

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023



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## VISION

# A QUALITY EDUCATION FOR EVERY CHILD.

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## MISSION

To mobilize partnerships and investments that transform education systems in developing countries, leaving no one behind.

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## GOAL

To accelerate access, learning outcomes and gender equality through equitable, inclusive and resilient education systems fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## PRIORITY AREAS

Access; Early learning; Equity, efficiency and volume of domestic financing; Gender equality; Inclusion; Learning; Quality teaching; Strong organizational capacity.



## OBJECTIVES

Strengthen gender-responsive planning and policy development for system-wide impact.



Mobilize coordinated action and financing to enable transformative change.



Strengthen capacity, adapt and learn, to implement and drive results at scale.



Mobilize global and national partners and resources for sustainable results.

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# FOREWORD

## LAURA FRIGENTI

Chief Executive Officer



Education is the foundation for building peaceful, prosperous, healthy and equitable societies. In a time marked by the impacts of conflicts, climate change and massive technological shifts, the role of education has never been more critical to empower the next generation with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And yet, nearly a quarter of a billion girls and boys remained out of school in 2023, and an alarming proportion of children in lower-income countries are still struggling to acquire basic reading and math skills.

Against this backdrop, support from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has reached 227 million children since 2021. Having grown to nearly 90 partner countries, GPE has rallied governments, civil society, teacher organizations, development agencies, the private sector and philanthropic foundations to support countries in their efforts to transform education systems. Our collective efforts have enabled partner countries to distribute 48 million textbooks, train 481,000 teachers and build 6,664 classrooms in 2023.

Our partnership also continued to grow. We welcomed Belize, Egypt, Indonesia and Sri Lanka as new partner countries and received new funding pledges from the US, Japan, Denmark and Norway. We joined forces with the Harry Hole Foundation and the Roger Federer Foundation to drive forward progress on girls' education and foundational learning.

GPE nearly doubled its grant support to partner countries compared to the previous year, approving almost \$800 million in grant funding over the course of 2023. Working with new and existing partners, we also leveraged \$1.2 billion in additional cofinancing to further drive progress, using innovative financing mechanisms such as the GPE Multiplier.

In 2023 there was a significant acceleration in partner countries identifying and agreeing on their vision for transforming education. Thirty-three partner countries finalized ambitious partnership compacts which can be used as a basis to leverage partnerships and funding around priority reforms with the greatest potential to improve education outcomes. Compact priorities emerging included foundational learning, teacher training and early childhood education.

A commitment to gender equality is at the center of GPE's mission, and this year we reinforced our partnership-wide approach to gender-inclusive education. Every partnership compact endorsed during 2023 considered gender aspects. The Girls' Education Accelerator reached \$176.5 million in allocations to initiatives aimed at addressing the unique barriers to education faced by girls, such as combating harmful gender norms and creating safer learning environments for over 26,000 girls in El Salvador and Zimbabwe.

During 2023, we also advanced our commitment to tackling the impacts of climate change on education. We launched the first-ever framework for climate-smart education systems, supported by a \$15 million initiative that provides education ministries with support to integrate climate into their national education plans, policies and curricula. At COP28, together with the Green Climate Fund and Save the Children, GPE mobilized \$70 million for a unique program that will support up to 23 countries to build more resilient education systems and prepare teachers, students and schools for an increasingly climate-impacted future.

Underpinning all these efforts is an unrelenting emphasis on effective, evidence-based approaches shared across the partnership. Fostering learning, innovation and adaptation, GPE hosted several regional workshops in which partner countries and other stakeholders gained a deeper understanding of systemic roadblocks to transforming education and how to remove them. At the same time, GPE made several operational changes based on partner feedback to make it easier to work together toward our common goals.

As we look to the future, our resolve to transform education systems remains unwavering. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of our partners and stakeholders whose dedication, generosity and trust fuel our ambition to make quality education a reality for every child. Let us reaffirm our commitment to education as the most powerful tool for building a more just, sustainable and peaceful world.



**Laura Frigenti**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Global Partnership for Education

# 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

**\$2.5** BILLION 

across 84 implementation grants active in FY2023.

 **227** MILLION

**CHILDREN REACHED** since 2021. In 2023, **\$795 million** was approved across **105 grants**.

**\$1.2** BILLION 

in cofinancing was leveraged through the **GPE Multiplier**.

 **\$140** MILLION

was committed to support girls' learning through the **Girls' Education Accelerator**.

 **4** COUNTRIES

**Egypt, Belize, Sri Lanka** and **Indonesia** joined the partnership.

**33** 

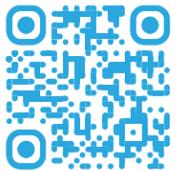
**PARTNERSHIP COMPACTS** were finalized.

 **39** GPE YOUTH LEADERS

from **28 countries** engaged in over 38 events and key moments and launched their 10-point plan for the future.

 **EDUCATION IN THE EYE OF THE STORM**

The GPE virtual reality web experience was launched here:



 **481,000** TEACHERS TRAINED, **48 million textbooks** distributed and **6,700 classrooms** built or renovated.

 **3** **KEY PAPERS** were published on climate-smart education systems, gender equality and transforming education systems equitably and inclusively.

## The 2023 Results Report shows that in partner countries:



➤ **6 out of 10 children** have access to at least one year of pre-primary education.



➤ more than **8 out of 10 children** complete primary school.

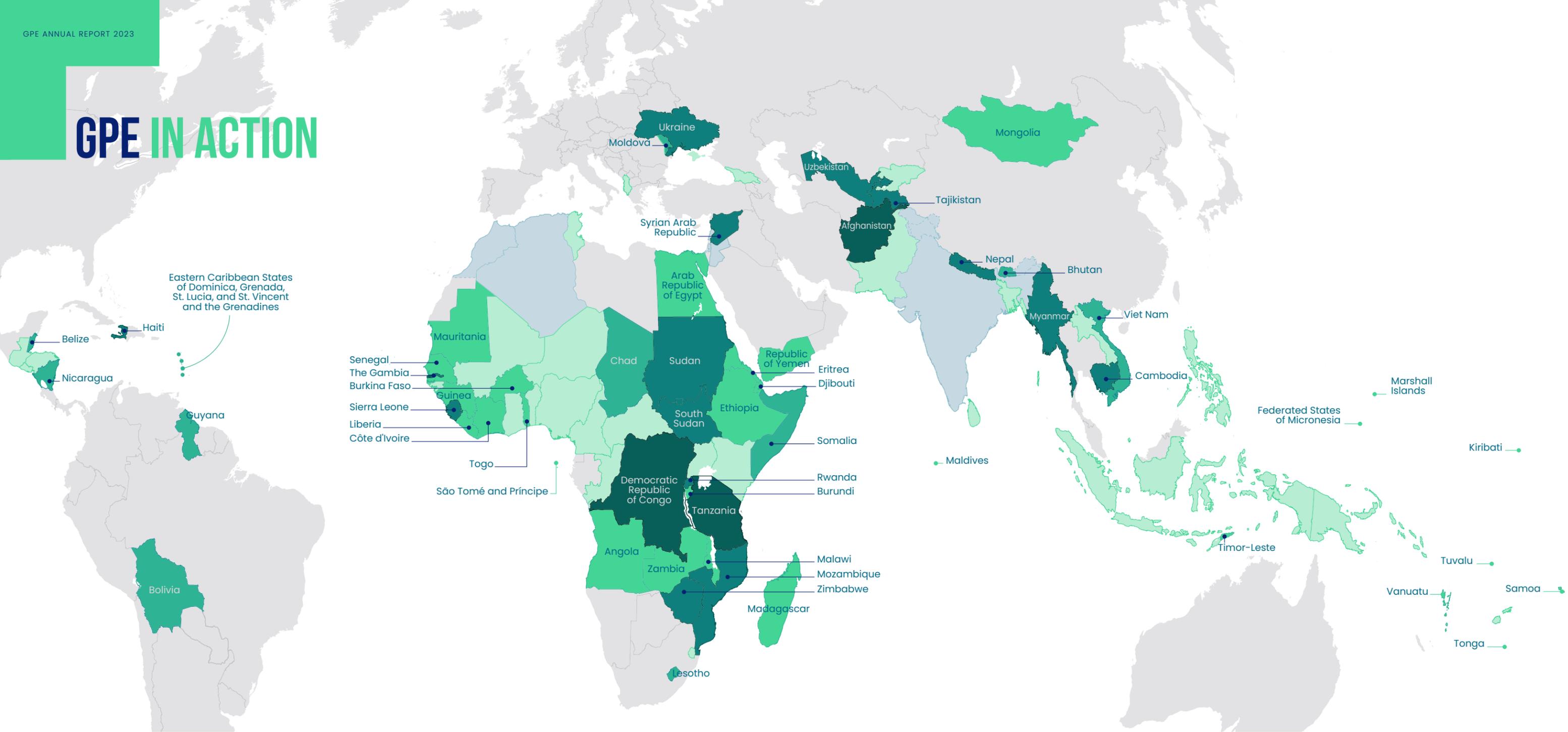


➤ almost **6 out of 10 children** complete lower-secondary school.

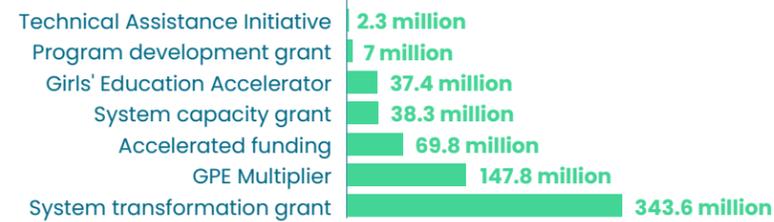


**60%** of partner countries increased their share of **education expenditure** or maintained it at the 20% benchmark or above.

# GPE IN ACTION



## Grant types approved in 2023 (US\$)



**Cofinancing mobilized**  **1.2 billion**

## GPE partner countries with a grant approved in 2023

Millions US\$  < 1  1-10  > 10  > 100

GPE partner countries

GPE eligible countries and territories

For country-specific grant amounts and types, please see GPE's grant data webpage: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/funding/grant-data>

\* Bolivia and Syria are not partner countries yet, but have received funding with exceptional approval from the GPE Board.

# TRANSFORMING EDUCATION



Primary school students enjoy a lesson at School 212 in Murun, Mongolia.

All for Education, supported by Education Out Loud—GPE's fund to support civil society—is ensuring more children with disabilities in Mongolia have access to quality education through advocacy efforts and gathering missing data for changemakers. As of 2021, more than 80 percent of children with disabilities across the country are now attending school, up from 44 percent in 2010.

GPE/Bat-Orgil Battulga

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**Throughout 2023, GPE focused on leveraging its partnership and funding to support the efforts of nearly 90 partner countries to transform their education systems and help every child get an education fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. GPE supports system transformation by working with governments and local partners to identify a priority reform with the potential to boost learning at scale. Each country's approach is captured in a partnership compact—essentially, a plan agreed by all stakeholders to improve education outcomes—that directs and aligns financing and technical expertise behind the priority reform. In 2023 progress across the partnership accelerated significantly, with nearly 80 partner countries working on developing partnership compacts to define systemic obstacles to learning and the reforms to overcome them.**

GPE backs countries' investments in education reform with funding that matches their ambitions as well as crowds in additional resources and attracts new partners. In 2023, GPE approved 15 system transformation grants while 19 countries unlocked funds through the GPE Multiplier by securing cofinancing from an array of different sources.

Partnership compacts showed that countries are focused on improving quality learning, more equitable and inclusive education, quality teaching, foundational learning and pre-primary education. Gender considerations were central across every priority reform, exemplified by **Côte d'Ivoire's** use of comprehensive gender analyses to inform its efforts.

In its partnership compact, **Tanzania** specified teacher workforce planning and management as an overarching reform with the greatest potential to accelerate change. GPE in 2023 approved

a system transformation grant of \$85 million, ensuring sustained support to the country's ongoing efforts to improve teachers' professional development. As of June 2023, the program had provided 272 teacher resource centers with over 1,170 desktop computers and hundreds of projectors, photocopiers and printers essential to their continued growth as educators.

During 2023, GPE approved a system transformation grant of \$20 million for **Nepal**, backing the government's own emphasis on quality teaching as a priority reform. This effort complements others that aim to improve both early childhood education and planning coordination with local administrations to boost gender equality and protect children from gender-based violence and harassment.

This combination of better understanding of how to achieve education system transformation along with fully aligned support is all the more critical as countries seek to make these systems more resilient and effective after the setbacks of COVID-19. Adding to the lasting impacts of the pandemic, in 2023 millions of children in GPE partner countries had their educations interrupted by the impacts of conflicts, climate-related disasters and other emergencies. From **Sudan to Syria** and **Nicaragua to Ukraine**, GPE was able to rally partners and funding to flexibly respond to children's needs in very challenging contexts. In December 2023, GPE restructured its support to **Afghanistan**, directing \$109.5 million to two community-based schooling programs that aim to keep children, especially girls, learning by improving schools and facilities, providing textbooks and paying community teacher salaries.

## Strong, innovative financial support to drive reforms

The flexibility built into GPE's financial support is designed to match each country's specific needs, goals and conditions, including those situations that pose severe risk to education systems themselves. GPE's grant funding catalyzes diverse forms of support from a range of partners, boosting investments in country-led reforms and critical education priorities.

Altogether, 82 partner countries were accessing \$2.8 billion in active GPE grants during 2023, while GPE approved new grants worth almost \$795 million. Of this total, system transformation grants represented \$343.6 million and the GPE Multiplier, \$147.8 million.

GPE also increased accelerated funding to emergency situations related to conflict as well as the climate crisis. Out of a total for accelerated financing of \$69.8 million in 2023, GPE agreed to \$20 million for programs in Sudan and \$4 million for earthquake-affected areas of Syria. GPE also provided another \$15 million to a program that in 2023 benefited more than 2,200 out-of-school children in **Syria's** Al-Hasakeh governorate, providing them safe places to learn as well as tablet computers they could use to continue their studies at home.

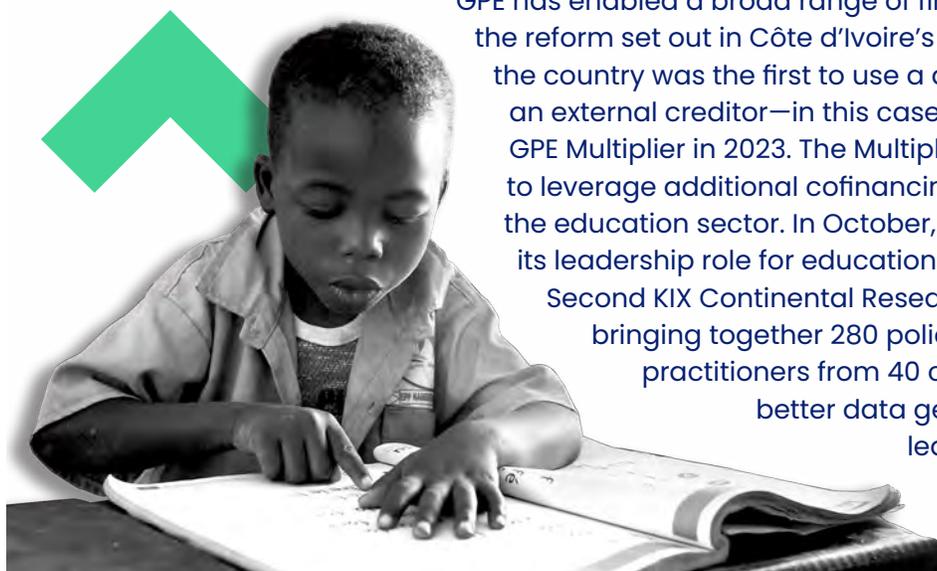
GPE's funding can trigger a snowball effect in attracting additional investment in education and encouraging greater innovation in the range of contributions. GPE's engagement has leveraged \$2.5 billion in funding from other partners via the GPE Multiplier, surpassing in just 3 years the cofinancing target set for the 5 years to 2025. The Multiplier on average realized \$4 for each \$1 from GPE.

## HOW CÔTE D'IVOIRE IS TARGETING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

In 2019, a regional learning assessment showed that by the end of primary school, just 41 percent of students in Côte d'Ivoire could read satisfactorily and just 17 percent were proficient in math. Key actors from across the education community subsequently took part in a nationwide, inclusive consultation process (*États généraux de l'éducation et de l'alphabétisation*) and identified dozens of reforms. The government also seized on the opportunity presented by the development of its partnership compact to target foundational learning as a priority reform that could best deliver far-reaching and lasting change to basic education.

The resulting partnership compact is aligned with Côte d'Ivoire's National Foundational Learning Program, which got underway during 2023. The program aims to improve basic competencies of early learners with innovative teaching methods; provision of a minimum package of learning materials; improved in-service training focused on teaching practices, pedagogical supervision and coaching; and regular learning assessments. The program also covers the rollout of a preschool class in primary schools, introduced in six regions across the country.

GPE has enabled a broad range of financial support behind the reform set out in Côte d'Ivoire's partnership compact and the country was the first to use a debt swap agreement with an external creditor—in this case, France—to unlock the GPE Multiplier in 2023. The Multiplier enabled the country to leverage additional cofinancing totaling \$182 million for the education sector. In October, Côte d'Ivoire enhanced its leadership role for education in Africa by hosting the Second KIX Continental Research Symposium in Abidjan, bringing together 280 policymakers, researchers and practitioners from 40 countries to explore how better data generation and analysis can lead to more effective and resilient education systems.



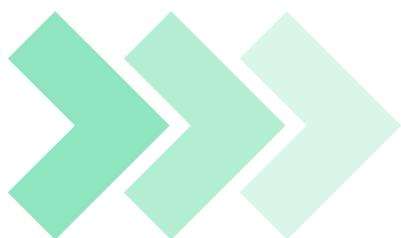
Grade 1 student during a reading lesson at the primary school in Nambirghékaha near Korhogo, Côte d'Ivoire.

GPE/Rodrig Mbock

## NEW PARTNER COUNTRY BELIZE MAKES A FAST START TO BOOST SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Belize's most vulnerable children in particular suffered significant learning losses during the COVID-19 pandemic, hampering foundational proficiency in literacy and numeracy as well as skills vital for the modern job market. With a heavy reliance on agriculture, tourism and fishing, and much of its critical infrastructure exposed to a changing climate, the government wanted graduates prepared for the future of work in roles in the digital economy and low-carbon industries.

Belize joined GPE as a partner country in early 2023 and by May had obtained \$20 million in funding, comprised of \$15 million from the Inter-American Development Bank and \$5 million from a GPE Multiplier grant. Belize is transforming teaching and learning as well as prioritizing underserved children, which are two main goals of its education sector plan. In addition to improving foundational learning, Belize is using the investments from GPE and the Inter-American Development Bank to support closing gender gaps in education and to advance science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics by constructing six regional laboratory hubs.



## New contributions in 2023

Denmark cited GPE's strong support to fighting climate change impacts and protecting education systems in fragile countries in announcing a yearly contribution of 33.5 million euros to the GPE fund in October. Among other donors, the **United States** provided a further contribution of \$130 million and **Japan** pledged \$5.1 million: \$4 million supporting education in **Somalia**, \$500,000 to back **Moldova's** assistance to refugees and \$600,000 to develop education sector plans. Near the end of the year, **Norway** agreed to contribute \$3 million to a specific funding account in support of the education crisis facing children in **West Bank and Gaza**.



Cofinancing came from development banks and private foundations and was complemented by breakthrough in-kind assistance from the private sector. **Google** and **Microsoft Corporation** became the first private sector partners to use in-kind contributions and cash to unlock the Multiplier, backing a distance learning and psychosocial support program with UNESCO and UNICEF in Ukraine. Through the Multiplier, GPE is matching dollar-for-dollar cash and in-kind support from these companies, totaling \$51 million, which includes a donation of 50,000 Chromebooks from Google and free software licenses for students and teachers by Microsoft. More than 410,000 children, teachers, principals, school psychologists, parents and caregivers, many in areas of intense conflict, will benefit from the UNICEF and UNESCO initiatives in partnership with Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Science.

The past year also marked the first time GPE funds were instrumental in a debt-to-education (Debt2Ed) swap, with **Côte d'Ivoire** unlocking a \$117 million investment in education as a result of a \$77 million debt swap agreement with the French government.

GPE's deepening relationship with philanthropic foundations and the private sector led to new financing partnerships in 2023. The **Harry Hole**

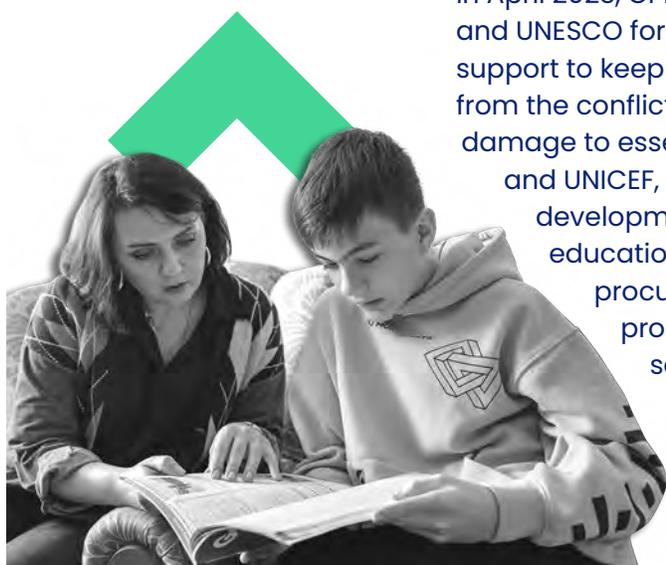
**Foundation**, founded by Norwegian best-selling author Jo Nesbø, contributed \$3 million to the Girls' Education Accelerator and the **Roger Federer Foundation** is providing \$3 million for early childhood education in **Lesotho**, the latter yielding \$3 million from the Multiplier. In addition, **The Nippon Foundation** agreed to provide \$5 million in support of education in **Viet Nam**, matched dollar-for-dollar by the GPE Multiplier.

The **Arab Coordination Group** is providing \$400 million to unlock \$100 million from the Multiplier. Funds under ACG SmartEd are available to 37 countries that are members of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation and collectively are home to nearly 28 million out-of-school children. During 2023, GPE and the **Islamic Development Bank** announced the first allocation of \$280 million in funding to **Cameroon**, the **Kyrgyz Republic** and **Uzbekistan** through the Arab Coordination Group Smart Education Financing Initiative or **ACG SmartEd**.

During COP28 in December 2023, **GPE, the Green Climate Fund** and **Save the Children** launched the first-ever major climate-finance investment in the education sector through "Building the Climate Resilience of Children and Communities through the Education Sector" or **BRACE** (see page 21 for more information).

## INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND SUPPORT TO SUSTAIN LEARNING IN UKRAINE

More than 2 years of sustained conflict in Ukraine have left an estimated 1,800 children dead or wounded and ongoing fighting continues to threaten the future of an entire generation of girls and boys. More than 3,000 learning institutions were damaged and 420 schools destroyed during the first 12 months of the conflict alone.



In April 2023, GPE teamed with Google, Microsoft Corporation and UNESCO for a \$51 million package of financial and in-kind support to keep children in Ukraine learning despite the risks from the conflict, the added hardships of winter and substantial damage to essential infrastructure. Implemented by UNESCO and UNICEF, the program includes teacher professional development, mental health and psychosocial support, education planning and management, as well as procurement and distribution of digital devices. This program will reach more than 350,000 primary and secondary school-age learners affected by the conflict and more than 60,000 others involved in education, such as teachers, psychologists, principals, parents and caregivers.

Olena Paskova helps her son Bohdan with his homework during a power outage at her current home in Rivne, Ukraine.

Throughout the Russian war in Ukraine, attacks targeting civilian infrastructure have further complicated access to education. Families displaced from the conflict zone have switched to online learning, but this continues to be disrupted by lack of access to power, internet access and other basic utilities.

GPE/Dmytro Maksymenko

## Sourced locally, shared globally: Generating and mobilizing information

GPE mobilizes and concentrates global support to education systems by sharing evidence and locally led learning through the **Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX)**, cofinanced with the International Development Research Centre. Through its four regional

hubs representing 70 lower-income countries, KIX serves both as a vital conduit and active partner in transforming research and learning into informed, effective action.

KIX-supported research and learning helped shape decisions on funding for accelerated education programming in **Sierra Leone**, teacher training in **Uzbekistan** and the integration of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in **Viet Nam** and

the Maldives. In early 2023, for example, **the Maldives** Ministry of Education decided to act on a strategic plan produced by a team of five national experts who had participated in KIX learning events. The ministry has since called for a comprehensive curricula review aimed at integrating modern skills at all levels.

KIX has supported 41 applied research grants involving 53 countries and 104 organizations,

most operating in low- and middle-income countries. These included teacher professional development, early childhood education, gender equality, equity and inclusion, learning, out-of-school children and youth and data use. In all, KIX grantees produced 111 primary research outputs, up 59 percent over the previous 12 months. Seventy percent of this new knowledge related to gender, equity and inclusion.

### DIVERSIFYING FUNDING SOURCES IN GUATEMALA WITH THE GPE MULTIPLIER

One of the key features of the GPE Multiplier is that it not only magnifies the amount of financing to education but also serves to diversify funding sources beyond the traditional ranks of multilateral and bilateral organizations, as seen in Guatemala. During 2023, Guatemala along with partners in a newly created local education group finalized \$47.2 million in education financing to better serve all children and adolescents, particularly those with indigenous backgrounds and living in rural areas.

This new funding unlocked a \$10 million Multiplier grant, with cofinancers including several local foundations and associations as well as World Vision, Save the Children and UNICEF. This additional grant financing generated greater resources to

the sector than would have been possible via borrowing, minimizing the impact on Guatemala's debt sustainability. The additional resources leveraged through the Multiplier and the alignment generated by the underlying education sector plan created the incentive for other donors to join this initiative.



Primary school students listen to their teacher in their classroom in El Renacimiento School in Villa Nueva, Guatemala.

World Bank/Maria Fleischmann

## KIX SUPPORT FOR TPD@SCALE: HONDURAS, GHANA AND UZBEKISTAN

Countries increasingly realize the urgent need to blend the growing range of information and communication technologies (ICTs) with traditional teacher training approaches to equip and support educators, affording them more equitable access to and participation in quality learning experiences. KIX is supporting the TPD@Scale project that is developing a framework and guidelines for adapting, implementing, evaluating and continuously improving on proven ICT approaches to teacher training.

The goal is to build the capacity of ministries of education and relevant education stakeholders to promote evidence-informed changes in policy and practice, significantly improving access to quality teacher professional development using the TPD@Scale approach. The project will apply and adapt two proven TPD@Scale models at

the national and subnational levels in Honduras, Ghana and Uzbekistan, where governments recognize the scale and urgency of the challenges facing their systems and are committed to strengthening teacher development as a pillar of their education reform efforts.



Mr. Jakhonigir Burkhonov, a teacher, works with his students in class at the GPE-supported Early Learning Hub in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

GPE/Federico Scoppa

## Strengthening civil society

Engagement with civil society organizations is crucial to ensuring that education systems and policies reflect community needs, particularly those of disadvantaged and marginalized families. **Education Out Loud**, implemented by Oxfam Denmark with GPE financing,

collaborates with civil society partners to raise awareness, highlight challenges and solutions, and advocate for greater domestic and international financing. This initiative also strengthens civil society capacity to encourage inclusive education policies, planning, monitoring and results.

Education Out Loud has provided more than 79 grants in 63 countries and states since 2019. From 2021 to 2023, civil society organizations with Education Out Loud funding have influenced education planning, policy dialogue or monitoring in 37 countries. In 2023, Education Out Loud activities led to 31 inclusive policy discussions and social accountability mechanisms, such as monitoring reports and local approaches that ensure community issues are heard at a national level.

Education Out Loud has been an essential element in GPE's support to **Mongolia** as the country has nearly doubled the proportion of children with disabilities in the school system to over 80 percent, compared with just 44 percent in 2010. Civil society advocacy encouraged policy changes, increased funding and boosted social awareness, culminating in the adoption of a regulation enshrining inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools. The new inclusive education measures for students with disabilities include a zero-rejection policy, early identification and intervention, infrastructure improvements, appropriate teaching methodologies, guidelines for school principals and salary incentives and support for teachers.

### Leveraging partners' expertise

GPE taps into and deploys the immense expertise of the partnership through technical assistance initiatives that serve to reinforce country capacity for system transformation. This on-demand technical assistance galvanizes global, regional and national efforts in support of priority education reforms, ensuring partner countries can take on complex education system or cross-sector challenges.

The **Education Data Leadership Program** in **The Gambia** is built around a public-private partnership with **Cisco** and **Microsoft Corporation** to tailor data capacity improvements for the education ministry and in-school management systems for measuring learning outcomes. Cisco will be working to address capacity needs in data analytics among staff at the ministry and regional offices, while Microsoft has provided a comprehensive technical diagnosis to facilitate provision of devices and software to aid in digitizing regional and school-level data. Lessons from this pilot will be used to inform GPE's broader strategic engagement with the private sector.

In partnership with the **World Food Programme** and the **School Meals Coalition**, GPE is mobilizing a school nutrition technical assistance initiative to bolster country capacity in delivering sustainable, gender-responsive and nationally owned school meals programs that provide school children with safe, diverse, nutritious and locally sourced food. The program, announced at the School Meals Summit in October 2023, will start with a \$1 million pilot program in 2024 with the aim of testing, adapting and expanding to all interested partner countries.

GPE is also exploring additional technical assistance opportunities aiming to improve gender equality and safe learning through integrated violence prevention measures in schools, as well as other opportunities to realize the potential of new technologies in education systems.

## Learning, adapting and innovating

GPE is committed to fostering continuous learning and adaptation. In 2023, this included improving peer learning and engagement through regional workshops, while GPE itself embraced several key changes in response to partner feedback.

Three regional workshops in 2023 brought together nine countries in Francophone Africa as well as a host of local and regional expertise. A national workshop hosted by Nigeria in January 2024 enabled the government, local education partners and six states—Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bauchi, Kebbi, Kwara and Lagos—to accelerate progress toward education reform prioritization.

To share knowledge gathered across the partnership, GPE published two papers in 2023 that offer all education partners framework ideas for advancing [gender equality](#) and creating [climate-smart education systems](#). GPE has also supported background research into the relationship between education and peace as well as education’s role in promoting societal stability (see box on page 17). Additionally, GPE produced an evaluation of its grant funding in response to the COVID-19 crisis (see box on page 16) that highlighted how these investments supported a wide array of activities. These ranged from high-tech options, such as e-learning tablets, through to low- or no-tech activities.

GPE also picked up the pace on its own learning throughout 2023, drawing on a continuous stream of evidence and experience to simplify and accelerate its operations and more effectively support partner countries. Three prominent lessons stood out:

1. Country selection of an ambitious but practical priority reform can attract and focus support, and accelerate efforts to improve education systems.
2. Gathering peers from across countries together with regional experts has been instrumental in advancing the understanding of evidence-based prioritization.
3. The emphasis on clear prioritization and implementation of the education reform demands strong national leadership and the coordinated efforts of all education actors, especially teachers.

For all stakeholders, this is leading to a deeper understanding of systemic roadblocks, why they exist and what can be done to remove them. GPE’s Board of Directors approved a set of operational changes to improve GPE engagement with partner countries and reduce transaction costs. These adaptations are expected to result in a record number of implementation grant approvals in 2024 and beyond.

## Lessons from GPE's COVID-19 accelerated grant financing

GPE's swift response to partner country demands for support in meeting the COVID-19 emergency clearly demonstrated the partnership's capacity to accelerate funding in times of crisis. Within weeks of the global pandemic being declared, GPE mobilized more than \$500 million to support global and national responses. In total, 66 partner countries benefited from \$474 million in grant financing, supporting distance- and home-learning programs that reached 100 million children, around 20 percent of the total school-age population in these countries.

An [evaluation](#) of this response emphasized the need to quickly adapt learning activities in crisis situations and to ensure that the use of technology, particularly for remote learning, matches ambitions to actual capacities in each setting. Additionally, support during emergencies needs to better accommodate the most disadvantaged, particularly girls and children with disabilities.

Accelerated financing contributed to immediate mitigation measures as well as subsequent recovery efforts matched to each country's preferred path. This approach enabled administrators to choose among low-tech or no-tech responses, such as distance learning via radio or television programming and physical delivery of education materials where possible, through to high-tech means using tablets or Internet delivery.

In addition to contributing to provision of school meals, hygiene and sanitation care, and public awareness campaigns, GPE also financed activities aimed at minimizing the negative impacts of school closures such as psychological effects, gender-based violence and issues related to distorting social norms. Crucially, training on distance learning methods reached more than 722,000 teachers and instruction on accelerated programs benefited another 397,000.

GPE's online series [Stories of Resilience during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) highlights how eight partner countries used funding from GPE as they coped with the pandemic's impact on their education systems.



## Exploring the links between education and peace

Education is not merely a means to individual growth; it is a powerful tool that can influence the future trajectory of societies. If inclusive and of good quality, it promotes understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence among individuals and communities. Education can reduce the likelihood of conflicts by fostering critical thinking, encouraging open dialogue and creating economic growth opportunities.

In 2023 GPE collaborated with the Institute for Economics and Peace and the Center for Strategic and International Studies to further investigate the evidence on linkages between education and peace. This resulted in [research](#) reaffirming the potential for education to build peaceful societies. While the detrimental effects of conflicts and protracted crises on education are well known, this study delves into the relationship between education and peace based on a literature review of quantitative studies and regression analyses. In addition, a [policy brief](#) shows that education can play a significant role in promoting stability, citizen security and social relations. Investments in education can be critical to forging strong economies and open societies, preventing conflict and rebuilding social cohesion after conflict—as in Rwanda, for example—and promoting peace and stability by including women and girls.



A Grade 5 student reads aloud in front of her class at Phonsivilay Primary School, Meun District, Lao PDR.  
GPE/Kelley Lynch

# KEY MOMENTS



GPE CEO Laura Frigenti visits a classroom at Dejazmach Wondirad Primary School in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.  
GPE/David Mugithi

## CEO Laura Frigenti visits Ethiopia

For her first official visit as CEO, Laura Frigenti spent three days in GPE partner country Ethiopia meeting with students, teachers, headmasters, parents and partners to discuss core education sector challenges. Ethiopia's investments in education have increased enrollment in primary school from 50 percent to 100 percent in the past 15 years, led to 300,000 teachers receiving in-service training and over 170 million textbooks, teacher guides and supplementary materials being distributed in schools. Across the country, US\$190 million in GPE grants are funding initiatives supporting the education of 18.5 million children. Laura emphasized how education is both a springboard and precondition for stronger economies and fairer, more stable societies, calling for investments in education to return to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.



GPE CEO Laura Frigenti holds a roundtable with GPE Youth Leaders on how young people are at the heart of sustainable development.  
GPE/Timo Diers



Janet Mbugua, GPE's new champion for education, addresses the panel at an UNGA side event on investing in education systems for sustainable development and children's wellbeing.  
GPE/Timo Diers



GPE Deputy CEO Charles North with Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Soipan Tuya at COP28 after participating in a panel on moving from climate change commitments to action.  
GPE/Ludovica Pelliccioli

## UN Climate Change Conference

At COP28, GPE strongly supported the [Declaration on the Common Agenda for Education and Climate](#) and co-organized 10 events focused on climate-resilient/smart education systems and their financing and the power of education and gender equality for climate justice.

With the Green Climate Fund and Save the Children, GPE launched BRACE (Building the climate resilience of children and communities through the education sector) with a \$70 million investment—the first major climate investment in the education sector to build climate-resilient schools in vulnerable countries.



GPE Youth Leader for Tanzania Salha Aziz advocates for gender-transformative climate education at the RewirED Summit at COP28.  
GPE/Ludovica Pelliccioli



GPE CEO Laura Frigenti with Roger Federer at UNGA side event.  
GPE/Timo Diers

## UN General Assembly

At the 78<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), GPE organized five events focused on system transformation and investing in education, the intersection of gender and climate for development and the next generation of changemakers as well as participated in a high-level dialogue on financing for development, a roundtable hosted by the Tony Elumelu Foundation and events on human capital in Africa and the High-Impact Initiative on Transforming Education at SDG Action Weekend. GPE Youth Leaders met with Roger Federer during a roundtable with the Roger Federer Foundation and participated in UNGA sessions to ensure youth have a voice in system transformation for education.

Youth leaders gather with Roger Federer to raise a hand for education.  
GPE/Timo Diers



## Women Deliver

At the Women Deliver conference in Rwanda, GPE hosted with Echidna Giving an 'Education Zone' for sessions on gender equality in education tied to advocacy, economic empowerment and barriers to equitable education access, creating a dedicated space for education actors to spotlight their ongoing work including under-represented voices and issues.

GPE Youth Leader for Nepal Lalita Tamang at Women Deliver where she spoke about ending child marriage and co-moderated a session on preparing girls and young women for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.  
GPE



# GENDER EQUALITY

Every girl and boy should enjoy their fundamental rights to grow up educated, healthy and safe without discrimination. GPE's commitment to gender equality was prominent throughout every aspect of its work in 2023, including funding, advocacy, knowledge sharing, capacity building and internal operations.

At the country level, every partnership compact endorsed by education partners during 2023 considered gender aspects, with 80 percent drawing on ongoing gender analysis to inform country policies and planning. To map out and align such efforts, GPE launched *Going Further Together. A Partnership Approach to Gender Equality* in September 2023, setting out how GPE pursues tangible actions to match its ambitions for enshrining gender in everything it does. The paper also details partner roles and responsibilities for hardwiring gender equality through a model of mutual accountability.

GPE's commitment to gender equality is complemented by the specialized funding available through the **Girls' Education Accelerator**, which approved nine new allocations to partner countries, bringing the total to \$176.5 million. **El Salvador**, the first country to access the Girls' Education Accelerator, is tackling gender norms and promoting gender-equitable learning assessments from early childhood to secondary school, covering more than 26,000 girls. In **Zimbabwe**, the Girls' Education Accelerator is backing investments in initiatives such as the development of an early warning system for girls most at risk of dropping out of school, promotion of safe learning

environments and drafting of a national life skills curriculum.

GPE also advocated for gender equality to highlight the enormous benefits that equal education delivers in terms of peace, prosperity and stability. One of the most significant events was the Women Deliver 2023 conference during July in Kigali, Rwanda, where GPE co-organized two conference sessions as well as other side events, focusing on the barriers to gender equality specific to education that also span numerous sectors.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, the **Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX)** and **Education Out Loud** demonstrated how research support and boosting advocacy capacity, respectively, complement each other as countries aim to change social and cultural norms underlying gender-based violence. Working in **Honduras, Haiti** and **Nicaragua**, a KIX initiative is relying on local evidence to better understand the nature and forms of gender-based violence in rural areas and to co-create prevention strategies. This experience has revealed that while there is no single path from research to advocacy to action, the more this process is connected to communities and their experiences, the greater the possibilities for change.



## ADDRESSING GENDER INEQUALITIES IN SOMALILAND

To reverse persistently low primary enrollment rates, Somaliland based its partnership compact on a program to deliver easier access to pre-primary and primary schooling, particularly for girls. The lack of female teachers is a major barrier to girls' attendance and experience of learning in schools in Somaliland. Girls constitute only around 30 percent of children enrolling in primary school in Somaliland and only 15 percent of those going on to secondary school.

GPE resources will increase girls' enrollment and improve their learning experience by expanding early childhood education infrastructure, particularly female teacher availability. Investment in new classrooms will be accompanied by water and hygiene facilities and the creation of girl-friendly spaces. Somaliland's program will remove barriers for female teachers and address gender-responsive pedagogy and training on gender-based violence. Girls' Education Accelerator financing will increase the technical and decision-making capacity of the gender unit within the Ministry of Education alongside targeted measures to address school dropout of adolescent girls. The program will also strengthen monitoring and evaluation in the education sector, with a sharper focus on gender indicators, sex-disaggregation of key education data—such as routine school-level reporting indicators—and improved analysis of gender-related data.



Female students concentrate during a lesson at Booldid Primary School, 40 kilometers from the city of Hargeisa, Somaliland.

GPE/AP

# EDUCATION AND CLIMATE

A rapidly changing climate and ongoing environmental deterioration are creating a planetary crisis that inevitably impacts education. In response, GPE accelerated and broadened its efforts to work alongside countries in building climate resilience and environmental sustainability into their education systems.

GPE's approach to the climate crisis leverages the interconnections between education systems and the environment, aiming to future-proof learning to foster better, more sustainable management of our planet. As awareness of the impact on education of this crisis grows, so too does the need to boost the scope and effective coordination of financial and technical support for lower-income countries. By 2050, climate change is likely to displace more than 216 million people, disrupting the education of millions of children, impacting their development and that of their countries.

To encourage resilient education systems fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, GPE launched *Toward Climate-Smart Education Systems: A 7-Dimension Framework for Action*, setting out GPE's strategy for maximizing the complementarity between the many approaches to climate resilience and climate action in education. Together with Save the Children, UNESCO and UNESCO's International Institute for Education Planning, GPE launched the **Climate Smart Education Systems Initiative** to assist ministries in integrating climate into their data systems, policies, plans and curricula, beginning in **Malawi** and **Zimbabwe**. GPE allocated \$15 million to back expansion to an additional

20 countries, creating a new path for countries to access climate finance.

At COP28 in Dubai, GPE also teamed with the Green Climate Fund and Save the Children to launch "Building the Climate Resilience of Children and Communities Through the Education Sector" or **BRACE**. Starting in **Cambodia, South Sudan** and **Tonga**, this \$70 million program will invest in a range of practical actions including retrofitting and constructing greener and more climate-adaptive schools in line with the Comprehensive School Safety Framework as well as integrating climate into curricula and improving early warning and response approaches depending on country needs.

This initiative will work with another 20 countries, predominantly in Africa and Asia, to build their capacity and readiness to access and deploy climate finance for increased resilience in the education sector. BRACE will take the results and lessons from these pilot countries and link with others, including the private sector, implementation partners and civil society, to strengthen coordination and good practice in climate-related investments in education.

BRACE points to the growing availability of technical and financial support to match the ambition of those governments that recognize the imperative of climate-proofing education systems so children can learn to overcome any challenge and prosper. At COP28 in Dubai, 37 countries signed the Climate and Education Declaration which provides a platform for governments to include education in national

climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. Co-developed by GPE, UNESCO and the UK, the Declaration represents a critical step in

countries committing the resources necessary to prepare education systems, teachers and students for the impacts of climate change.

### **ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHALLENGES IN MADAGASCAR**

In the last 35 years, more than 5 million children have been affected by 46 natural disasters in Madagascar including cyclones, droughts and floods. These disasters, intensified by climate change, have destroyed school infrastructure and reduced school attendance, especially for students from vulnerable families.

Through its school construction program, the Ministry of Education is identifying safe locations to build schools, adopting climate-proof designs so that school buildings are capable of withstanding disasters, and is implementing new disaster-resistant infrastructure standards for schools in high-risk areas. With GPE funding, the ministry is revising the school calendar to align with the agriculture and weather seasons, which will help minimize high student and teacher absenteeism caused by problems accessing schools during the rainy, cyclone and drought seasons.



Primary school students complete a writing lesson in class in groups at EPP Anosisoa School in Antananarivo, Madagascar.

GPE/Carine Durand

# FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING

The learning crisis, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights the vital importance of foundational elements of learning—reading, writing, socioemotional skills—and other 21<sup>st</sup> century abilities. Without these essential building blocks, children are not able to realize their full potential.

Weaknesses in foundational learning affect vulnerable children the most. Children with disabilities are 42 percent less likely to have essential reading and numeracy skills than other girls and boys. Children from the poorest households are eight times less likely to complete primary school compared to children from the richest households. Globally, more than two-thirds of children emerging from primary schools across low- and middle-income countries are unable to read or do math at an appropriate level.

Most GPE partner countries are putting foundational learning and a focus on learning outcomes as the cornerstone of their transformation efforts. By the end of 2023, 29 of 33 partnership compacts included a priority reform focusing on the improvement of teaching and learning. At least nine explicitly focused on foundational learning, while others included it as part of related initiatives in early learning or improvement of primary learning outcomes.

In **Sierra Leone**, the government specified the “Foundations of Learning for All” initiative in its partnership compact, believing this priority reform has the potential to ignite transformation across its education system. The government, alongside a diverse coalition of education partners, committed to this priority to ensure that all students can read fluently with comprehension, achieve fundamental mathematics competencies and develop skills for socioemotional resilience by their fourth year of primary school.

Recognizing the urgency and scale of the challenges to successful foundational learning in partner countries, in March 2023 GPE endorsed the [Commitment to Action](#) on foundational learning and in October, formally entered the [Coalition for Foundational Learning](#). The Coalition aims to help countries access and use data, set ambitious targets in early learning and implement plans to achieve them.



## GPE SUPPORT TO TEACHER TRAINING AS A PILLAR OF FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING

The learning crisis is a teacher crisis. According to a new global report from the UNESCO Teacher Task Force, 13 million additional primary teachers and another 31 million secondary teachers are needed if the world is to meet sustainable development goal (SDG) 4. More than \$549 million or 89 percent of GPE's implementation grants active in the 2023 fiscal year included a range of support to teachers, such as pre- and in-service training, coaching and mentoring, teacher management and teaching tools.

GPE assists with improving the availability and quality of data on teachers and teaching as well as policies for advancing teaching quality, support and management. The partnership also facilitates the engagement of teachers and school leaders and encourages the inclusion of teacher organizations in local education groups. GPE funding in [North-east Nigeria](#) has been used to strengthen children's foundational literacy and numeracy skills through an additional training program that promotes teaching that starts at the child's learning level rather than a specific age or grade. The program has provided more than 3,600 teachers with professional development and mentoring to deliver remedial education to children in grades 4 to 6. As a result, 176,000 students from 386 schools have strengthened their foundational learning skills.



Teacher Tukur Yusuf engages with students during a language lesson at Miga Central Primary School, Jigawa State, Nigeria.

GPE/Kelley Lynch

# DOING MORE FOR CHILDREN FORCED FROM HOME

At the beginning of 2023, more than 108 million people were displaced due to conflict, persecution or natural disasters, including more than 35 million refugees. GPE works with governments to include children and youths living as refugees in national education systems, strengthening capacity and resources to meet their learning needs.

As of the second half of 2023, GPE had invested \$1.1 billion to strengthen education systems in 17 countries where refugees had at least some access to schooling. In October 2023, GPE approved \$20 million to support learning for

more than 285,000 children in six states within **Sudan** that have been affected by conflict-related displacement: White Nile, Gezira, Kassala, River Nile, Sennar and South Kordofan. The two grants of \$10 million each will be implemented by UNICEF and Save the Children respectively, along with Sudanese nongovernmental organizations.

**Education Out Loud**, GPE's fund for advocacy and social accountability, also supported civil society organizations in promoting access to quality education for refugees and other marginalized groups in 37 areas affected by fragility and conflict.



16-year-old student Sumaya Abdel Rahman Mahmoud Mohamad walks home at Djabal refugee camp, Eastern Chad.

Sumaya's family fled Sudan during the war in Darfur and the recent uptick in violence in the region means that families such as hers remain in a state of uncertainty for the near future.

GPE/Michael Knief/AP

In December 2023, GPE signed the *Multistakeholder Pledge: Securing Sustainable Futures - Towards a Shared Responsibility to Uphold the Right to Education and Include Refugee Children in National Education Systems* during the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva. More than 140 governments and

organizations signed the pledge, promising to do more to advocate, support and finance countries in their efforts to include refugee children in education. GPE also granted membership eligibility to **Jordan** and **Lebanon** as both countries host rapidly growing refugee populations.

### **SOURCING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND EDTECH TO REACH REFUGEE CHILDREN IN CHAD**

While confronting the daunting challenges of poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity, Chad shelters 1.3 million displaced persons including more than 1 million refugees from Sudan, the Central African Republic, Cameroon and Nigeria. To provide an education to the children within this population, KIX is supporting War Child's 'Can't Wait to Learn' initiative which has researched the scaling of technology to assist education in Chad, Sudan and Uganda.

War Child and KIX analyzed the learning of over 800 students in 20 schools across three refugee camps in Chad: Djabal, Gos Amir and Goz Beida. In 11 of the schools, Can't Wait to Learn accounted for more than half of the numeracy lessons each week. In the remaining nine schools, education continued as before. Results assessments found that children using the Can't Wait to Learn tablets and programs learned 50 percent more than children who did not. Girls learned four times more than boys and girls that started with lower numeracy skills than male peers caught up in just 4 to 4.5 months. These results are significant in the face of Chad's learning poverty rate (being unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10), which stands at 98 percent for children completing primary school.



Sudanese students Salima Khamis, Oumnia Souleyman and Sumaya Abdel Rahman Mahmoud Mohamad (left to right) study on tablets as part of the technologies for education program 'Can't Wait to Learn' at a school in Djabel Refugee Camp, Eastern Chad.

GPE/Michael Knief/AP

GPE CEO Laura Frigenti and Board Chair H.E. Jakaya Kikwete with students during their visit to Maji Majimaitu Primary school in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.  
GPE/David Mugithi



# GPE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The GPE Board met in Tanzania in December, visiting the Kisiwandui and Kiaangoni primary schools in Zanzibar to see firsthand the collective action and inclusive commitment to preparing today's generations for the future.

Board members met with students, teachers and school heads and learned about how these schools were meeting the education needs of students with disabilities. Since 2013, GPE has invested more than \$330 million to support the government's efforts to transform education in Tanzania.

## Board of Directors List as of December 31st, 2023

<b>Africa 1</b>	Torerayi Moyo, Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe Alternate: Farah Sheikh Abdulkadir, Minister of Education, Culture and Higher Education, Somalia
<b>Africa 2</b>	Komla Dodzi Kokoroko, Minister of Primary, Secondary and Technical Education and Crafts, Togo Alternate: Moussa Kadam, Minister of National Education and Civic Promotion, Chad
<b>Africa 3</b>	David Moinina Sengeh, Chief Minister, Sierra Leone Alternate: David Adejo Andrew, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of General Education and Instruction, Nigeria
<b>Asia and Pacific</b>	Sureshi Adhikari, Secretary of Education, Science and Technology, Nepal Alternate: Aishath Ali, Former Minister of Education, Maldives
<b>Eastern Europe, Middle East and Central Asia</b>	Usman Sharifodjayev, First Deputy Minister of Education, Uzbekistan Alternate: Saidzoda Rahim, Minister of Education and Science, Tajikistan
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<b>Donor 1</b>	Clélia Chevrier Kolačko, Deputy Director, Sustainable Development Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France Alternate: Anna-Lena Flurry Angelotti, Senior Policy Adviser, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland

<b>Donor 2</b>	Line Friberg Nielsen, Chief Technical Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark Alternate: Sofia Norlin-Telde, Senior Programme Specialist, Education, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sweden
<b>Donor 3</b>	Judith Herbertson, Head of Girls' Education Department, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, United Kingdom Alternate: Sharon Armstrong, Director General, Social Development, Global Affairs Canada
<b>Donor 4</b>	Kristian Ødegaard, Senior Advisor, Section for Food Security, Health and Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway Alternate: Rashid Al Shamsi, Director of Technical Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, United Arab Emirates
<b>Donor 5</b>	Martin Seychell, Deputy Director-General, Directorate General for International Partnerships, European Commission Alternate: Heike Kuhn, Head of Division, Education, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany
<b>Donor 6</b>	LeAnna Marr, Deputy Assistant Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development Alternate: Aedan Whyatt, Assistant Secretary, Education and Social Protection Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia
<b>CSO 1</b>	Kira Boe, Education Co-Lead, Oxfam International, Denmark Alternate: Yona Nestel, Education Policy and Advocacy Lead, Plan International
<b>CSO 2</b>	Solange Akpo-Gnandi, Regional Coordinator, Africa Network Campaign on Education for All Alternate: Abeer Tamimi Darwazeh, Capacity Building and Learning Coordinator, Arab Campaign for Education for All
<b>CSO 3</b>	Haldis Holst, Deputy General Secretary, Education International Alternate: Dennis Sinyolo, Regional Director for Africa, Education International
<b>Private Sector</b>	David Boutcher, Partner, Reed Smith LLP, Secretary and Safeguarding Director, Executive Board, Global Business Coalition for Education Alternate: Emily Friedman, Head of Business Investment for Education Impact, Global Business Coalition for Education
<b>Private Foundations</b>	Christopher Thomas, Director of Partnerships, Yidan Prize Foundation Alternate: Carolyne Ng'eny, Programme Officer, Firelight Foundation
<b>Multilateral Agency 1</b>	Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO Alternate: Valerie Guarnieri, Assistant Executive Director, World Food Programme
<b>Multilateral Agency 2</b>	Robert Jenkins, Global Director of Education and Adolescent Development, UNICEF Alternate: Rebecca Telford, Officer in Charge, Deputy Director and Chief, Education Section, Division of Resilience and Solutions, UNHCR
<b>Multilateral Agency 3</b>	Luis Benveniste, Regional Director, Human Development, Latin America and the Caribbean, World Bank Alternate: Syed Husain Quadri, Acting Director, Resilience and Social Development Department, Islamic Development Bank



GPE Board members gather during their June 2023 meeting in Brussels, Belgium.  
GPE/Lode Saidane



GPE Board member Helena Reuterswård engages with a student and an assistive learning device, Kisiwandui Inclusive Primary School, Zanzibar.  
GPE/David Mugithi



GPE Board members gather during their visit to Kisiwandui Inclusive Primary School in Zanzibar as part of their December 2023 meeting.  
GPE/David Mugithi



GPE Board member Robert Jenkins with students and teacher at Kisiwandui Inclusive Primary School, Zanzibar.  
GPE/David Mugithi



Cover photo:

Sérgia Rafael and Aladina Zacarias return from school after classes resumed after Cyclone Freddy devastated the Inhima area in Zambézia Province, Mozambique. To reach their school, Sérgia and Aladina had to jump over fallen trees and walk through floodwaters.

Cyclone Freddy was the longest-lasting tropical cyclone on record in Mozambique, with significant consequences for children's education.

GPE/Mbuto Machili

## CONTACT

[information@globalpartnership.org](mailto:information@globalpartnership.org)

## OFFICES

### Washington

701 18<sup>th</sup> St NW  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20006  
USA

### Paris

66 Avenue d'Iéna  
75116 Paris  
France

### Brussels

Avenue Marnix 17, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
B-1000, Brussels  
Belgium

### Chennai

Global Infocity Park, Block C  
11<sup>th</sup> floor  
40 MGR Salai, Perungudi  
Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600096  
India

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