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# Overview of GPE Support to Developing Country Partners



## 4.1 Introduction

The Global Partnership for Education offers a collaborative and participatory platform that focuses on supporting developing country partners' efforts to educate all their children. The Global Partnership is not just about financing; it provides a framework for effective and inclusive policy dialogue and implementation among key stakeholders at the country level – including developing country governments, donor partners, international organizations, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations, and the private sector – to work together to ensure that (i) education policies are sound, credible, and rigorously monitored; and (ii) development aid is better coordinated and more effective, and funds results-oriented activities.

The activities of the Global Partnership are based on the principle that technical assistance, knowledge sharing, advocacy, a convening role and financial support at critical stages of the national policy cycle help to improve development and implementation of education sector policies. These key principles, in turn, are most likely to lead to better education outcomes.

Building on analysis to be published in the 2014 GPE Portfolio Review, this chapter provides an overview of a variety of ways in which the Global Partnership supports improvement in the education sector. The report analyzes not only the volume of grants to its developing country partners, but also the levels of direct technical support to country policy processes provided by the GPE Secretariat.<sup>1</sup> It shows that GPE Secretariat support to countries at all stages of the policy process has increased significantly since 2011.

Grant approvals and expenditures have also increased considerably, with cumulative approvals for Program Implementation Grants standing at US\$3.9 billion by mid-2014, of which US\$1.0 billion was approved in 2013. It is expected that total approvals will increase to US\$4.1 billion by the end of 2014. In addition, US\$2.3 billion in Program Implementation Grants have already been spent. The report also shows that delays between grant approval and disbursement are decreasing. Challenges remain, however, and this chapter outlines how ongoing and foreseen changes in the Global Partnership, such as the development of a GPE theory of change or the new funding model, aim to address these challenges.

While grants and direct technical support are two of the main vehicles through which the Global Partnership adds value, the Partnership also supports the wider engagement of key stakeholders in policy dialogue and the introduction of best practices and new approaches to solving key challenges in the sector. Some of these efforts are described in this chapter.

Section 4.2 of this chapter presents GPE support to a variety of research and policy development initiatives. Section 4.3 analyzes of country-level technical support provided by the GPE Secretariat, along with other mechanisms through which the Global Partnership supports country level policy processes. Section 4.4 offers an overview of GPE grants; succeeding sections examine GPE grants for education sector plan development (section 4.5); for program development (section 4.6); and for program implementation (section 4.7). Section 4.8 concludes with highlights of results, opportunities and challenges.

<sup>1</sup> This chapter focuses primarily on recent developments and results during the 2011 to 2014 period. To capture long-term trends, however, the analysis for Program Implementation Grants covers the 2003-2013 decade.

## 4.2 Avenues for supporting country policies and processes

The Global Partnership provides support for improvements in the education sector through a variety of research and policy development initiatives. The Partnership has sponsored 15 Global and Regional Activities (GRA), and also engages and funds a variety of regional policy initiatives spearheaded by GPE partners. The Global Partnership has supported initiatives in the following broad areas:

- *monitoring out-of-school children and improving their inclusion in schools;*
- *enhanced engagement of teachers in sector policy dialogue;*
- *new approaches to early childhood education;*
- *mapping and approaches for eliminating gender based violence in schools;*
- *monitoring and improved approaches to early grade teaching and learning;*
- *approaches to better monitoring of national education sector spending;*
- *piloting of tools for gender sensitive education sector planning (see Box 4.1); and*
- *assessing learning outcomes (see Box 4.2).*

### Box 4.1 Gender sensitive education sector planning

The Global Partnership's Strategic Objective 2 (2012-2015) on Girls' Education states that "all girls in GPE-endorsed countries successfully complete primary school and go to secondary school in a safe, supportive learning environment". Gender-responsive education sector plans (ESPs) are foundational to the achievement of this objective. ESPs need to be based on a thorough analysis of the nature and magnitude of gender disparities in access to and completion in education. It should identify and prioritize relevant strategies to address the barriers that girls face in local contexts; and which may range from increasing access through cash transfers, addressing gender stereotypes in curricula and textbooks or gender-based violence in schools as well as targeted efforts to improve learning outcomes.

The Global Partnership has partnered with the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative to develop a gender analysis tool, to help countries to analyze their education situation, institutional setup and capacity, policies and strategies, and costing and monitoring among other elements to inform development of a credible ESP.

The gender analysis tool has been developed through a participatory and incremental piloting process in Eritrea, Guinea, and Malawi in 2014, and will be available for use in early 2015. Key principles and elements of the tool will also be reflected and mainstreamed in the Education Sector Plan Preparation and Appraisal Guidelines, currently being reviewed in line with GPE's new funding model. (The tool will be available by mid-December 2014.)

The GRA Program fosters innovation through the systematic provision of services and products that enlighten, engage, and energize partners to apply knowledge and evidence-based good practices to solve education challenges. The GRA Program was approved by the GPE Board of Directors in 2010 and became effective in 2013. It aims at promoting common learning and exchange by partners around work in key thematic areas. In February 2013 and July 2013, the Board of Directors approved funding for 16 GRA grants totaling US\$29.7 million.

In terms of grant allocation shares, the six priority areas supported by these grants are: (i) early grade readiness, reading and assessment; (ii) out-of-school children issues; (iii) quality teaching and learning; (iv) education financing; (v) disability and school health issues; and (vi) other GPE strategic objectives such as gender, school profiles and overall learning assessment (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 **Summary of Global and Regional Activities Grants approved to date**

Thematic areas of support	Number of grants	Grant Amounts (US\$ millions)	Amount share (%)
Early grade readiness, reading and assessment	2	11.2	37.5
Out-of-school children	3	5.7	19.1
Quality teaching and learning	3	4.1	13.8
Disability and school health	1	3.0	10.1
Education financing	2	2.9	9.8
Others (gender, school profiles, learning assessment)	4	2.9	9.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>15*</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.

\* One grant is not yet active.

The Global Partnership also provides a grant to support broader engagement of civil society in national policy processes through its Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) Program. A recent evaluation of the CSEF showed impressive results in terms of the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the education policy process. The number of countries reporting that CSOs are represented in their local education groups (LEGs) rose from 16 to 43 from 2010 to 2013, and CSOs are increasingly represented in joint sector review processes (see 2013 Results for Learning Report, chapter 5).

These varied initiatives target policy change at the country level, and suggest important ways in which the Global Partnership can leverage partnership to improve equity, efficiency and accountability in basic education. However, except in a few instances (such as the gender sensitive planning tools) the Global Partnership has not developed an approach for integrating the tools, guidelines, research and policy solutions developed through these initiatives into its approach to country level support. This is an area of important promise for the Global Partnership going forward.

#### Box 4.2 **Learning Metrics Task Force 2.0**

The Global Partnership is continuing to serve as an active member of the Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF), a multistakeholder collaboration working to improve learning outcomes for children and youth worldwide since 2012. During the first phase launched in 2012, the task force focused on catalyzing a shift in the global education conversation from access to access and learning, while building consensus on global learning indicators and actions to improve the measurement of learning in all countries. LMTF 2.0, which spans January 2014–December 2015, sets out follow-up tasks, involves an expanded set of partners and focuses on bringing task force recommendations to life.

In order to understand the extent of the global learning crisis and the targeted interventions needed to improve learning, governments must be equipped with effective assessment systems. Accordingly, the objective for LMTF 2.0 is to support development of more robust systems for assessing learning outcomes at the country level (both within and outside of formal school systems) and better use of assessment data to help improve these outcomes.

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LMTF 2.0 members are working in their individual areas of expertise to achieve five key results by the end of 2015, on which progress is developing as follows:

**1. Technical:** LMTF members are developing measurable indicators in each of the seven areas recommended during Phase 1.0 for global tracking: Learning for All, Age and Education Matter for Learning, Reading, Numeracy, Ready to Learn, Citizen of the World, and Breadth of Learning Opportunities.

**2. Institutional:** The Task Force is supporting Learning Champion governments and other national stakeholders to implement LMTF recommendations in country-specific ways to support learning assessment and the national use of assessment data to improve learning. A new LMTF Learning Champion Working Group launched in October 2014 to coordinate this support.

**3. Political:** Task force members are striving to use recommendations to inform the post-2015 global development and education agendas, through providing inputs to the Education for All Steering Committee, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the United Nations Development Group consultation processes, the European Union Education Experts Meeting, the Plan for the Development of Education in the Arab World, and the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

**4. Assessment as a Public Good:** LMTF members are working to ensure that assessment tools, technical expertise, and data are more accessible to low- and middle-income countries. For example, the GPE Secretariat has worked closely with LMTF partners on the development of a concept note for an international platform for assessing learning, which is currently being circulated and revised, and UNESCO Institute for Statistics is launching a Catalogue of Learning Assessments, which will be used to develop global indicators for monitoring learning outcomes measurements and their characteristics.

**5. Knowledge Sharing:** LMTF actors and experts in learning assessment are continuing to share knowledge and coordinate efforts, and member agencies have been hosting a robust array of conferences, webinars, and workshops toward this goal.

### 4.3 GPE Secretariat: Levels of support to developing country policy processes

Since the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) became the Global Partnership in 2011, its governance structure and operational rules have evolved significantly. In particular, the GPE Secretariat was reorganized with an increased focus on country-level support and results-oriented activities. As discussed in the 2013 Results for Learning Report, strengthening the quality of the partnership at the local level is crucial to the achievement of improvements in equity, efficiency and learning outcomes in basic education.

The GPE Secretariat provides support to country partners in preparation of education sector plans.

It also promotes more inclusive policy dialogue, by supporting LEGs and the engagement of civil society, teachers organizations and others; and by encouraging greater alignment of donors around a single sector plan and use of country level processes and systems.

The increase in the number of developing country partners, from 46 in 2011 to 59 in 2013, could not have happened without a strengthening of the Global Partnership's capacity to provide country level support, particularly when new developing country partners were often fragile or conflict-

*The GPE Secretariat has been reorganized with a greater focus on country-level support and results-oriented activities.*

*Staff reforms have ensured that there are more experienced staff dedicated to country support.*

affected and hence in need of greater support. Since 2011, the number of education sector specialists has grown from 5 to 14 in 2014. Furthermore, the level of technical expertise and field based experience among staff has grown. In 2014, staff dedicated to country support have had professional experience or lived in 32 developing countries, compared with only 12 in 2011, and they have on average around 18 years of experience each. This

experience level is better geared to supporting partner countries' education planning and policy processes effectively.

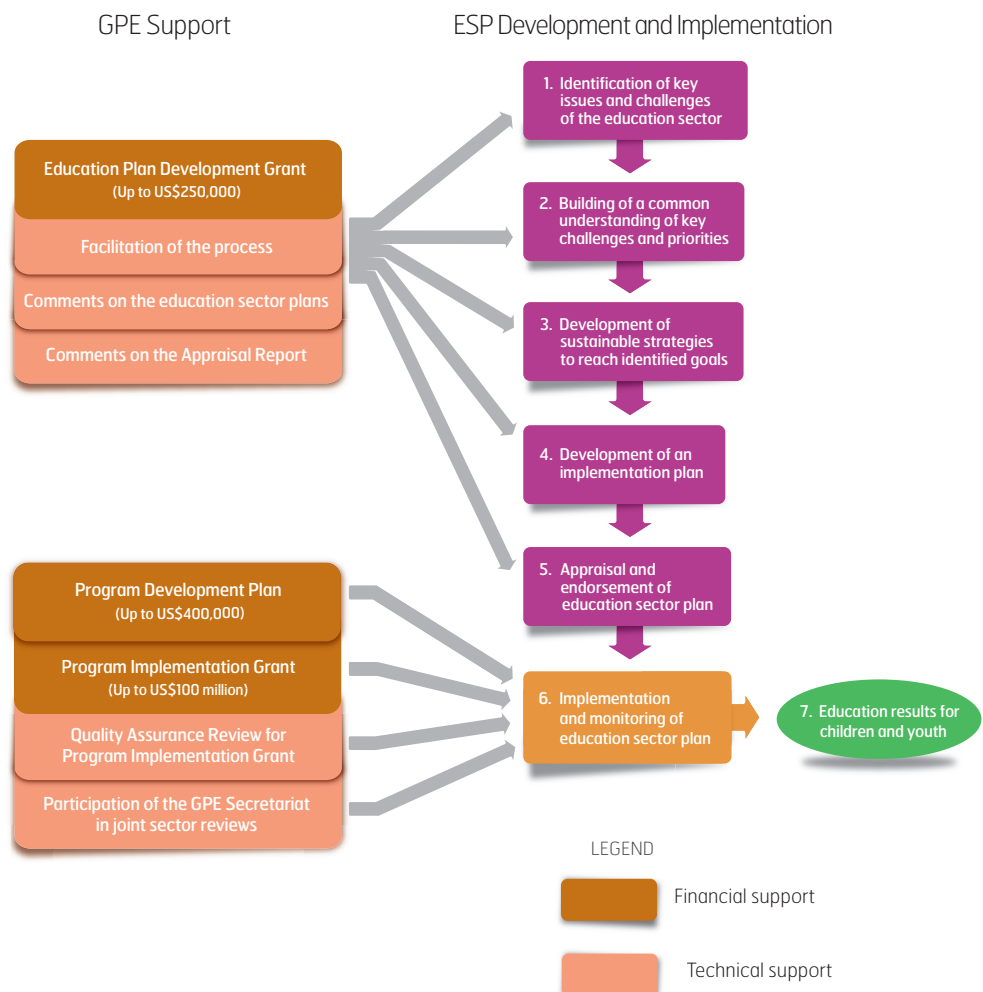
As demonstrated below, these improvements in GPE country support allow more emphasis on supporting the development and implementation of country-led sector plans, and greater engagement with a wider range of stakeholders in education sector policy dialogue.

### 4.3.1 Overview of the GPE model at the country-level

The national policy process is fundamental to the GPE model. For the Global Partnership, a successful policy process is critical to ensuring equitable, sustainable education development. Thus, GPE support is dedicated to ensuring the successful completion of the different stages

of the process. Figure 4.1 shows the sequence in the development and implementation of education sector policy and details the technical and financial support provided by the Global Partnership.

Figure 4.1 The GPE model at the country level



The Global Partnership's support is provided during the education sector policy development phase and the implementation phase. Policy development support consists of an Education Plan Development Grant (up to US\$250,000<sup>2</sup>) that supplies funds for the development or revision of educational plans and for any technical support provided by the GPE Secretariat. In terms of technical support, the facilitation of a participatory process is crucial to ensuring that issues are discussed and that the mechanisms or policies adopted are optimal and sustainable. The plan development process should bring together governmental, nongovernmental, and civil society stakeholders in the education sector through consultations. However, the alignment of incentives and the presence of political will are critical. The GPE Secretariat seeks to play a facilitating role in this regard.

Likewise, the support provided by the GPE Secretariat for the ESPs and to the appraisal reports are crucial in determining whether the plan contributes to the achievement of education sector goals, to the identification of risks, and to guaranteeing that the process is participatory and transparent.

GPE support during the implementation stage includes technical and financial assistance.

Two grants are dedicated to supporting the implementation phase: (1) the Program Development Grant (normally US\$200,000, but up to US\$400,000 in exceptional circumstances), which finances the design of the programs to be supported by the Global Partnership, and (2) the Program Implementation Grant (up to US\$100 million), which finances the execution of a three-year program for the implementation of the education sector policy. The Quality Assurance Review involves assessments associated with the application for a Program Implementation Grant, as well as assessments of the potential for making progress toward key educational outcomes. Although the overall responsibility for the Quality Assurance Review process lies with the GPE Secretariat, local support is a major component of the process.

Finally, the participation of the GPE Secretariat in joint sector review meetings serves as an input for the implementation and monitoring of the ESP and subsequent education results.

### Box 4.3 The GPE technical resources available to developing country partners

The GPE Secretariat has developed several resources to support the developing country partners in the development of ESPs. Most of them are being revised to take into account the changes linked to the new funding model (see Box 4.4). Some of the key resources include the following:

- *Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation and Appraisal (GPE and IIEP 2012)*
- *Country Level Process Guide (GPE 2012a)*
- *Education Plan Development Grant Guidelines<sup>a</sup>*
- *Program Implementation Grant Guidelines<sup>b</sup>*
- *Program Development Grant Guidelines<sup>c</sup>*
- *Terms of Reference for Coordinating Agencies (GPE 2012b)*
- *Terms of Reference for Managing Entities (GPE 2012c)*
- *Terms of Reference for Supervising Entities (GPE 2012d)*

a. "Education Plan Development Grant Guidelines," Global Partnership for Education, Washington, DC, <http://globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-development-grants>.

b. "Program Implementation Grant Guidelines," Global Partnership for Education, Washington, DC, <http://globalpartnership.org/content/global-partnership-education-program-implementation-grant-guidelines>.

c. "Program Development Grant Guidelines," Global Partnership for Education, Washington, DC, <http://globalpartnership.org/content/global-partnership-education-program-development-grant-guidelines>.

<sup>2</sup> This amount is going up to US\$500,000 with the new funding model.



### 4.3.2 Increased and more relevant country support from the GPE Secretariat

*GPE support per country jumped by 64 percent, on average, over the past three years.*

To analyze the evolution of the levels of country support provided by the GPE Secretariat, several measures were considered, including the number of missions and the financial cost of different types of support. With regard to financial costs, direct country support costs are divided into three main categories: (i) cost of staff time dedicated to country support, which includes mission work as well as significant distance work to support dialogue and country-level processes, and to review the quality of grant applications; (ii) travel cost of country visits by GPE Secretariat staff; and (iii) cost of external consultants hired to contribute to the Quality Assurance Review process of the Program Implementation Grant.<sup>3</sup>

The results<sup>4</sup> of the analysis show that financial resources devoted to direct support

of policy processes in country partners more than doubled between 2011 and 2013, from US\$990,300 to US\$2,076,800. Given the tight unit-cost control measures put in place, especially for travel, the sharp increase in costs is evidence of increased volume of activities and support to countries. Based on current trends, resources dedicate by the GPE Secretariat for direct country support is projected to reach around US\$2,158,000 in 2014. In spite of the increase in the number of countries supported, per country support, captured by financial figures, jumped by 64 percent, on average, over the past three years, from US\$21,500 in 2011 to US\$35,200 in 2013. Preliminary estimates show that per country direct support should reach about US\$36,600 in 2014.

### 4.3.3 More staff time is devoted to support country processes

*In the past three years, staff time devoted to countries throughout the education policy increased by more than 50 percent.*

Staff time devoted to direct technical support to countries is critical, as it helps improve sector policy dialogue, country-level processes and grant quality assurance. In the past three years, staff time devoted to countries increased sharply. Its financial cost doubled from US\$808,600 in 2011 to US\$1,619,900 in 2013

(excluding staff time devoted to thematic, global or regional work). As a result, average staff time per developing country partner on an annual basis increased by more than 50 percent over the period 2011-2013. This indicates that each country is being supported increasingly throughout the education policy cycle.

### 4.3.4 Country visits and diversified sector support have increased sharply

*The number of country visits and related financial resources increased significantly between 2011 and the 2012-2013 period, a trend which is continuing in 2014.*

Country visits by GPE Secretariat staff are critical to provide direct support to partners at the country level. The number of country visits and related financial resources increased sharply between 2011 and the 2012-2013 period. Estimates and projections indicate that the trend is likely to continue in 2014. Analysis of financial data shows that the average cost for staff visit per

developing country partner doubled over the past three years, from US\$2,178 in 2011 to US\$5,035 for the 2012 to mid-2014 period.

Country visits are undertaken to support many activities, including the development of national education sector plans (ESPs); support to grant development, implementation and monitoring;

<sup>3</sup> The Quality Assurance Review helps strengthen the design of programs supported by GPE grants. It contributes to ensure its alignment with the ESP and assess its potential to support progress toward key educational outcomes. For more information, see "Quality Assurance Review for Program Implementation Grants", <http://globalpartnership.org/content/global-partnership-education-fund-quality-assurance-review-guidance-note-consultants>.

<sup>4</sup> The financial cost of GPE support to developing country partners was estimated using different data sources. Information was collected and cleaned up from staff travel logs, time-recording systems, and the World Bank's accounting system.



and sector monitoring activities. Other country support visits focus on activities such as explaining GPE processes. A small number of country visits could not be classified due to missing or insufficient records. These are reported in the “other” category in Table 4.2.

Analysis of staff travel by objective shows an increasing proportion of support devoted to national policy planning and implementation, as compared with grant processing. Initiated in 2012, this deliberate shift responded to findings,

as highlighted in the 2013 Results for Learning Report, that on average staff dedicated to country support were spending most of their time on grant-related processes, rather than supporting all stages of the policy process. Although this report does not re-estimate staff time on tasks per se, it shows the increasing attention paid to support to the development and implementation of ESPs, with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of the Global Partnership’s support at different stages of the national education planning and policy cycles.

*There is an increasing proportion of GPE Secretariat support devoted to national policy planning and implementation, as compared with grant processing.*

**Table 4.2 Share of GPE Secretariat staff travel to developing country partners by activity (%)**

Year	ESP development	GPE grant related	Sector monitoring	Other country support
2011*	12.1	28.7	35.8	23.4
2012	15.2	68.6	5.3	10.9
2013	24.7	57.7	16.8	0.8
Projected 2014	23.8	23.4	37.9	14.8
<b>Average</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>11.0</b>

Source: GPE Secretariat time recording and travel records.

\* There were only 9 missions in 2011.

Higher financial costs may be misleading and do not necessarily imply more activities, unless unit costs are analyzed. To ascertain increased support, both the number and unit cost for staff missions have been analyzed. The data show that staff visits have become more cost-effective, with average mission unit cost

declining by about 60 percent between 2011 and 2013.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the number of missions dramatically increased from 9 in 2011 to 56 in 2012, and 44 in 2013. In 2014, the number of missions may reach 80. This rise clearly reflects significantly increased GPE technical support to countries.

*GPE staff visits have become more cost-effective, with average mission unit cost declining by about 60 percent between 2011 and 2013.*

## 4.4 Overview of GPE grants

Table 4.3 provides a summary of GPE grants approved by category between 2003 and June 30, 2014, to support both regional and country-level activities. At the regional and global levels, two funding instruments were approved. First, the CSEF—initially created under the now closed Education Program Development Fund—supports increased involvement of civil society organizations in national policy processes. And

second, the GRA Program (see section 4.2) became operational in 2013 and supports innovation, capacity building, knowledge development and sharing.

This section focuses on grants dedicated to direct country-level support. First, the Education Plan Development Grants helps fund the development of ESPs. These grants

<sup>5</sup> This is mainly explained by the generalization of multi-country missions and the new travel policy restricting travel in business class.

*Since 2003, 244 grants have been approved by GPE for a total amount of US\$4 billion.*

have traditionally been capped to a maximum of US\$250,000<sup>6</sup>. Next, Program Development Grants help prepare three-year programs in support of ESP implementation, and are approved up to US\$400,000. Before 2011, the Education Program Development Fund (now closed) was supporting a number of activities, such as sector analysis, plan development, or program development.

Finally, Program Implementation Grants fund the implementation of the ESP. The amounts of these grants have been determined since 2011 by the Needs and Performance Framework, up to a maximum of US\$100 million.<sup>7</sup> Over the next four years, the new funding model will be the applicable instrument used to calculate each grant amount (Box 4.4). Program Implementa-

tion Grants are approved by the GPE Board of Directors, based on recommendations from the Country Grants and Performance Committee.

Overall, Education Plan Development Grants approved since their inception in 2012 amounted to US\$6.1 million by June 2014, representing 11 percent of the total number of grants approved but only 0.15 percent of the total amount. Similarly, approved Program Development Grants reached US\$5.6 million – 12 percent of the number of grants approved, and 0.14 percent of the total amount. Finally, the cumulated amount of Program Implementation Grants was US\$3.9 billion, representing the lion's share of the total amount – 96 percent – but accounting for 45 percent of the number of all grants approved.

Table 4.3 Overview of GPE grants (2003 to June 30, 2014)

Type of GPE grant	Number of grants	Number share (%)	Grant amount (US\$)	Amount share (%)
Education Program Development Fund (closed)*	60	24.59	112,200,000	2.79
Education Plan Development Grant	28	11.48	6,073,929	0.15
Program Development Grant	30	12.30	5,565,243	0.14
Program Implementation Grant	110	45.08	3,860,170,308	95.83
Civil Society Education Fund	1	0.41	14,500,000	0.36
Global and Regional Activities	15	6.15	29,748,797	0.74
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,028,258,277</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat

\* Note: the Education Program Development Fund amount includes the first round of the Civil Society Education Fund, corresponding to one grant and US\$17.6 million.

## 4.5 Education Plan Development Grants

### 4.5.1 Overview of Education Plan Development Grants

Education Plan Development Grants were established in 2012 to support the preparation or revision of ESPs. Between 2012 and mid-2014, 27 countries have received these grants for a total of US\$6.1 million and an average

grant amount of US\$217,000. Almost 70 percent of these grants (19 out of 28) were approved at the maximum amount of US\$250,000, which suggests that there may have been a need for the Global Partnership

<sup>6</sup> In light of the recently approved new funding model (see Box 4.4) and Board of Directors' decisions, the grant for education plan development was increased to a total of US\$500,000, including up to US\$250,000 for data and education sector analysis and a maximum of US\$250,000 for the development of the ESP itself.

<sup>7</sup> See "the Needs and Performance Framework for Education Plan Implementation Grants," Global Partnership for Education, Washington, DC, <http://globalpartnership.org/content/presentation-needs-and-performance-framework>

to provide a higher amount to complement available resources devoted to plan development activities. Consistent with this finding, the new ceiling for Education Plan Development Grants is US\$500,000, half of which is earmarked for education sector analysis.

Out of 28 Education Plan Development Grants, 17 grants were approved in fragile and conflict-affected countries, totaling US\$2.4 million, or 61 percent of the total amount approved under these grants: Central African Republic, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Haiti, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia (2 grants), Togo,

Uganda and Zimbabwe. Three GPE partners acted as managing entities for these grants. The World Bank managed 16 grants for a total amount of US\$3.6 million (59 percent); followed by UNICEF for 11 grants totaling US\$2.3 million (38 percent). Cambodia selected UNESCO as the managing entity for its Education Plan Development Grant of US\$226,682 (4 percent). A large majority of Education Plan Development Grants (70 percent of the total amount) were approved for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for 63 percent of developing country partners. In addition, 73 percent of grants were for partners classified as fragile and conflict-affected countries. Further details are provided in Annex 4.1.

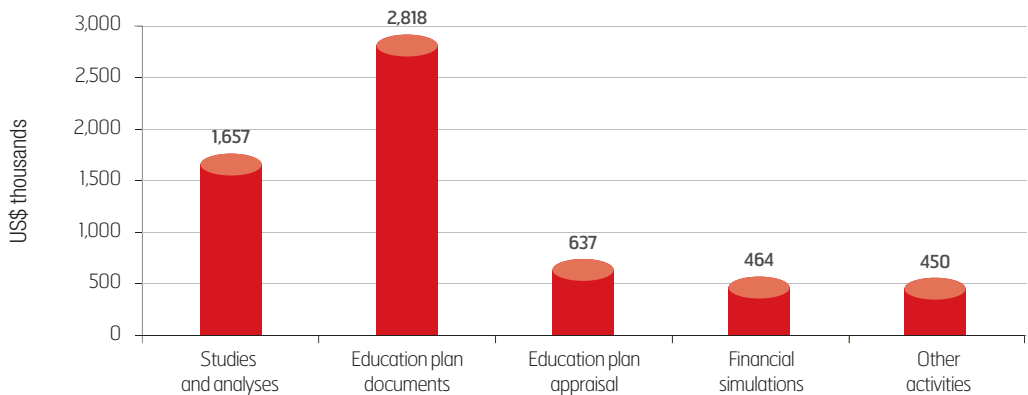
**61 percent of the Education Plan Development Grants have been approved in fragile and conflict-affected countries.**

### 4.5.2 Analysis of Education Plan Development Grants by activities

Education Plan Development Grants support a variety of activities (Figure 4.2). These include studies and analyses to inform education plan development, the development of sector plan documents, evaluation of their quality, financial simulation models, and activities such as

disseminating the plan and managing the grant. Each of these activities may be undertaken using a variety of means, including data collection, desk work, consultations or capacity building. Further details are provided in Annex 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Analysis of Education Plan Development Grant budgets by activities



Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.



## 4.6 Program Development Grants

**Program Development Grants support the preparation of Program Implementation Grant applications. By mid-2014, 29 grants had been approved for a total of US\$5.6 million.**

Program Development Grants support the preparation of implementation grant applications. They were also established in 2012 and capped at US\$400,000, though justifications are required (e.g. federal country, or a fragile and/or conflict-affect country) to receive a grant higher than US\$200,000. Grant resources can be used to (i) conduct technical and financial analyses of GPE-supported programs; and (ii) fund the documentation for both grant applications and implementation. By mid-2014, 29 such grants had been approved<sup>8</sup> for a cumulative amount of US\$5.6 million: 11 in 2012, 14 in 2013 and 4 plus an extension to a previously approved grant in 2014. The average grant amount was US\$192,000 and 12 countries received US\$200,000. Only one Program Development Grant reached the maximum amount, for a program covering several

states in Nigeria, a large federal country. This suggests that the current grant cap, combined with contributions from partner agencies, is appropriate and flexible enough to cover costs, even in large countries. As with Education Plan Development Grants, a large majority of Program Development Grants were approved for Sub-Saharan African countries, accounting for 69 percent of the total amount. In addition, the large majority of Program Development Grants were managed by the World Bank (25 grants for US\$5.0 million), with UNICEF managing 3 grants (Chad, Eritrea, Somalia) for US\$0.5 million and the French government aid agency AFD managing one grant for Burkina Faso for US\$45,000. Further details are provided in Annex 4.3.



Photo credit: GPE/Paul Martinez

<sup>8</sup> Given the increased focus on fragile and conflict-affected countries, 8 out of 25 Program Development Grants were approved in those countries; amounting to US\$1,493,017. These represent 30 percent of the total amount, or 32 percent in terms of the number of grants.

## 4.7 Program Implementation Grants

### 4.7.1 Overview of Program Implementation Grants

Program Implementation Grants support the implementation of ESPs. Until now, these grants have been approved by the GPE Board of Directors for up to US\$100 million per

country. Recent changes to the GPE governance structure and funding model (Box 4.4) were approved in 2014, but they did not affect any of the grants analyzed here.<sup>9</sup>

#### Box 4.4 The GPE new funding model: A results-based approach for the education sector

Based on lessons learned in the implementation of the existing funding model, the Global Partnership's new funding model, to be implemented in the 2015-2018 period, adopts a stronger focus on providing incentives to achieve results and on adopting more evidence-based approaches. It also gives more attention to domestic and donor funding, aims to ensure fairer targeting and allocation to developing country partners, and seeks to adapt realistically to the needs of fragile and conflict-affected countries.

The model includes the following critical elements:

- *Expanded eligibility criteria.* Poverty remains an important criterion for securing support from the Global Partnership. However, the new model adds two additional eligibility factors: education vulnerability (i.e. large numbers of children out of school) and fragility.
- *A needs-based allocation formula* that takes into account financial needs associated with delivering a certain level of education services to a given number of children, a departure from the past model. The share allocated to each country will be based on the country's needs in relation to other countries.
- *A new results-based approach* that includes new performance requirements and incentives.

In order to receive the first 70 percent of its financing allocation, each developing country supported by its partners must achieve the following performance benchmarks:

- > produce a credible, costed, evidence-based and workable ESP that international and domestic partners have endorsed and are committed to implementing;
- > implement an education sector analysis and strengthen data collection and management and information systems; and
- > commit to raising domestic spending on education and to tapping additional external financing.

To receive the remaining 30 percent of its financing allocation, each partner must demonstrate significant performance results in three primary categories: equity, efficiency and learning outcomes that align both with the Global Partnership's strategic goals and country's ESP. In order to adapt to the variety of situations in developing country partners, the performance standards will vary depending on the development situation in each country. Some countries will be able to measure progress in the number of children who are attending school and learning, while others need intermediary milestones, such as adopting stronger policies and strategies or implementing key actions to move towards improved results.

*The Global Partnership's new funding model adopts a stronger focus on providing incentives to achieve results and on adopting more evidence-based approaches.*

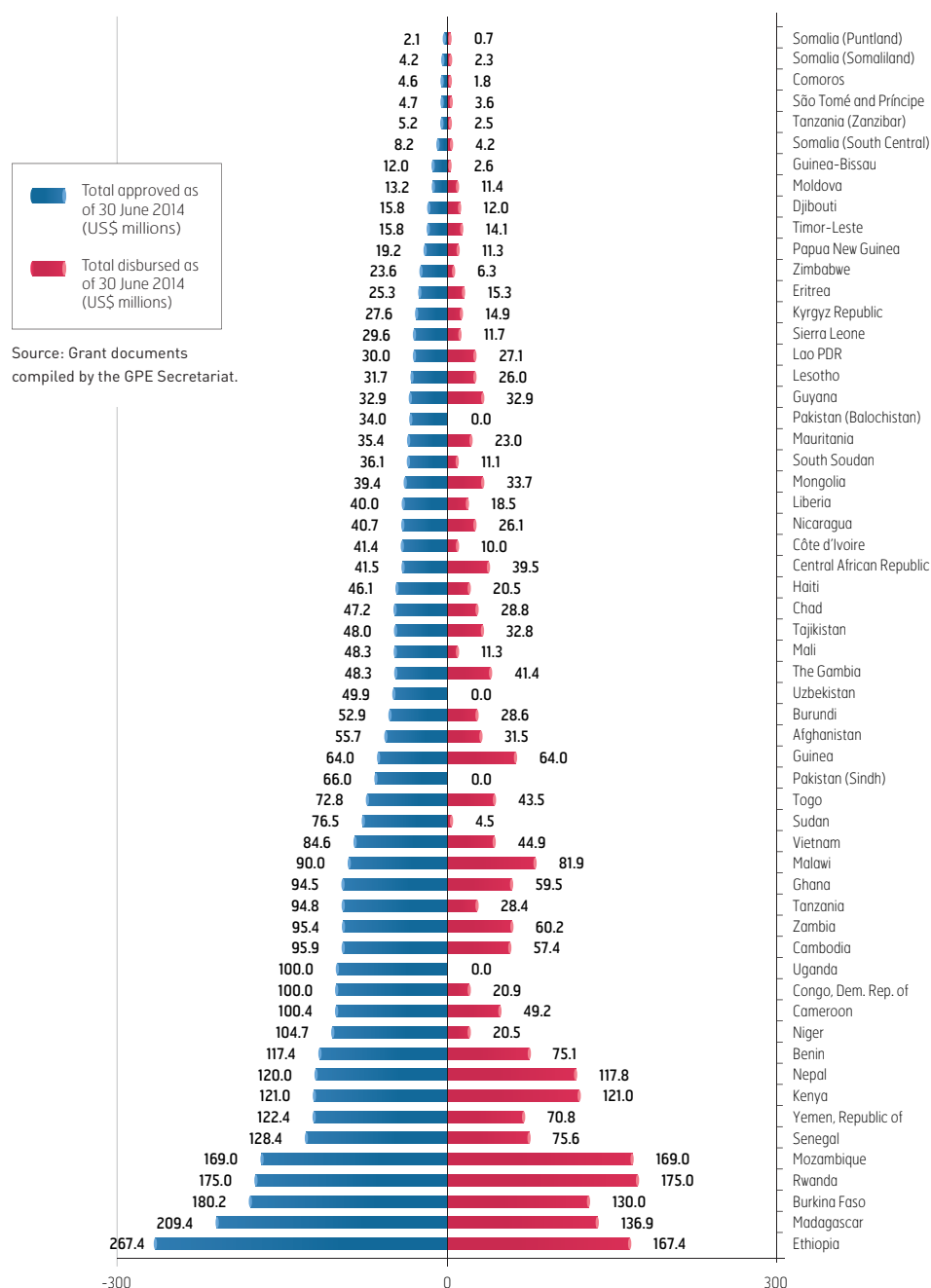
<sup>9</sup> The Financial Advisory Committee was replaced by the Country Grants and Performance Committee (CGPC), which now makes grant approval recommendations to the Board of Directors. The GPE new funding model was approved by the Board of Directors in 2014.

**Program Implementation Grants support the implementation of education sector plans. Between 2003 and mid-2014, 110 grants were approved for a total of US\$3,860 million.**

Program Implementation Grants accounts for 95.8 percent of all grant resources to date. Between 2003 and June 2014, the Global Partnership approved 110 Program Implementation Grants<sup>10</sup> to benefit 54 developing country partners (Figure 4.3). The overall portfolio includes 47 closed grants totaling US\$1,279 million; 53 grants for a total of US\$2,138

million that are under implementation; and 10 grants for a total of US\$444 million that have been recently approved and are not yet active. The bulk of all Program Implementation Grants were allocated to Sub-Saharan Africa countries, which account for 73 grants, of which 43 are active or pending implementation. Further details are provided in Annex 4.4.

**Figure 4.3 Program Implementation Grants approved and disbursed (cumulative as of 30 June 2014)**



Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.

<sup>10</sup> The Catalytic Fund, out of which Program Implementation Grants were previously allocated, was reformed in 2007 to expand its eligibility criteria, and allow for three-year grants instead of yearly allocations. Before that date, many yearly grants were allocated or executed simultaneously; making their headcount, processing and implementation timeline problematic.



Until 2008, the World Bank was the sole GPE grant implementation partner agency. In 2008, the Netherlands became the second partner playing that role, in Zambia. Since then, the number of partners selected as supervising or managing entities has increased. Nonetheless, two partner agencies predominate: The World Bank is the supervising entity for 77 percent of all approved grants and 80 percent of grant

amounts; and UNICEF accounts for 15 percent of approved grants and 10 percent of grant amounts. Other partner agencies, including AFD (France), Belgium, DFID (United Kingdom), the Netherlands, SIDA (Sweden) and UNESCO, represent only 7 percent of all Program Implementation Grants and 10 percent of approved amounts.

*Until 2008, the World Bank was the sole GPE grant implementation partner agency. Today, it is in charge of 77 percent of approved grants, and UNICEF is in charge of 15 percent of approved grants.*

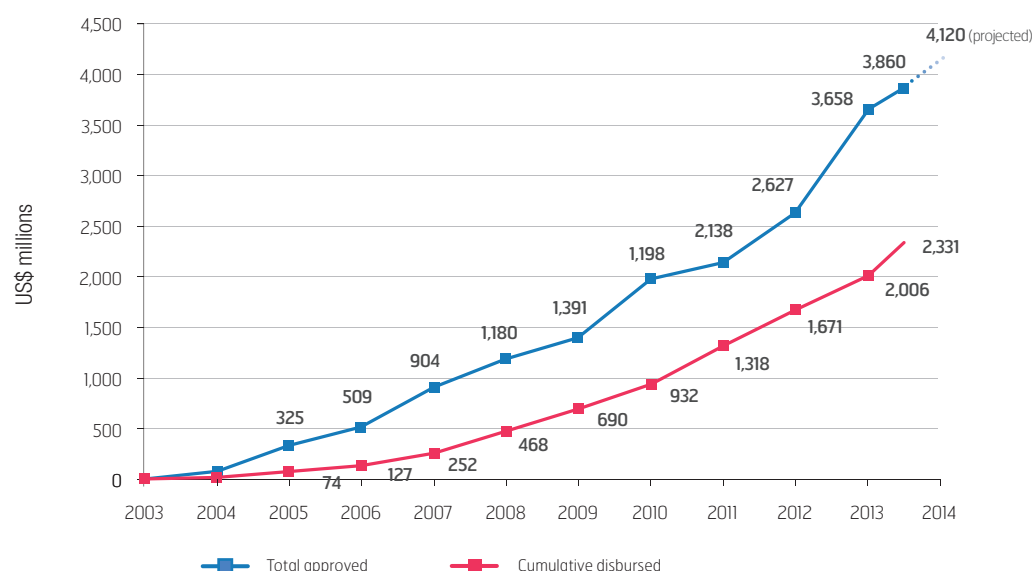
## 4.7.2 Grant approvals and disbursements

As previously noted, both the number and value of approved Program Implementation Grants rose sharply between 2003 and 2014, except in 2011 due to an allocation hiatus to accommodate the first replenishment of the GPE Fund. A record of 29 Program Implementation Grants

were approved in 2013, totaling US\$1 billion. As of end June 2014, US\$3.9 billion have been approved and US\$2.3 billion has been disbursed (Figure 4.4). Further details are provided in Annexes 4.5 and 4.6.

*As of end June 2014, US\$3.9 billion have been approved for Program Implementation Grants and US\$2.3 billion have been disbursed.*

Figure 4.4 **Program Implementation Grant approvals and disbursements, as of June 2014**

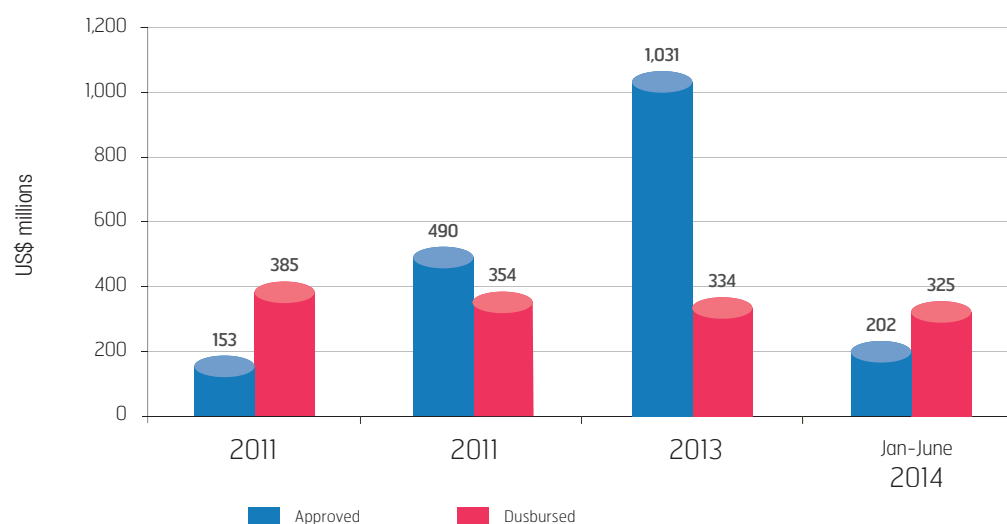


Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.

Amounts approved per year increased sharply between 2011 and 2013, up to US\$1.0 billion approved in 2013 (Figure 4.5). The 2014 value, with US\$202 million approved by mid-2014 and a projected US\$462 million by the end of year, is expected to be close to the amount approved in 2012. Amounts disbursed declined slightly

between 2011 and 2013, from US\$385 million to US\$334 million. As disbursement begins for grants approved in 2013, however, amounts disbursed in 2014 have stepped up significantly, with disbursements by the middle of 2014 (US\$325 million) already close to amounts disbursed in all of 2013.

Figure 4.5 **Program Implementation Grant amounts approved and disbursed per year**



Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.

### 4.7.3 Program Implementation Grants in fragile and conflict-affected countries

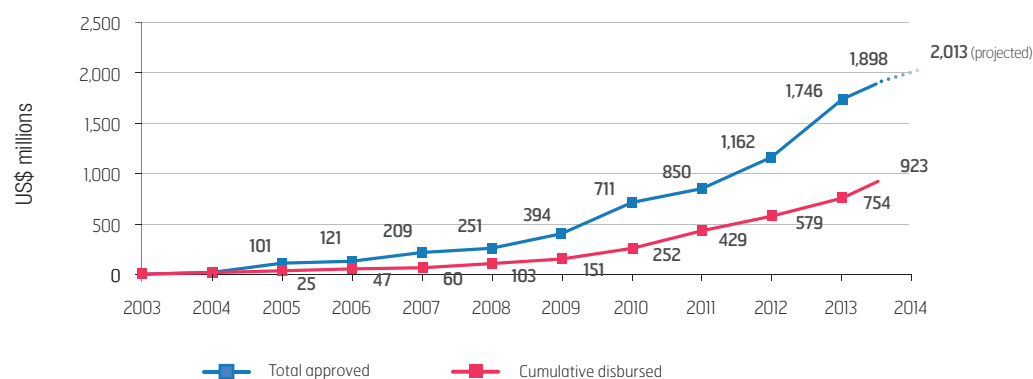
#### *An increasing focus on fragile and conflict-affected countries*

**While grants to GPE FCAC partners accounted for only 21 percent of grant amounts approved in 2008, that share had more than doubled to 49 percent by mid-2014.**

A similar analysis can be done for grants approved for fragile and conflict-affected countries (FCACs). It shows a slower start for those countries, reflecting FTI's initial limited engagement with FCACs. Until the end of 2008, only US\$251 million had been approved in FCAC partners. By end of June 2014, US\$1.9 billion had been approved, and cumulative disbursements reached

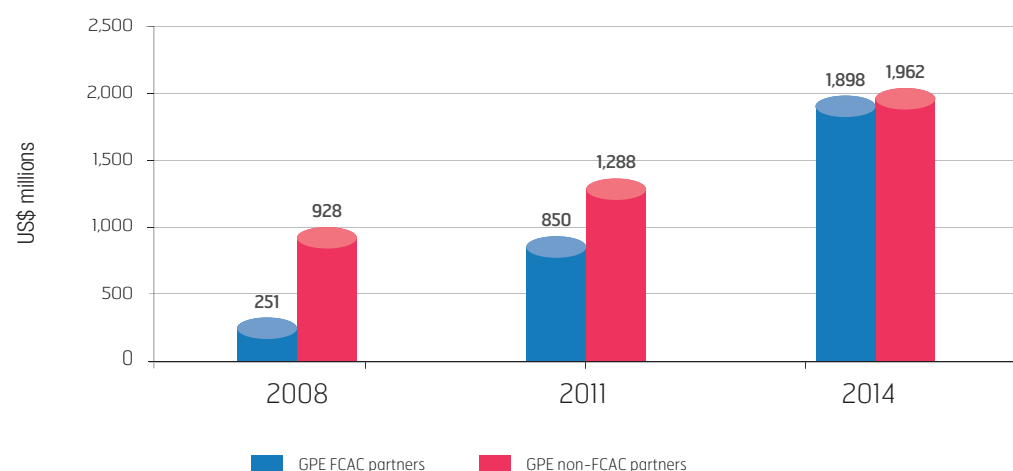
US\$923 million (Figure 4.6). While grants to FCAC partners accounted for only 21 percent of amounts approved in 2008, that share had more than doubled to 49 percent by mid-2014 (Figure 4.7). It is expected that an additional US\$115.5 million will be approved before the end of the year, bringing total approvals in FCAC partners to US\$2 billion.

Figure 4.6 **Program Implementation Grant approvals and disbursements in GPE FCAC partners, as of June 2014**



Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.

Figure 4.7 **Program Implementation Grant approvals in GPE FCAC partners and GPE non-FCAC partners, for selected years**

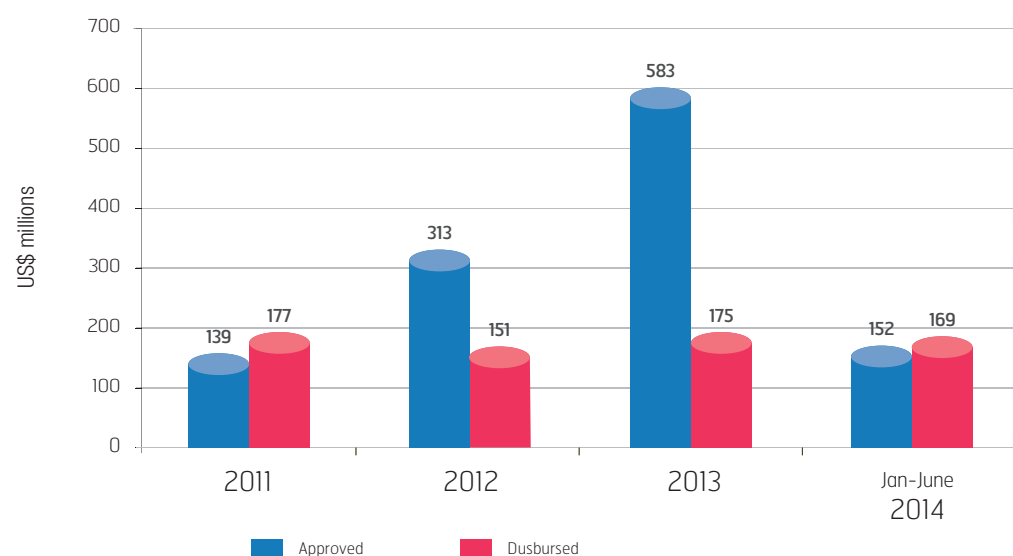


Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.

Amounts approved per year in FCAC partners increased sharply between 2011 and 2013, to reach US\$583 million approved in 2013 (Figure 4.8). The 2014 value, with US\$152 million approved by mid-2014 and US\$267 million projected to be approved by the end of the year, is expected to be lower and close to amounts approved in 2012. Amounts disbursed have been mostly stable between 2011 and 2013, between

US\$151 million and US\$177 million. However, as disbursements for grants approved in 2013 begin, amounts disbursed in 2014 have stepped up significantly. By the middle of 2014, disbursements were at US\$169 million, which could lead to almost double the amounts disbursed in 2013 if the trend continues for the second half of the year.

Figure 4.8 **Amounts approved and disbursed per year in GPE FCAC partners, from 2011 to 2014**



Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.



*The Global Partnership's conditions and modalities of support have evolved progressively to better take into account the specific needs of FCACs.*

### **Adapting GPE support to fragile and conflict-affected countries**

The Global Partnership's conditions and modalities of support have evolved progressively to better take into account the specific needs of FCACs. Acceptance of FCACs into the Global Partnership was facilitated by the reform of the Catalytic Fund in 2008, which eased membership conditions. And the adoption of Transition Education Plans for FCAC partners in 2011 – which include criteria better suited to specificities and challenges for these contexts – promoted and consolidated GPE's effective and timely support for FCAC partners.

However, the implementation of GPE grant activities in FCAC partners presents several challenges. First, the capacity of the national government to implement the activities may be low, requiring an increased involvement of the partner agency in charge of GPE grant implementation. Second, there are countries where the national government's reach in some areas is not adequate, so other implementation channels must be sought. Finally, some governments in FCACs may not be recognized by the international community, which often forbids the partner agency from implementing activities through government channels.

The first examples of the specific challenges in FCAC partners were related to GPE grants in

Madagascar (2009) and Guinea (2010). The original supervising entity, the World Bank, suspended both programs when the countries suffered crisis situations. It became urgent to find other modalities of support and to identify possible partner agencies best suited to use these. UNICEF took over both Program Implementation Grants as managing entity partner for the first time. Over time, UNICEF became the Global Partnership's most important partner agency playing the managing entity role. To date, while UNICEF covers 15 percent of all Program Implementation Grants, it represents 31 percent of GPE grants in FCAC partners (Table 4.4).

While a high proportion of grants to FCAC partners are supervised by the World Bank, the increasing number under the responsibility of UNICEF is an indication that its capacity may be better suited to FCACs. Among all grants to FCAC partners, 65 percent were managed by the World Bank (48 percent in the 2012–2014 period) and 31 percent by UNICEF (44 percent in the 2012–2014 period). In total, 94 percent of all Program Implementation Grants under UNICEF's responsibility are in FCAC partners, versus 39 percent of those under the responsibility of the World Bank.

**Table 4.4 Program Implementation Grants by beneficiary and partner agency (January 2003–June 2014)**

	% UNICEF	% World Bank	% other agencies
All GPE developing country partners	15	77	7
GPE Non-FCAC partners	2	88	10
GPE FCAC partners	31	65	4

Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.

### **4.7.4 Analysis of grants by modalities and instruments**

In keeping with the principles of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, the Global Partnership

promotes aligned aid modalities and the use of each country's own systems<sup>11</sup> to reinforce each country's sense of ownership and build the

<sup>11</sup> The ultimate objective is to use, to the extent possible, the aid recipients' own institutions, rules, procedures and laws in the implementation of grants. These rules and procedures pertain to planning/budgeting, procurement, public expenditure management, audits and financial accountability. See GPE Charter: <http://globalpartnership.org/content/charter-global-partnership-education>.

capacity of its institutions. The Global Partnership builds on its collaborative attributes to provide multidimensional support to help developing countries design and implement sound education sector policies. Using the built-in attributes of the new funding model as a financial incentive to promote aligned aid modalities and the use of country systems is a key challenge for the Global Partnership, given that the majority of GPE grants are implemented as projects, which are not conducive of greater harmonization and alignment.

Since 2003, the Global Partnership has approved 110 grants to support ESP implementation. The partner agencies use various modalities and underlying instruments to disburse funds to recipient countries. In the 2013 Results for Learning Report,<sup>12</sup> Program Implementation Grants were classified according to four main modalities. The overall picture last year was that 78 percent of these grants had used project support instruments. That result has not improved since then (Table 4.5). The share of projects has actually increased in the past year, to reach 82 percent. For a full list of Program Implementation Grants by delivery channel and type of modality, see Annex 4.8.

*The share of projects has slightly increased in the past year, to reach 82 percent of all GPE Program Implementation Grants.*

**Table 4.5 Modalities of implementation of Program Implementation Grants, as of June 30, 2014**

Type	Number	Number share (%)	Amount (US\$ millions)	Amount share (%)
General budget support	1	1	102.0	3
Sector budget support	3	3	140.2	4
Pooled funds	16	15	1,117.5	29
Project support	89	82	2,500.4	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>109*</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,860.1</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.

Note: Although the number of standalone projects has been revised for coherence with financial records, the project headcount since 2003 remains problematic due to the FTI year-by-year grant policy in place until 2007-2008.

\* Note that one of the 110 grants approved since 2003 was later cancelled hence was not included in the modalities analysis.

The simple grant modality classification above does not give sufficient information on actual instruments used and particularly on the use of country systems. For example, a project support modality does not exclude a partial use of country systems for procurement and financial management. While budget support assumes full use of country systems, pooled funds imply donor harmonization but may have varying levels of alignment with national systems.

In this context, the GPE Secretariat has initiated an analysis of 59 GPE-funded active programs

for their full or partial use of country systems. This desk analysis is done along five dimensions to test whether the programs are aligned with national ESPs, and national treasury, procurement, accounting and reporting, and audit systems. The results of this study will be incorporated into the forthcoming 2014 GPE Portfolio Review. The preliminary results of the analysis show that GPE programs are aligned to ESPs, and most grants at least partially use country systems, but there is room for improvement.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 5, Table 5.1: <http://www.globalpartnership.org/results-learning-report-2013/>.

### 4.7.5 Grant implementation effectiveness

The Global Partnership pays special attention to delays between conception and implementation of its programs. This section focuses on the following major elements: (i) the time spent developing the GPE program; (ii) delays between

grant approval and first disbursement;<sup>13</sup> and (iii) the duration of implementation from the first disbursement to grant closing (Tables 4.6 and 4.7).<sup>14</sup>

**Table 4.6 Average time to develop a GPE program, get approval, and obtain the first disbursement, in months**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Development to approval	6.5	5.8	8.0	8.1	6.0	6.4	8.2	9.5	13.3
Approval to first disbursement	11.3	16.7	20.6	14.9	12.8	16.8	9.7	9.2	9.3

Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.

**Table 4.7 Average duration between first disbursement and closing of GPE grants, in years**

	Before 2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
First disbursement to close	1.6	2.5	2.3	3.5	3.3

Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.

#### *An increasing time to develop the GPE program*

**On average, it took eight months to develop a program to be supported by a GPE Program Implementation Grant over the 2006-2014 period.**

On average, it took eight months to develop a GPE program to be supported by a Program Implementation Grant over the 2006-2014 period. The average duration of program development has increased in the past few years, as more time has been devoted to ensuring programs' relevance and alignment to country priorities, and to improving programs' readiness for implementation. Average development time exceeded 9 months for the first time in 2013 and 2014.

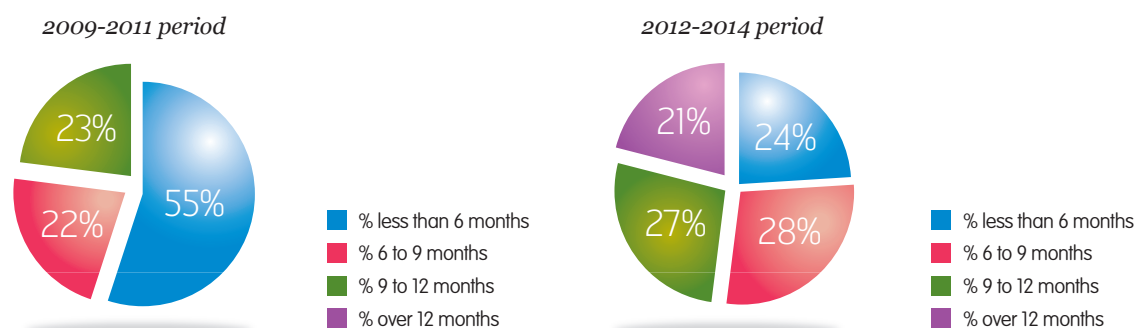
In the 2009-2011 period, more than half of the grant programs were developed in less than six months, and no program took more than 12 months to develop (Figure 4.9). In contrast, between 2012 and 2014 only a quarter of programs took six months or less to develop; and 21 percent of programs took 12 months or more.

<sup>13</sup> First disbursement to the country is only known for World Bank grants.

<sup>14</sup> This only applies for World Bank closed grants.



Figure 4.9 Average time spent to develop Program Implementation Grants



Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.

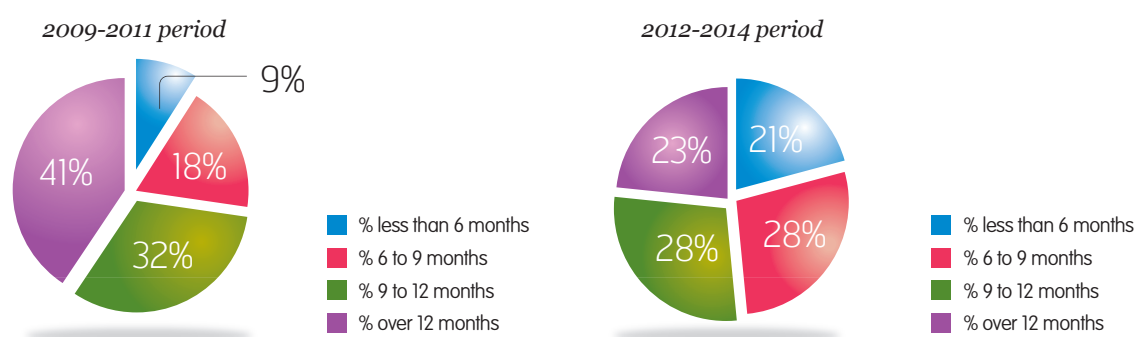
**Declining delay between grant approval and first disbursement**

Until 2011, the average delay between grant approval and first disbursement for programs managed by the World Bank<sup>15</sup> was 13.8 months. Joint efforts to reduce this delay have brought it down to 10 months for the 2012-2014 period (Figure 4.10). A more in-depth analysis of these trends shows that past changes in the delay between approval and disbursement were primarily driven by the time spent to sign the grant agreement after GPE Board of Director's approval. While the average delay between grant signature and the first disbursement was less than six months, the average delay between

Board approval and grant signature, which was originally around six months, increased to 14 months in 2008. The increase was driven by a change in simplified grant procedures, which caused backlogs and delays as staff strived to abide to the new procedures. Once this problem was resolved, the average grant signing delay declined. The analysis of these trends would have been more complete if partner agencies other than the World Bank were required to report disbursement data. An agreement on minimum reporting requirements with all partner agencies could resolve this issue.

*The average delay between grant approval and first disbursement for programs decreased to 10 months for the 2012-2014 period, for programs managed by the World Bank.*

Figure 4.10 Delay between grant approval and first disbursement



Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.

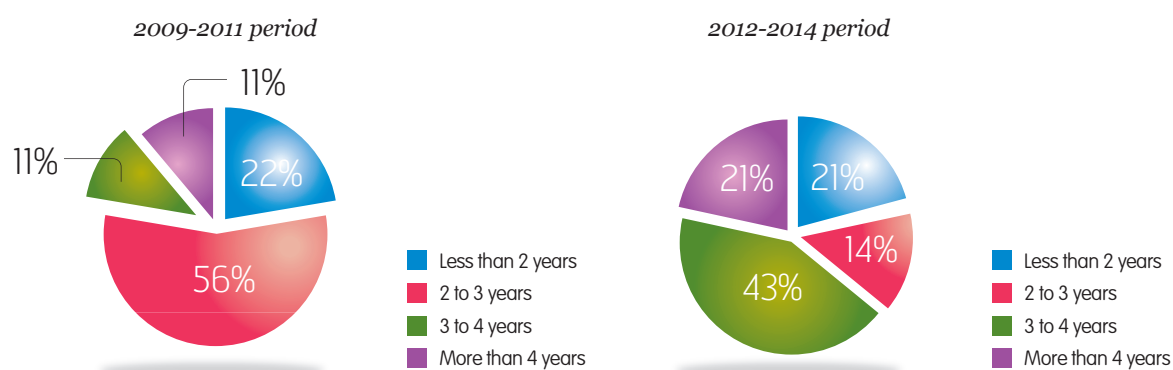
<sup>15</sup> Data on first disbursement to the country is not reported by other partner agencies.

***An increase in the duration of implementation of World Bank-supervised grants***

Initially, the FTI approved Program Implementation Grants for one year, but the average time to implement these grants was 1.6 years, showing the limit of this overly optimistic short-term grant policy. In response, the Global Partnership adopted standard three-year Program Implementation Grants starting

from 2008-2009. Grants implemented over three to four years made up 43 percent of all grants that closed during the 2012-2013 period, whereas in the 2010-2011 period, grants implemented in two to three years represented 56 percent of all grants (Figure 4.11).

**Figure 4.11 Duration of implementation between first disbursement and grant closing**



Source: Grant documents compiled by the GPE Secretariat.



Photo credit: GPE/Paul Martinez

## 4.8 Results, opportunities and challenges

This chapter has shown a number of positive results. As country support was strengthened and its activities diversified, direct technical support per developing country partner increased by 60 percent between 2011 and 2014. This support focused increasingly on the entire national policy cycle. Support to develop and implement credible ESPs accounted for 21 percent of all country visits by GPE Secretariat staff in 2012, 42 percent in 2013, and 62 percent in the first half of 2014. The Global Partnership is facing an increased demand in that area.

In addition to the direct technical assistance and support for inclusive policy dialogue provided by the GPE Secretariat, the Global Partnership also provides support for improvements in the education sector through a variety of research and policy development initiatives, through its GRA Program and its thematic work. Disbursements on the GRA program have been completed within the last year and the underlying work is at a preliminary stage. As a result, the Global Partnership has not yet developed a comprehensive approach for harnessing the tools, guidelines, research and policy solutions developed through these initiatives into its approach to country-level support. As the Global Partnership moves forward, the GRA program represents an important opportunity to develop new policy solutions and for broader engagement on basic education.

From inception until June 2014, the Global Partnership approved 110 Program Implementation Grants for 54 countries,

totaling US\$3.9 billion. Of that amount, US\$2.3 billion (or 60 percent) was disbursed over the same period. New rules and procedures, including the adoption of the Transitional Education Plan, the diversification of grant management modalities and the associated introduction of new partner agencies, specifically UNICEF, has helped consolidate the GPE focus on FCACs. Grants to FCAC partners accounted for only 21 percent of amounts approved in 2008, that share had more than doubled to 49 percent by mid-2014.

The Results for Learning Report tracks choice of modality within the GPE grant portfolio as a means of determining whether GPE grants are encouraging further harmonization and use of country systems. The share of GPE grants implemented through project mode has increased over the past year, now standing at 82 percent. Further analysis indicates limited use of national systems for GPE grants. The implementation of the new funding model plus the advent of the second strategic planning process provide the Global Partnership an opportunity to reconsider and enhance how choice of modality and use of country systems are taken into consideration in its work.

Finally, more time appears to be taken for grant development, which reflects a greater attention to implementation readiness for GPE programs. There is also less waiting time between the moment a grant is approved and the moment the country receives the first tranche of funding. However, efforts should be pursued to ensure that all approved GPE grants are processed and implemented more quickly.

***As country support was strengthened and its activities diversified, direct technical support per GPE developing country partner increased significantly.***

***The share of grants to GPE FCAC partners had more than doubled to 49 percent by mid-2014.***

***The share of projects has actually increased in the past year, to reach 82 percent. More focus needs to be put on the modality aspect in the GPE process.***

