

PLEDGE FROM THE VARKEY GEMS FOUNDATION
GPE Second Replenishment Conference
June 26, 2014

The Varkey GEMS Foundation pledges to expand its low-cost teacher training programmes that address teacher quality in five developing countries. The world needs seven million new trained primary school teachers by 2015, and this number will continue to rise. Teacher quality has the most significant impact on student outcomes; but current solutions for teacher training are unlikely to produce either the necessary quantity or quality of teachers.

Many teachers themselves have disadvantages: poor literacy, no professional development plans, and little or no peer-to-peer or inter-school support. Our pledge is to work in alignment with national country plans and programmes to raise the overall standard of education in developing countries, through a five day Instructional Leadership programme that addresses the needs of principals and teachers and focuses on the skills needed to improve pedagogy; delivered face-to-face to school principals, who are supported in cascading the course to 250,000 teachers in their schools. The programme establishes structures to ensure accountability and uses a tailored approach to meet local needs. We are committed to working in close collaboration with governments and all stakeholders. Over the past year we have reached 6,000 teachers in Uganda, and following this successful pilot we are expanding into other countries that are experiencing similar challenges.

The programme is a significant investment in sustained and continuous advocacy for education. VGF trainers quality assure the delivery of the cascade through school visits, and provide coaching and support to principals to embed the programme and improve practice. Trainers evaluate the impact of the training on professional practice through questionnaires and interviews with participants and teachers at the school, undertaking regular reviews with the project team and wider stakeholders to identify operational improvements. A comprehensive review of the programme's impact is delivered at the conclusion of every year-long cycle, and is used to inform the design of the programme's expansion into other countries.