated population of 3.32 million, living in 329 square kilometres. It is estimated that approximately 750,000 poor residents live in the area, of which, 700,000 are dwelling in 1,410 slums or informal settlements, where both basic infrastructure and public services have failed to keep pace with rapid population growth," says Sabbir Ahmed, Education Officer Dhaka and Mymensingh Division, UNICEF.

"Mainstreaming these children and getting them admitted in government primary schools is the ultimate goal of the project, along with helping the City Corporation to continue the programme, once they fully grasp how the project works. The strategic intent of the proposed programme is to reach under-served populations that would lead to a reduction of out-of-school children



10-year-old Mosammat Jannatul Ferdousi is singing and dancing with her fellow classmates at the multi-grade classroom supported by UNICEF at Surabaru, Uttarpara ward 5, Kashempur, Gazipur. 23 January 2019. © Habib/UNICEF

and also contribute to addressing the issue of child-labour and early marriage," Sabbir Ahmed adds.

"The Gazipur slums are a poor and many of the people who live here are migrants from other parts of the country. Here, we have quite a number of out of school or school dropouts, or students who had never been enrolled, who deserve a second chance at education. Parents of these kids came here to seek work in garments factories or other factories or do petty business that are booming here. So, the kids are victims of migration. Government primary schools are not adequate enough, and kindergarten schools are expensive. Thus, if this option was not available here, these kids would not have access to primary education. The inadequacy is because of the sudden population boom. Industrialisation here is 100 percent more for everything," Sarker explains.

Local schools certify or give a No-Objection Certificate that these students are either dropouts or left outs before we enrol them, and later, integrate them into mainstream. This year, 575 students will sit for Primary education completion exam.

Primary school shun absenteeism

By Akram Hosen, UNICEF Consultant

No matter when her classes begin, Pria Rani Nath goes to school at least an hour in advance. Even after the end of her classes, the 5th grader of Ashampara Government Primary School in Sylhet's Jaintiapur does not go home right away, because she and many other students then begin what they are passionate about: playing games arranged by the school's teachers.

"I love football. I want to play on the school ground until the evening," says a smiling Pria, who lives with her landless parents and two brothers in the remote Ashampara village in the north-eastern corner of Bangladesh.



Priya Devi Nath (Class V) is a member of school football team of Asham Para Government Primary School in Jaintapur, Sylhet. The photo was taken on 2 December 2018. © Habib/UNICEF

Meanwhile, in another part of the large playground, a team is playing cricket with utmost seriousness.

To the amazement of the children gathered to watch the game, Tarekul Islam, another 5th grader, is scoring runs pretty fast.



Tarekul Islam (Class V) is playing cricket with the school team of Asham Para Government Primary School in Jaintapur, Sylhet. The photo was taken on 2 December 2018. © Habib/UNICEF

When he is bowling, 4th and 5th grader batsmen keep getting caught out by him.

"I want to be a professional bowler like Mustafizur," he says.

Like most students of the school, Pria and Tarekul are from very low-income families, says the head teacher Shaheed Mia. However, their enthusiasm for the school is remarkable, he adds.

"In fact, all of our students' love for the school has increased since they began to play games on the premises. The children simply do not want to leave. Even when it is time for them to go to a secondary school, they miss playing games here and sometimes come to us and ask us to keep them here somehow," he says with a proud smile.

With children engaged in different games in the corridors and front yard in a winter morning, the school premises look different from most schools in the country's rural areas.

Under the UNICEF funded School Effectiveness Programme, Shaheed Mia and assistant teacher, Beauty Rani, last year received training on teaching children how to play football, badminton, cricket and handball.

"We have formed teams for the games. There is a competition among kids to be part of the teams," Shaheed says. It all happened after the school was included in the UNICEF funded School Effectiveness programme in 2014. It received funds for the three following years. The authorities decorated its classrooms to make them attractive to children and arranged indoor games like carrom and chess and outdoor games like football, cricket and handball. Fun and merrymaking items like swings have been installed. Now there is also a library for children and the classrooms have teaching materials. But the situation in the school was not always like this. "We also struggled with absenteeism, but our emphasis on sport and the availability of play materials from UNICEF have made children really enthusiastic for the school," Shaheed says.

Meanwhile, in the playground Pria, who is a member of the school football team, scores a goal. The following screams and cheers are a proof of what the head teacher has been saying. After the game, Pria says, "I would give anything to be able to play here, because I want to be a member of the national team."

Shaheed says Pria's class attendance and concentration in the studies significantly improved after she became active in the football team. "Both Pria and Tarekul's exam performance has improved," he adds.

In a country that sees 21.4 per cent of the children dropping out of primary schools and alarming rates of absenteeism, the nearly 100 per cent attendance rate of 516 students at the school is surprising.

WHY SPORT?

Besides contributing to children's physical and emotional wellbeing, sports help to reduce frequent absenteeism in schools and boost retention. Furthermore, it develops their leadership and decision-making skills, confidence and discipline, and teaches them core values such as tolerance, cooperation and respect, says Md Qausar Hossain, education officer of UNICEF in Dhaka.

According to the "Global Initiative on out of school children: Bangladesh country study" conducted in 2012 by UNICEF, 21 per cent of parents in Bangladesh said their children didn't like school. It concluded that children's lack of fondness for their schools is one of the reasons behind 21.4 per cent dropouts in primary schools.

To change this, UNICEF has integrated sports into its ongoing interventions in primary schools. The initiative enhanced the results of other UNICEF interventions and showed a link between sports and school enrolment.

"Very few primary schools in Bangladesh, especially those in rural areas and urban poor pockets, provide children with the opportunity to participate in organised sports. The schools also don't have any sports or play equipment. The government funds are mostly used by schools to purchase

supplementary learning materials or of furniture. Teachers are also not aware of the necessity of organised sport and physical education,” Qausar says.

SCHOOLS TRANSFORMED

Head Teacher Shaheed also remembers how ensuring safe drinking water and maintaining a WASH block in the school largely influenced children’s attendance and enthusiasm.

“Most grownups in our village do not encourage children, especially girls, to play in the field. But when they see our teachers facilitating games and providing the gears, the people change their minds,” Shaheed says.

In Sylhet, the School Effectiveness Programme was introduced in 2013 in only six schools, 12 more were added in 2014-15 and another 50 in 2016-17. Now a total of 168 schools are supported by the project.

Sports Programme transforms rural school in Sylhet

Akram Hosen, UNICEF Consultant

Children in small groups cross the Sari river in dinghies and climb the steep bank of the river to reach their school.

The front yard of Nischintapur Government Primary School gradually springs to life as more students arrive and begin to play different games, grabbing the sports equipment made available for them. A teacher in sports outfit joins them and gives them instructions on the rules of different games. Surprisingly, most of the children have come to the school well before their classes would start, a phenomenon not often seen in Bangladesh.

When it is time for class, the teachers herd the students inside the rooms with some difficulties.

Students find renewed interest in school

At a first glance, the school in the idyllic Jaintiapur upazila (sub-district) of Sylhet does not seem much different from any other cash-strapped government primary school. However, a close look reveals that the children's enthusiasm for the school is extraordinary.

"It seems that the students can't get enough of school. Absenteeism is record low among our 243 students and we have zero dropouts since 2017," says Head Teacher Noor Uddin with a triumphant



School girls are practising football under the guidance of Md. Nur Uddin on 2 December 2018. He is the Head Master of Nishchintopur Government Primary School in Jaintapur, Sylhet. © Habib/UNICEF

smile. The man, who is in his late 50s now, has spent the greater part of his life as a teacher in this school. He thinks the school has been improving a lot since 2016, when the UNICEF and Directorate of Primary Education included the school in their School Effectiveness Programme.

"We have ensured community engagement, water and sanitation facilities and introduced sports as an important part of schooling. The classrooms have been made colourful and a garden has been prepared in front of the school," he says. In July 2017, Noor and an assistant teacher of the school received training in Dhaka on how to coach children on football, badminton, handball and cricket.

Since these are among the most popular games in the country, the teachers had no trouble forming teams of each of the games at the school.

“Since the equipment was provided under the project, the students even keep coming even after school hours,” he adds. But the situation has not always been like this, he recalls. “The washrooms were in bad shape and we didn't have our own source of safe water. But we now have a proper WASH block and a tube well. Our approach towards teaching has also changed with more focus being given on making the classes enjoyable. In 2017, none of the students of the school failed in the primary certificate exams. All of these things have contributed to the achievement.”

Local engagement

Jalil Miah, who runs a tea and snacks shop at a nearby kitchen market, was a student of this school many decades ago. His son is now a student of Grade-III at the school. Jalil has been nominated as a member of the school management committee.

“I always wanted to be involved. Most of the students are children of tea garden workers who earn extremely low wages. I wanted to do my part to make sure these children get better learning opportunities,” he says.



Md. Nur Uddin is the Head Master of Nishchintopur Government Primary School in Jaintapur, Sylhet who is acting as dedicated school coach. © Habib/UNICEF

Head Teacher Noor Uddin explains that there are many benefits of having local communities involved. In times of urgent needs, the local people even make financial contributions.

Thanks to the initiative of providing the schools with sports equipment and training the teachers to be coaches, the school's environment has transformed in recent months. The children's newfound love for their school also leaves parents surprised.

“Rather than trying to make the students excel in the games, what we do here is to help them understand how to control their behaviour for their own wellbeing and for the wellbeing of the group, seeking harmony both on and off the playing field. We impart knowledge on healthy lifestyle, self-esteem, change in attitudes, gender equality and social cohesion,” Noor explains.

The children may not have been presented with a state-of-the-art learning environment, but things are certainly changing for the better defying all odds. In Sylhet, the School Effectiveness Programme was introduced in 2013 in only six schools, 12 more were added in 2014-15 and another 50 in 2016-17. Now, a total of 168 schools are supported by the project, officials inform.

J. Annex: Donor Feedback Form

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