

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN (SEP)
COVID-19 SCHOOL SECTOR RESPONSE PROJECT (GPE)

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
Center for Education and Human Resource
Kathmandu,
April, 2021

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Covid-19	Corona Virus Disease-19
LG	Local Government
ESS	Environmental and Social Standard
WHO	World Health Organization
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
RACE	Risks Communication and Community Engagement
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
CEHRD	Centre for Education and Human Resource Development
CwD	Children with Disabilities
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
SMS	Short Message Service
TV	Television
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
PCU	Project Coordination Unit
E&S	Environmental and Social
IPF	Investment Project Financing
GRP	Grievance Redress Procedure
SMC	School Management Committee
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
GBV	Gender Based Violence
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SH	Sexual Harassment
WB	World Bank
GRS	Grievance Redress Service
EMIS	Education Management Information System
USAID	United States of America for International Development
ADB	Asian Development Bank
EU	European Union
ID	Identity Document
I/NGO	International Non-Government Organization
UNICEF	United Nation International Children Emergency Fund
SSDP-AF	School Sector Development Plan- Accelerated Fund
PAI	Project Area of Influence
NEFIN	National Federation of Indigenous Nationalities
NFDIN	National Federation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities
LGBTI	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Intersex

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1 Introduction

1.1 Project Description

The outbreak of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is spreading fast across the world since December 2019. Given the nature of the disease and its scale of transmission, WHO declared the virus a global pandemic, with a call on countries to take proactive measures to prevent and/or respond to further outbreak. As of September 20, 2020, over 30.6 million COVID-19 cases and 950 000 deaths have been reported to WHO globally. In Nepal, the first case of COVID-19 was detected on January 24, 2020 and the virus has been spreading fast since then. According to WHO, Nepal, a total of 56,787 COVID-19 cases were confirmed in the country through polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) by 16 September 2020. All seven provinces and 77 districts have reported one or more cases since the beginning of the disease. The country's daily new infection rate has surpassed 1000 cases per day in recent weeks with health experts suggesting that the situation may worsen further in the days ahead.

GoN imposed first nationwide lockdown on March 23, 2020 to reduce the spread of COVID-19 diseases. Since then, lockdowns were imposed number of times on phased basis restricting most of the social, cultural and economic activities except essential commercial goods and services. A High-Level Coordination Committee on COVID-19 Prevention and Control has been established under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense to provide oversight and take major decisions on the operations of government for the control and treatment of the disease.

As a result of lockdowns, Nepal's educational institutes are fully shut down for a period of about six months. In consequence, an estimated 8.2 million children from pre-primary to Grade 10 are out of schools. Although all school going children are affected adversely by Covid-19, it disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable groups- children, mainly girls and CwD from marginalized indigenous group, children of Dalits and poor, migrant children, children of remote areas and youth. It also exacerbates gender inequalities, with increased incidents of child abuse, gender-based violence, forced child marriages, teenage pregnancies, GBV and SEA/SH.

In order to respond the impacts of the pandemic on education sector, the GoN has requested funding from IDA to implement the COVID-19 School Sector Response Program. The project fund is made available through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Trust Fund and will be implemented over a period of 18 months.

The Project Development Objective is to maintain access to basic education in grant-supported local governments and build resilience for continued learning. The Project has three components which are as follows to support the education system by the adverse impact of COVID- 19:

Component 1: Remote learning methods for continued learning of all children, including children with disabilities (CwD) and children from marginalized background: This component will finance activities to ensure continuity of learning for all children; communication campaign and sharing of information; and continued professional development of teachers.

- (i) **Mitigate learning loss through inclusive distance learning programs for all children:** On April 28, 2020, MOEST/ CEHRD launched a learning portal which includes digital content for Grade 1-12. The content is categorized as per grade and subject for easy user accessibility. The project will support development of additional disability inclusive content for basic education, including content for early childhood education. Disability inclusion in remote learning content will specifically include captioning, interpretation, use of images and examples that are inclusive and do not stigmatize. These contents could be made available on the learning portal and broadcasted through TV, radio and print-media. Digital content developed will also factor the needs of the CwD. The availability of these contents will be advertised locally through communication campaigns nationwide through newspapers, TV, social media, mobile messaging. The communication campaign will also include (i) messages on the importance of education with special focus on girls and CwD; (ii) messages endorsed by the Ministry of Health and Population on disease prevention and good hand washing practices; (iii) sensitization campaign to prevent gender based violence (GBV), teenage pregnancy, and consequent dropping out from school resulting from stay at home orders in the current pandemic. (iv) schedule of TV and radio programs. The Project will also seek arrangements and/ or finance zero bandwidth access to learning portal in partnership with telecom companies and internet providers.

- (ii) **Development and updating of learning packs for children from marginalized background** with no access to media or internet:, Many households in Nepal, particularly in marginalized communities and remote areas, do not have access to media and/or internets and will be refrained from online learning. The project willsupport development and updating appropriate learning materials for children of such communities.

- (iii) **Strengthening Education Management Information System (EMIS):** The EMIS is the main administrative database system capturing information related to schools, students, and teachers. The data and reports generated by the EMIS are used for the annual and trimester progress reporting of school education. Currently, there is ongoing support provided by donors (USAID, EU and ADB) to include disability module, and strengthen and enhance the web-based EMIS. The Project will fill the financing gap and support enhancement of EMIS to capture data for project-related indicators. In addition, further enhancements to EMIS will be supported, including linking it to learning portal, and creation of unique student ID.

Component 2: Support to sub-national level to support safe re-opening and continued learning:

This component will support three subcomponents.

- (i) **Sub-component 2.1: Printing and distribution of learning packs to children from marginalized background** with no access to media or internet: The project will support printing and distribution of learning packs to children from marginalized backgrounds, including for CwD. The printing and distribution of the materials will be carried out at the sub-national level by the provincial/ local government or other agencies/ INGOs/ CSOs. The most effective and efficient medium for printing and distribution of these materials/ packs will be adopted. The Project Implementation Manual will provide details on the modality that will be adopted for this activity.
- (ii) **Sub-component 2.2: Continued Professional Development of Teachers and Head-teachers:** The development of teacher training courses on remote teaching strategies is being supported by UNICEF. The project will (i) fill the financing gap in the contingency plan; and (ii) finance the design and delivery of teacher/ head-teacher professional development opportunities to address students' learning gaps post CoVID 19. These trainings will be practical and short-term delivered through distance learning strategies/ platforms as well as face-to-face upon reopening of schools, following the required protocols. It will focus on conducting formative assessment to assess learning loss; remedial instruction and digital skills. The implementation of training will be carried out by teacher training centers at the provincial level. Other agencies, including INGOs/ CSOs may also be sub-contracted for the delivery of these short-term training. The details will be provided in the Project Implementation Manual.

- (iii) **Schools grants to schools from selected local governments:** The project will support about 100 local governments in disadvantaged areas/ regions that have been impacted most by CoVID-19. Supports will be made available through schools grants to ensure safe re-opening of schools and learning¹. Selected LGs will be required to develop a response plan for the implementation of project activities, including a timeline, physical and financial reporting mechanism. Following are the list of activities to be supported through this grant:
- a. **Welcome to School campaigns:** This involves educating parents, caregivers and communities on disease prevention for safe and sustained re-opening of schools, and motivating students to return to school. This will specifically target CwD and adolescent girls who are the most vulnerable to effects of pandemic in terms of their return to school.
 - b. **School sanitation & health protocols**, including health screening: The project will support implementation of school reopening framework at the school-level. The project will support (i) sanitization of schools before reopening, especially schools that have been used as quarantine facilities; (ii) availability of hygiene products, including menstrual hygiene products; (iii) minor refurbishment of WASH facilities (including ensuring availability of water) with a focus on ensuring accessibility for girls and CwD; (iii) safety protocols for school re-opening; (iv) implementation of staggered shifts and alternating weeks to reduce student contact; and (v) psycho-social support for students, parents and teachers at the school level.
 - c. Teaching at the right level, including conducting formative assessments in classrooms when schools reopen to estimate the learning gaps and providing additional support to children falling back, including remedial instruction.
- (iv) **Grants to schools with resource classrooms and special schools:** The project will support special schools and community schools in Nepal with resource classrooms that cater to the education of CwD. Selected schools will be required to develop a response plan for the implementation of project activities, including a timeline, physical and

¹ LG selection criteria will be detailed in the Project Implementation Manual.

financial reporting mechanism. Following are the list of proposed activities under this component.

- a. Support during and post-CoVID learning for CwD, including remedial instruction
- b. Minor refurbishment of WASH facilities to ensure accessibility of CwD
- c. Psycho-social support for CwD, parents and teachers at the school level.

Component 3: Management, and Monitoring and Evaluation: The component will support (ii) analytical work, including evaluation of the remote learning practices with the objective to inform future interventions and expansion; (iii) development and dissemination of school reopening framework and creation of national guidelines and strategies that will enable continued learning of students; (iii) building capacity and coordination among the provinces and LGs to equip them to respond to the effects of COVID-19 and potential further disruptions; (iv) project management, monitoring and evaluation

1.2 Objectives of SEP

The main objective of this Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is to provide guidance on various activities related to stakeholder engagement in the SSDP-AF project. Specific objectives of the plan are as follows.

- To identify the project's stakeholders by categories;
- To provide indicative plans of stakeholders engagement during different stages of project cycle;
- To provide guidance in organizing stakeholder consultations ensuring their participation during project implementation including environmental and social safeguards compliances;
- To assist the project in establishing functional GRM including environmental and social concerns; and
- To assist the project in information disclosure.

2 Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

Project stakeholders are defined as individuals, groups or other entities who:

- Are impacted or likely to be impacted directly or indirectly, positively or adversely, by the project (also known as ‘Affected Parties’); and
- May have an interest in the Project (‘Interested Parties’). They include individuals or vulnerable groups who may be affected by the Project and who have the potential to influence the Project outcomes in any way.

The Project will place due emphasis on regular consultations and communications with all stakeholders throughout project development and implementation. This will require identification of right persons or groups who may serve as legitimate and capable representatives of their respective stakeholder group, i.e. the individuals who have been entrusted by their fellow group members in advocating the groups’ interests in the process of engagement with the Project. In case of SSDP-AF, , elected local representatives of Rural Municipalities and Municipalities, school management committees, school teachers and community leaders, students, can provide helpful insights into the local settings and may act as main conduits for dissemination of the Project-related information and as a primary communication/liaison link between the Project and targeted communities and their established networks. Verification of stakeholder representatives, which involves the process of confirming that they are legitimate and genuine advocates of the community they represent, remains an important task in establishing contact with the community stakeholders. Legitimacy of the community representatives may be verified through an informal survey of community members or opinion leaders, heeding their views on who can be representing their interests in the most effective way.

2.1 Methodology

In order to meet best practice approaches, the Project will apply the following principles for meaningful engagement of the stakeholders:

- **Openness and life-cycle approach:** Stakeholder engagement, public consultations and disclosure of project-related information will be conducted throughout the project life cycle in a transparent manner, free of external manipulation, interference, coercion or intimidation;
- **Informed participation and feedback:** Information will be provided to and widely distributed among all stakeholders in an appropriate format. Opportunities will be provided to stakeholders for their feedback and comments on information related to the project, and arrangements will be made to addressing appropriate comments and concerns;

- **Inclusiveness and sensitivity:** Stakeholder identification is undertaken to support better communications and build effective relationships. The participation process for the project is inclusive. All stakeholders are encouraged to be involved in the consultation process. Equal access to information is provided to all stakeholders. Sensitivity to stakeholders' needs is the key principle underlying the selection of engagement methods. Special attention is given to children and students, mainly girls and CwD from marginalized and indigenous communities, other vulnerable groups, especially children/students of both gender, women, Dalits, ethnic minorities and the elderly. School sanitation and health protocol including the WASH facilities and availability of water will also be considered as inclusive and sensitivity with a focus on ensuring accessibility for girls and CwD.

For the purposes of effective and tailored engagement, stakeholders of the SSDP-AF can be divided into the following core categories:

- **Affected Parties:** Individuals, groups and other entities within the project Area of Influence (PAI) that are directly influenced (actually or potentially) by the project and/or have been identified as most susceptible to the change associated with the project, and who need to be closely engaged in identifying impacts and their significance, as well as in decision-making on mitigation and management measures;
- **Other Interested Parties:** Individuals/groups/entities that may not experience direct impacts from the project but who consider or perceive their interests as being affected by the project and/or who could affect the project and the process of its implementation in some way; and
- **Vulnerable Groups:** Persons who may be disproportionately impacted or further disadvantaged by the project as compared with any other groups due to their vulnerable status, and that may require special engagement efforts to ensure their equal representation in the consultation and decision-making process associated with the project.

2.2 Affected parties

Affected Parties include local communities, community members and other parties that may be subject to direct impacts from the project. In SSDP-AF project, the following individuals and groups fall within this category:

- Individuals and households, primarily the children of school going age, mainly children/students (mainly girls, CwD) from marginalized indigenous communities affected by Covid-19 pandemic who will be directly affected by project activities, both positively and negatively;
- Government staff/agencies and other organizations which are and will be directly involved in designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project;
- Students, teachers, school staffs , community people, parents etc who can face temporary restriction on their normal activities due to project related activities; and
- Workers/service providers, firms or individuals directly involved in providing services to WASH facilities and other various component of the project.

2.3 Other interested parties

The project stakeholders also include parties other than the directly affected communities, including:

- Officials of government agencies directly or indirectly linked with the project at federal, provincial and local level, e.g. the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; district or local Health centers
- Elected representatives of Rural Municipality and Municipality, and local politicians;
- Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)/INGOs
- Other national and international organizations involved in education sector in Nepal;
- Businesses and service providers in education sector;
- National and local media;
- Security agencies;
- Interest groups such as National Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) and National Women Commission;
- Suppliers, contractors and contractors' workforce; and,
- General public.

2.4 Disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups

It is particularly important to understand whether project impacts may disproportionately fall on disadvantaged, or vulnerable individuals or groups from indigenous communities, who often do not have a voice to express their concerns or understand the impacts or benefits of a project. The vulnerability may stem from person's origin, gender, age, education level, health condition,

economic deficiency and financial insecurity, disadvantaged status in the community, such as minorities or fringe groups, dependence on other individuals or natural resources, among others. So, the proposed stakeholder engagement activities will focus on disadvantaged/vulnerable individuals or groups, mainly from indigenous communities and aim to understand specific concerns and cultural or religious sensitivities and ensure a full understanding of project activities and benefits. Engagement with the vulnerable groups and individuals often requires the application of specific measures and assistance aimed at the facilitation of their participation in the project-related decision-making so that their awareness of and input to the overall process are commensurate to those of the other stakeholders.

In SSDP-AF, the vulnerable or disadvantaged groups may include, however, not limited to the following individuals or groups:

- Children/students, mainly girls and CwD from the marginalized and indigenous communities, Dalits, ethnic and religious minorities;
- Teachers/staff/ officials of relevant agencies;
- Parents/guardians, mainly from poor and female-headed households;
- Individuals with chronic diseases and pre-existing medical conditions;
- Children with disabilities; and
- Communities in remote and inaccessible area.

Vulnerable individuals/groups within the communities affected by the project interventions will be further verified, confirmed and consulted through dedicated means, as appropriate. The methods of engagement that will be undertaken by the project are described in the following sections.

3 Stakeholder Engagement Program

Given the emergency nature of this operation and the transmission dynamics of COVID-19, consultations during the project preparation phase were limited to relevant government officials and educational experts and institutions working in education sector. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan as well as the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) and other documents to be developed under the project will be publicly shared and disclosed. The project ensures adequate resources to implement the actions that are included in the Plan. Detailed activities under these actions will be developed further as part of the updated SEP. The planned activities under the action plan will be commenced at earlier possible date of project effectiveness, which is expected to take place within 30 days after the project negotiation date. The SEP will be continuously updated throughout the project implementation period, as required.

3.1 Summary of stakeholder engagement completed during project preparation

During project preparation, consultation meetings were conducted at the centre in Kathmandu. These consultations involved informal, formal and virtual meetings with the representatives of government officials of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology/CEHRD, EDCU, Local government and school. All together 100 participants were invited to join the virtual consultation meeting held on April 21 ,2021(8 Baishak 2078). Feedback received during consultations were useful for MoEST/CEHRD in taking measures to prevent and minimize environmental and social risks associated with the COVID-19 School Sector Response Program. Environmental issues discussed during consultation were related to sustainability of water supply facility to students/schools, hygiene and sanitation, solid waste management etc. Moreover, there were suggestions to develop guidelines for WASH facilities and support infection prevention by developing guidelines and providing training local governments.

Social issues pertained mainly to the problems related with remote or distant learning-teaching methods and very limited access to remote/distant teaching-learning technologies such as TV, radio, internet and printed materials involving both online and offline services. Participants shared that only 5-7% students in remote area and about 30-35% students of urban areas could access the digital devices. They also raised concerns for rapid training of teachers and students on digital skills and development of different remedial measures to mitigate learning losses. Similarly, the Federal government was also advised to launch targeted communication campaigns to prevent potential dropouts, particularly among girls and

disadvantaged students who are at higher risks for drop out from schools due to COVID-19 crisis. Suggestions were also provided to support re-enrollment campaigns and offer various incentives, such as extending support to school feeding programs introducing the provision of school uniforms and distribution of books and supporting equipment to schools or payment of school fees. There were also concerns that LGs need to be resourced with adequate information to support stakeholder engagement activities. Key issues and concerns raised by the participants of consultation and list of participants and feedback received during the virtual meeting is presented in Annex-1.

3.2 Summary of project stakeholder needs and methods, tools and techniques for stakeholder engagement

The stakeholder engagement strategy for the project will be guided by the WHO Risks Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Protocol; the World Bank's ESS 10; and Nepal's Education Policy 2019. The SEP is a living document and will be continuously updated as the project evolves to account for emerging needs of stakeholders. Specific targeted approaches will be applied to ensure that the vulnerable and marginalized groups have meaningful participation in the decision making and implementation of the activities.

Rapid perception and/or key informant survey and focused group meetings/discussions, however in small number limiting the gatherings not more than five persons at a time, will be conducted to understand changing perceptions and concerns, influencers and preferred communication channels of key target audiences/stakeholders and high risk groups in addressing the Covid-19 induced issues and impacts on education. The Project's Environmental and Social team will take lead role to conduct the surveys with the primary stakeholders, mainly the students, teachers and parents, particularly from the vulnerable groups like women, indigenous people, Dalits and ethnic minorities. The team will visit selected schools and communities for survey, identify environmental and social issues related to community/stakeholders, difficulties and needs of students on distance learning measures and learning packs designed for students from marginalized groups with no access to media and internet facilities. The feedback from the survey will then be communicated to the management along with the recommended measures to improve the teaching and learning environment.

3.3 Proposed strategy for information disclosure

All relevant information on Covid-19 response plan including Project's ESMF, SEP, GRM etc will be disclosed and made accessible to all stakeholders. The information will be disclosed through all possible means ranging from consultations to hard copies and electronic media so that these are accessible to all beneficiaries, including those in remote areas.

Project stage	Target stakeholders	List of information to be disclosed	Methods and timing proposed
Preparation	Government representatives (Federal, provincial and local)	Project concept (COVID response plan and guidelines), E&S principles and obligations, Consultation process/SEP, ESMF, ESCP, GRM procedure, project information including Covid-19 response Guidelines/Directives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-on-one meetings, orientation program • Consultation meetings, electronic publications • Information leaflets and brochures • MoEST/Project websites • Appropriate methods such as audio-visual materials, technologies such as telephone calls, SMS, emails, etc per the changing situation of Covid-19 pandemic.
	LG/School management, teachers/students, mainly girls, CwD and parents NGOs Media representatives including district/local health post	Project concept, E&S principles and obligations, Consultation process/SEP, ESMF, GRM procedures/ Teaching-learning strategies/ Curriculums/Covid-19 response protocols/guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group meetings, orientation program • Information boards, project/LG/school websites, project leaflets and brochures; • Appropriate methods such as audio-visual materials, technologies such as telephone calls, SMS, emails, etc per the changing situation of Covid-19 pandemic.
	Affected people/communities Neighboring communities Children/students of both gender Students, mainly girls, CwD/parents from	Project concept, E&S procedures, Consultation process/ SEP, Standardized health messages, mainly Covid-19 response protocols/guidelines and information, ESMF, SEP, GRM procedures,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public notices, press releases in the local media and on the project website, • Information leaflets and brochures at schools and RMs and municipalities • Airing of messages through educational programs through community radio, emails, text messages • Separate focus group meetings with IPs

	Vulnerable and Indigenous peoples		<p>and vulnerable groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate methods such as audio-visual materials, technologies such as telephone calls, SMS, emails, etc per the changing situation of Covid-19 pandemic.
Implementation	Government representatives (Federal, provincial and local)	<p>Scope of project and activities, regular updates on project development</p> <p>ESMF, SEP and GRM procedures/Covid-19 response guidelines/protocols</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Update Reports/press release, Emails, Meetings, Radio/TV and prints • Electronic publications as well as dissemination of hard copies • Appropriate methods such as audio-visual materials, technologies such as telephone calls, SMS, emails, etc per the changing situation of Covid-19 pandemic.
	<p>LG/Schools/Affected individuals and their families neighboring communities</p> <p>Students/parents from Vulnerable and Indigenous peoples</p>	<p>Scope of project and specific activities, regular updates on project development</p> <p>ESMF, SEP and GRM procedures and Covid-19 response guidelines/protocols including community health and safety, WASH facilities, Safe drinking water supply and sanitation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public notices, press releases in the local media and on the project website • Information leaflets and brochures at schools and RMs and municipalities • Airing of messages through educational programs through community radio, emails, text messages • Information desk at local government offices. • Appropriate methods such as audio-visual materials, technologies such as telephone calls, SMS, emails, etc per the changing situation of Covid-19 pandemic.

3.4. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

CEHRD organized a consultation amongst the EDCU representatives, CEHRD Officials and World Bank representatives on 21 April 2021. The consultation was participated by about 50 participants from EDCUs representing various districts. The participants raised issues on the impact of Covid-19 to the children and issues related to alternative teaching-learning initiatives taken by the EDCUs/schools in different districts. The participants also suggested measures for effective implementation of SSDP Covid-19 Response Project. Some of environmental and social issues shared by the participants were: i) unsustainability of water supply facilities to the schools due to the water source issues where the water sources are located in other LGs than LGs of beneficiary schools, ii) solid waste management in school where waste generated from different kinds of packing materials used for food and drink products and wastage from use of mask, gloves during the COVID response activities, iii) unsatisfactory performance of learning packs distributed to the children iv) problems in teaching and learning among the CwD v) poor compliance of Covid-19 protocols (social distance, mask, sanitizer etc) and lack of supervision and monitoring vi) very limited access to distant learning tools such as inter net and TV among large number of children. Key observations made by the participants during consultation are provided in the Annex.

Following matrix details out the consultation designs in SSDP-AF including the consultation topics, methods, target stakeholders as well as the responsible party or agencies during different stages of Project implementation.

Project stage	Topic of consultation / message	Method used	Target stakeholders	Responsibilities
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need of the project's Planned activities/ interventions • Access, equity and quality of education • Inclusive education/ learning/curriculums • E&S principles, risks and impact management/ESMF including like exclusion/discrimination in teaching-learning/impact and access to school sanitation and health protocol • Grievance Redress mechanisms (GRM) Health and safety impacts including Covid-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation Program/ Training • Phone, email, letters • One-on-one meetings • FGDs • Outreach activities • Appropriate methods such as telephone calls, SMS, emails, TV, radio etc per the changing situation of Covid-19 pandemic. • Methods that are culturally appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government officials from relevant line agencies at federal/ provincial /local level • Selected Rural Municipalities /schools/communities/ Health officers (health post). • Students/CwD, especially from marginalized communities/teachers/staff .Affected individuals/group from vulnerable/indigenous communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment and Social Specialist • Project Coordination Unit of Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) • LGs Focal person related to Education and E & S safeguard.
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project scope and ongoing activities/adjustments needed • ESMF and other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on identification of environmental and social concerns, issues and risk including risk management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government officials from relevant line agencies at central/provincial and local level • Educational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment and Social Specialist • Project Coordination Unit of Center for Education and Human Resource

	<p>instruments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEP • GRM • Health and safety • E&S concerns/risk management including solid waste management and sustainability of water supply facilities to students/school, • Issues related to access, equity and quality including access to teaching-learning technologies i.e TV, internet, printed materials etc. Guidelines/health and sanitation protocols (including WASH facilities) 	<p>tools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training / workshops/implementation guidelines/manuals etc • Disclosure of information through Brochures, flyers, website, etc. • Information desks/centres at schools/municipality/LG offices <p>Appropriate methods such as telephone calls, SMS, emails, TV, radio etc as per the changing situation of Covid-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>institutions/schools/Health center (health officers), School management committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers, students, mainly, girls, CwD from vulnerable groups who are at high risk and likely to be excluded from project supports. 	<p>Development)</p> <p>Local governments/schools/ LGs</p> <p>Focal person related to Education and E & S safeguard.</p>
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3.5 Future of the project

Stakeholders will be kept informed as the project develops, including reporting on project environmental and social performance and implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and grievance mechanism.

4 Resources and Responsibilities for Implementing Stakeholder Engagement Activities

4.1 Resources

An E&S Safeguard Specialists based in PCU of the Center of Education and Human Resources Development (CEHRD) will be in charge of the implementation of the SEP and related stakeholder engagement activities. The Director General of the CEHRD will exercise oversight over the implementation of engagement activities and ensure that budget and logistical resources are available to support the Plan's implementation

4.2 Management functions and responsibilities

The project implementation arrangements are as follows:

- The MoEST, mainly the PCU at CEHRD will be the lead agency responsible for the implementation of components 1 and 2. The Project Coordinator at Project Coordination Unit (PCU) under the CEHRD will oversee the project activities.
- The provincial/LGs will be responsible for the implementation of Component 2. A Project Implementation manual (with procurement section) will be developed to support the implementation of SEP activities.
- The PCU at CEHRD will appoint an Environment and Social (E&S) safeguard specialist at the centre who will be responsible for the implementation of SEP for components 1 and 2. Each LG at project implementation level will appoint a focal point /person who be responsible for implementing the SEP at LG level;
- Each LG focal point /person will work closely with CEHRD and LGs, seeking guidance as necessary and providing regular updates;
- CEHRD under the MoEST, will have the overall responsibility for oversight of the proposed project;
- The PCU under CEHRD will have a qualified procurement staff/ consultant to coordinate the procurement related activities. All procurement for project works will be carried out in accordance with the World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers for Goods, Works, Non-Consulting and Consulting Services, dated July 1, 2016 (revised in November 2017 and August 2018); and,
- LGs will follow GON procurement guidelines as per the Public Procurement Act/Public Procurement Regulation.

The stakeholder engagement and consultation activities will be documented in the form of reports, minutes, and audio-visual means.

5 Grievance Mechanism

The main objective of Project's Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) is to assist in recording, processing and resolving complaints and grievances in a timely, effective and efficient manner that satisfies all parties. Specifically, it provides a transparent and credible process for fair, effective and lasting outcomes. It also builds trust and cooperation as an integral component of broader community consultation that facilitates corrective actions. Specifically, the GRM will:

- Provide affected people with avenues for making complaints or resolving any dispute that may arise during the course of the preparation and implementation of project;
- Ensure that appropriate and mutually acceptable redress actions are identified and implemented to the satisfaction of complainants;
- Avoids the need to resort to judicial proceedings (at least at first); and,
- In the case of indigenous people, adopt culturally appropriate and accessible means by which IPs can lodge complaints for redress, taking into account their customary dispute settlement mechanisms.

5.1 Description of GRM

The implementation of Project's GRM will be guided by the Grievance Redress Procedure (GRP) 2074 BS developed by CEHRD/MoEST. The Grievance Redress Committees (GRCs) formed at three different levels will fully handle the grievances as specified by CEHRD's procedure.

The GRP 2074 BS has the provision of a Grievance Redress Committee (GRC) which is formed in every school comprising of SMC member, school principal/teacher, member of Parent Teacher Association (PTA), member of children club and other members as relevant. All the grievances at school level will be recorded, reviewed and addressed by this committee at the first point of registration. In view of important role of local governments in basic education, the judicial committee led by deputy mayor or deputy chairperson as per the article 217 of constitution will be considered a second tier GRC at local government level. The Education Officer at local education unit will work as an important member of the committee while addressing education related grievances. Similarly, there will be a GRC at PCU which will work

under the guidance of CEHRD. All grievances not resolved by the GRCs at school and local government level will be forwarded to PMU at central level .

The project will publicize GRM on a regular basis. The project will consider the cultural characteristics and accessibility factors while publicizing the GRM in the project area.

The GRM will include the following steps:

- Receive and register all grievances communicated/submitted verbally or in writing through telephone hotlines/toll free numbers, SMS, project staffs etc involved in handling grievances or other staffs that have direct contact with affected communities and if necessary, anonymously.
 - Collecting grievances and acknowledge it within 24 hours
 - The project will track grievances throughout the processing cycle to reflect their status and other important details.
- Review and investigate grievances:
 - Complaints categorized and documented depending on the nature and complexity.
 - Focal person validates the complaints and arrange for investigation by concerned units or departments within 2 days.
- Develop resolution options commensurate with the nature of grievances within 7 days
- Respond to grievances: E&S Safeguard Specialist/Focal person communicates to the complainant advising of findings and the outcome within 24 hours. If the grievance remains open, complainant will be given opportunity to appeal to the MOEST.

Once all possible redress mechanism is applied and if the complainant is still not satisfied then they should be advised of their right to legal recourse. The existing GRM will also be used for addressing GBV, SEA/SH related issues along with mechanism for confidential reporting with safe and ethical documenting of GBV, SEA/SH and other issues like environmental issues, social/caste based discriminations, bullying etc. Further, the GRM will also have provision to immediately notify both the MOEST/CEHRD and the World Bank of such complaints, with the consent of the immediate survivor.

The grievances under the project will be managed systematically by types of complaints and complainants to provide more efficient management. Detailed information on GRM procedures and functioning are provided in the Project's GRP, 2074.

5.2 World Bank Grievance Redress

Communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a World Bank (WB) supported project may submit complaints to existing project-level grievance redress mechanisms or the WB's Grievance Redress Service (GRS). The GRS ensures that complaints received are promptly reviewed in order to address project-related concerns. Project affected communities and individuals may submit their complaint to the WB's independent Inspection Panel which determines whether harm occurred, or could occur, as a result of WB non-compliance with its policies and procedures. Complaints may be submitted at any time after concerns have been brought directly to the World Bank's attention, and Bank Management has been given an opportunity to respond. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank's corporate Grievance Redress Service (GRS), please visit <http://www.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/grievance-redress-service>. For information on how to submit complaints to the World Bank Inspection Panel, please visit www.inspectionpanel.org

6 Monitoring and Reporting

The SEP will be periodically revised and updated as necessary in the course of project preparation and implementation phases in order to ensure that the information presented herein is consistent and is the most recent, and that the methods of engagement remain appropriate and effective in relation to the project context and specific phases of the development. Any major changes to the project related activities and to its schedule will be duly reflected in the updated SEP. Monthly summaries and internal reports on public grievances, enquiries and related incidents, together with the status of implementation of associated corrective/preventative actions will be collated by the Focal Point Person/E&S Safeguard Specialist and referred to the Project Coordinator of the PMU. The monthly summaries will provide a mechanism for assessing both the number and the nature of complaints and requests for information, along with the project's ability to address those in a timely and effective manner. Information on public engagement activities undertaken by the project during the year may be conveyed to the stakeholders in two possible ways:

- Publication of half-yearly report on project's interaction with the stakeholders.
- Monitoring of a beneficiary feedback indicator on a regular basis. The indicator will be determined in the updated SEP and may include:
 - Number of consultations, including by using modern means of communications carried out within a reporting period (e.g. monthly, half-yearly, or annually);
 - Number of public grievances received within a reporting period (e.g. monthly, half-yearly, or annually); and,
 - Number of those resolved within the prescribed timeline; number of press materials published/ broadcasted in the local, regional and national media.

Annex 1: Key Issues/Concerns Rose during Consultation, April 2021

CEHRD organized an online consultation of EDCUs, LGs representing 100 Municipalities/schools selected for support under SSDP Covid-19 Response Project on 21th April 2021. The consultation was participated by about 50 representatives. The LG's representatives of different districts viz Baitadi, Morang (Biratnagar), Kavrepalanchowk (Bethanchowrk), Rautahat raised various concerns on alternative teaching-learning measures to address the impacts caused by Covid-19 pandemic. Key concerns shared during consultations and suggested measures were as follows.

Social Issues and Mitigation Measures

- i) The alternative learning measures such as distribution of learning packs and distance teaching methods that were put in places by the Government did not perform as envisaged. Lack of clear performance indicators and monitoring of alternative learning initiatives were amongst the key issues.
- ii) EDCU representative, Baitadi District, shared that simple measures such as wearing mask, effective water supply system, sanitizer and physical distance among the students and teachers are essential measures to be complied during face to face teaching. Strict compliance of these protocols are essential to restore and retain the teaching- learning activities in the schools.
- iii) Participant from Morang (*Birat Bahira* Resource Class Room, Biratnagar) shared that given the special needs education of CwDs, teachers and students could hardly get connected by net and such children needed face to face teaching. It was also shared that about 30-35% students from urban area had access to the net facilities and for most of the students, masks were hardly affordable. School waste, toilet and sanitation were other key issues of the school.
- iv) Representative from Kavrepalanchowk district (Bethanchowk), observed that close supervision was necessary for effective performance of alternative teaching initiatives. Although CEHRD distributed the printed learning packs to the children in places without net facility, these were hardly used by the children. One of the reasons for this was that the learning materials were not in mother tongue of the children. Another underlying problem for poor performance was lack of awareness among children, teachers and parents for using the materials distributed.
- v) Participant from Rautahat noted that only 5-7% students had access to advanced alternative learning technologies such as net and TV, and a large number of students were excluded from these teaching methods. No protocols of Covid-19 were maintained in the school making the situation quite challenging. He further noted that *Haatbazzars* (temporary markets) and schools were the main sites that contributed to the spread of corona virus.
- vi) CEHRD officials shared that the key activities to be performed during Covid-19 were: i) distribution of books /learning materials to the students and ii) maintaining continued

relationship among teachers, parents and students in order to be able to cope with the Covid-19 problems and address the damage in the school level education.

Environmental issues and concerns:

- I. Kul Prasad Khanal- shared his view that performance indicators of school should be prepared as it will help in monitoring and reporting process of Schools.
- II. Narendra Prasad Awosti (EDCU Chief, Baitadi)- expressed that water supply facilities to the schools are located in other Municipality rather than in Municipality relevant to beneficiary schools. His concern was about how to manage water source issues between municipalities and school. He additionally, raised query that solid waste management is an emerging issue in school where student dispose different kinds of packing materials used for food and drink products and furthermore, wastage is generated from use of mask, gloves during the COVID response activities. If the school could provide water and bucket to students for hygiene and sanitation facility, it will be meaningful to address the COVID response measure at large in School.
- III. Ms. Pushapa Rai, Bethanchowk, Kavre: suggested that program monitoring and evaluation activities should be given high priority.
- IV. Mr. Deepak Khatri, Rauthat Municipality: suggested that outside the School premises, students violate the COVID protocol. Therefore, parents and guardians should be orientated on COVID awareness and monitoring is important.
- V. Mr. Durga Prasad Khatiwada, Biratnagar Metropolitan City, informed that Metropolitan city had lunched face to face education program in Birat Deaf Children School. Students were provided face mask and sanitizer to avoid the spread of COVID-19. But the distribution of mask and sanitizer could not longer due requirement of large quantity of mask to students to be used daily. One mask can be used for a day and procurement cost of mask which was Rs.3/pc.
- VI. Participant also raised query on provision of Monitoring cost, overall project implementation modality, share list of selected schools and consultation with LGs.

Response:

Mr. Ghanshyam Aryal responded the queries of participants. He mentioned that Monitoring cost is not included in budget which will be provisioned in coming next budget program. Program activity monitoring aspects will be strengthened and CHERD has planned to carry out consultation with LGs and has been preparing guidelines.

List of Participants from Different EDCUs/Schools and Other Stakeholder during Consultation, 20th April, 2021

SN	Name of Participants	SN	Name of Participants
1	Gokarna Dhoj Karki, Kavrepalanchok	36	Kartika Radhakrishnan
2	Baikuntha Subedi, Kailali	37	Jaya Sharma
3	Rajendra Chapagain	38	Annu Rajbhandari
4	Gopal Silwal, Jugal Gaunpalika, Sindhupalchowk	39	Sara Subba
5	Keshab Lamsal, Rajpur Gaunpalika, Dang	40	Bipana Sharma
6	Nageswor Rai Yadav, Haripur Nagarpalika, Sarlahi	41	Dron Pun
7	Damber Bahadur Thapa, Dhankaul Gaunpalika, Sarlahi	42	Ishwor Neupane
8	Dal Bahadur Thapa Magar, Myagdi	43	Sunil Paudel
9	Keshab Bhattarai, Sankhuwasabha	44	Rajan Shrestha
10	Hem Raj Dahal, Barju Ga. Pa Sunsari	45	Prabhakar Pandit
11	Salikram Ghimire, Tripurasundari Gaupalika, Sindhupalchowk	46	Keshab Dahal
12	Kul Prasad Khanal, Rajpur Nagarpalika, Rautahat	47	Ghanashyam Aryal,
13	Deepak Khatri, Dakshinkali Nagarpalika, Kathmandu	48	Ganesh Paudel
14	Guru Prasad Paudel, Syangja	49	Padma Sapkota
15	Srijal Shrestha	50	Bishnu Prasad Adhikari
16	Nagendra Prasad Awasthi	51	Ramchandra Timilsina
17	Ganesh B Katuwal , Annapurna Gaunpalika, Myagdi	52	Medinee Prajapati
18	Ramesh Paudel		
19	Singh Raj Dangi, Bajura		
20	Nanda lal Paudel, Kathmandu		
21	Pawan Kushawaha, Chakrahatta Gaunpalika, Sarlahi		
22	Ashok Rijal, Malika Gaunpalika, Myagdi		
23	Surendra Thakur, Katahariya Nagarpalika, Rautahat		
24	Tikaram Acharya, Dharche Gaunpalika, Gorkha		
25	Dhani Prasad Sharma, Suddhodhan Gaunpalika, Kapilbastu		
26	Laxmi Parajuli, Sammarimai Gaunpalika, Rupandehi		
27	Uddhimraj Paudel		
28	Sita Bhattarai		
29	Bimala Kumari Ghartimagar, Birndaban Nagarpalika, Rautahat		
30	Chandeshwor Sah, Maulapur Nagarpalika, Rautahat		
31	Krishna Paudel		
32	Tara Prakash Pun		
33	Oppo A5s		
34	Acer		
35	Puspa Rai, Bethanchwok Gaupalika , Kavrepalanchok		

Photos

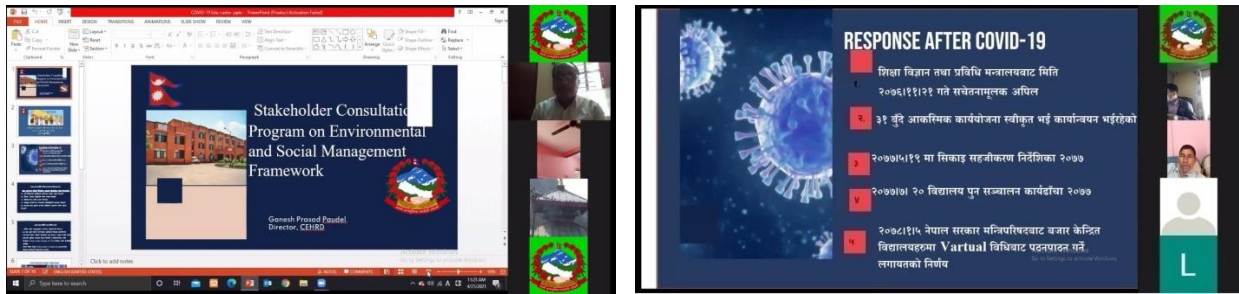


Figure: Virtual Stakeholder Consultation Meeting