NOVEMBER 30, DECEMBER 1 AND 3, 2020

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE | BOD/2020/11/12 DOC 03 | FOR INFORMATION

REPORT FROM THE CEO

Please note: Board papers are deliberative in nature and, in accordance with the GPE Transparency Policy, are considered to be public documents only after their appraisal by the Board. It is understood that Board members will circulate Board documents among their constituency members prior to Board consideration for consultation purposes.

Overview

1. The upcoming year is a tremendously important one for GPE as we step into implementing a new ambitious strategic plan. The campaign to raise the finances to do it was launched last month and the scale of our ambition depends on its success. We are seeking at least US $5 billion for the period 2021–2025 to support lower-income countries to transform their education systems. As developing country ministers have counselled, there is an urgency to step up, to be bold and transformative if we are to ensure that the most vulnerable and marginalised children can receive an education fit for the 21st century.

2. The COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest education crisis in living memory, putting at risk decades of progress and potentially denying hundred of millions of children their right to a quality education. It is the poorest and most vulnerable who will suffer the most. Extended school closures have already hugely exacerbated existing inequalities. An entire generation is at risk.

3. There is no doubt that the pandemic has created a crisis that demands an unprecedented response. The upheaval it has caused also presents an opportunity to 'build back better' and that is where we must focus our collective efforts. In the immediate period we have to work to get schools reopened safely, and paying attention to those furthest behind. And we have to ensure that education financing is not just protected but expanded.

4. GPE responded early and rapidly to the pandemic, mobilizing our largest-ever crisis response of more than $500 million to help partner governments plan and implement their responses. This month, I **approved the last of 66 proposals** from partner countries. By moving funds expeditiously, we were able to help governments to keep learning going, to plan and support the safe reopening of schools and to strengthen the resilience of their education systems to respond to future emergencies.

5. We have demonstrated the capacity to move fast and effectively both in getting financial resources to countries and in tapping the strengths of our diverse partnership. Together we designed and implemented new ways of working that preserved quality while responding with urgency and at scale. We need to bring that same dynamic approach – drawing on the partnership's strength and financial muscle - to drive transformational change. At the Secretariat we have re-organized our own ways of working in readiness for the new strategic period. We are prepared to step up and embrace the demands and aspirations of the new plan and, just as the partnership has come together to forge the new directions, we look forward to coming together to drive its success.

6. During the upcoming meeting, the Board will consider a series of decisoins that represent the culmination of a nearly two-year strategy development process. I want to thank Board members and colleagues throughout the partnership for the time and energy they committed to helping create what is an ambitious and timely plan together with a set of thoughtful tools and approaches to make it work. There is a clear approach set out to using the powerful levers available to the partnership - convening, funding, advocacy, and technical expertise - to deliver on GPE's goal and objectives. The Operating Model, Financing and Funding approach, and Monitoring Evaluation and Learning proposals all serve to make us more flexible and country-driven while sharpening incentives to focus on equity and the most marginalized. I particularly want to thank our partner countries who have played a leadership role in this process, providing insightful input at each step of the way.

7. Following the Board's final deliberations this month, we will launch the strategic plan in January and begin immediately to roll out the new Operating Model on a pilot basis in a handful of countries. Adaptability is a key concept underlying the new approach and faced with the uncertainty wrought by the pandemic, it is an attribute that will be needed in strength. The Monitoring , Evaluation and Learning framework, which we will start to consider at this Board meeting, will be key to ensuring adjustments are driven by evidence and experience.

Financing Campaign

8. On 12 October, the GPE financing campaign was formally launched by our co-hosts, the Prime Minister of the UK, Boris Johnson and the President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta. President Kenyatta spoke of Kenya's achievements in education over the past 15 years – including universal primary education and gender parity in school enrolments – and described GPE as a true and strong partner in walking this journey. It was particularly heartening to see PM

Johnson say he will be using the upcoming UK Presidency of the G7 to promote global education and confirm that GPE's replenishment conference will be held in the UK in mid-2021.

9. You can see the launch event here, find the Case for Investment here, and I encourage you to look at Kenya's story of change amongst the many country stories, which speak to the core of GPE's approach to transform education systems.

10. Our goal is to raise at least US$5 billion to implement GPE 2025. By mobilizing the strengths of our partnership, those funds can deliver a disproportionate impact on education outcomes. We can ensure 175 million additional girls and boys have the opportunity to learn and 88 million more children to enroll in school. The longer-term knock-on benefits are enormous: adding $164 billion to country partner economies, lifting 18 million people out of poverty and saving 2 million girls from child marriage.

11. We are in a strong position to secure a successful replenishment and in the process drive attention to the value of making smart investments in education. We will use the campaign to advocate for not just greater volumes of domestic investment but more efficient and equitable budget allocations, as highlighted in our new strategic plan. However, there can be no doubt that these are exceptionally difficult times to pursue a financing campaign. Government budgets of country partners and donors alike are severely challenged by the economic fallout of the pandemic. And most leaders are still rightly focused on the immediate need to contain the virus and save and protect lives. Education budgets in GPE partner countries are already largely locked into recurrent expenditure commitments. As they are stretched further, GPE's funds represent an even more important source of finance to enable governments to pursue the transformational reforms they are seeking to make. We estimate that a fully-funded GPE would represent almost 30 percent of discretionary funds available to low-income countries to pursue reform.

12. We successfully launched the campaign nationally in **Germany, the Netherlands and Spain** and I met members of Parliament to secure ambitious pledges. I had some great conversations with representatives and ministers from Switzerland, the UK, Norway, Finland, Germany and Spain, country Ambassadors from **France, Japan, Senegal** and UN Permanent Missions Representatives of **the Netherlands, Japan and UAE**, positioning GPE and the financing campaign. To make the case for our financing campaign, I interviewed with **The International Development Journal** in Japan, **El Pais**, **The National, the Financial Times**, **Alarabiya News**, and **CNN Marketplace Africa,** emphasizing the urgency of funding education globally.

GPE at work

13. As you all know, one of our main priorities over the past few months was the response to the unprecedented education crisis caused by the pandemic. The Board approved and allocated US$500 million for the COVID-19 window, split between US$475 million to country partners and US$25 million to the global grant, and in addition US$8.8 million for the COVID-19 ESPDG. We

have approved all received grant applications from 66 countries for US$467 million and the full amounts for the global grant and ESPDG. We have currently disbursed US$496 million to grant agents, including the ESPDG.

14. We are studying the impact of these funds. A recently released report , entitled 'What have we learnt?' begins to take stock. The findings indicate that while online learning may be a solution to fulfilling educational needs of some students in high-income countries, it is not a uniform solution due to a variety of challenges in lower income settings. Overall, 108 countries reported missing an average of 47 days of in-person instruction due to school closures by the time of the survey, equivalent to approximately one quarter of a regular school year. Already, we can see that the crisis will deepen the inequities that already exist in education in lower income countries.

15. I have continued to spotlight the education crisis and work with others to put education on top of the political agenda. At the Global Education Meeting 2020, I stressed the importance of **international and domestic financing**. I attended the formal launch of the International Parliamentary Network on Education (IPNED), Save the Children's UK Conservative Party Conference event alongside Baroness Sugg, the C20 summit, the ReWirED Talk hosted by Dubai Cares, Their World conversation on Unlocking Early Childhood Education, World Economic Forum 2020, and also thanked the world's **teachers** by participating in the initiative by Education International. GPE also hosted some key events around **girls' education:** a **"**back-to-school" event with some of our dearest friends and fellow advocates on gender equality and girls' education in times of COVID-19 and "Advancing Girl's Education" - A dialogue on opportunities for business action and impact to explore ways to align corporate initiatives with country strategies and priorities on girls' education.

16. Finally, as requested by the Board, we have commenced the **Governance Review.** We look forward to the Board's discussion of this important work at the December Board meeting.

Strengthening Delivery

17. Gender remains a high priority. The Secretariat is developing a series of technical products and training opportunities to support policy dialogue. For instance, a quick assessment tool is being developed by UNGEI in collaboration with GPE to support countries and local education groups (LEGs) to conduct assessments on gender equality, which will be made available at the end of 2020. In addition, the Joint Sector Review (JSR) and LEG Self-Assessment tools have been revised to include a stronger gender component. Furthermore, the Secretariat is working with the Gender at the Center Initiative (GCI) to deliver a training on gender-responsive sector dialogue and financing for decision makers and partners in the first half of 2021.

18. GPE's Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) initiated last year has quickly responded to the realities of the COVID-19 context. The global grants and 4 regional hubs have adapted their implementation plans, a KIX COVID Observatory for Africa has been established, and US$21 million is budgeted for regional calls for which 361 proposals have been received from

consortia of southern-based organizations; up to 25 will be selected for KIX funding by January next year. KIX has drawn in some important partners including ADEA, AU/CIEFFA, Brookings Institution, JPAL, PAL-network, Pratham, UNICEF and UIS among others to work on specific issues focused on gender, equity and inclusion. The first Annual KIX Symposium was organized in September to celebrate one year of implementation. Finally, the KIX website was launched and the platform will be fully operational before the end of the year.

19. Our second initiative, **Education Out Loud (EOL)** has also made great strides in its implementation this year with national level advocacy activities under way in 52 countries and the completion of all calls for proposals in its new areas of transnational advocacy and national social accountability. The total GPE allocation for EOL is US$55.5 million, of which US$10.5 million has been transferred by the GPE Trustee to the GA (Oxfam IBIS) as of June 30, 2020. Grantees have focused on the promotion of gender equality, contribution to pandemic response and increased domestic financing, in addition to developing a range of technical resources for evidence-based advocacy with policy makers.

20. The initial round of the **GPE Multiplier** is coming to a close and as an instrument designed to leverage additional funding and attract new partners to education, it has exceeded expectations. More than US$226 million had been allocated to 25 partner countries, catalyzing more than US$897 million in co-financing from 22 partners—a ratio of nearly 4:1 vs a target of 3:1.

21. We are continuing the focused and steady work of building relationships with the **business community and foundations**. As part of the follow-on work from the Education Data Solutions Roundtable (DRT), UNESCO and the GPE Secretariat officially launched the Education Management and Information System (EMIS) guide in September shared with all partner countries and provides a methodical approach for ministries of education to navigate challenges in their EMIS. The Secretariat is continuing its ongoing engagement with Rotary in Kenya and Uganda, and exploring additional collaboration opportunities in Nepal. We are collaborating with MRC Holland, a Dutch foundation, Telefonica Foundation, International Education Funders Group, Jacobs Foundation.

22. GPE Secretariat continues to **mobilize evidence across the Partnership** to inform the development of the new Operating Model, support policy dialogue at country level, and shape global policy discourse. In September 2020, the Secretariat organized a series of simulation workshops to discuss possible ways education systems may evolve by 2023. These discussions highlighted concerns from country partners on how the pandemic is expected to significantly exacerbate some of the current challenges that countries face, including child labor, gender-based violence, teacher motivation, and drop-out rates. The Secretariat is also mobilizing evidence to showcase GPE's COVID grants as examples of how countries are ensuring that children with disabilities are not left behind and targeting gender specific barriers during the pandemic. December 2020 will mark the end of two of the main GPE flagship initiatives: **Assessment for Learning (A4L) and Better Early Learning and**

Development at Scale (BELDS). Over the past three years, these two initiatives financed in-depth capacity building activities around learning assessment systems and strengthening planning for early childhood education and contributed to the development of global resources – ANLAS and ECE Accelerator (to be launched in early December). An independent evaluation of BELDS and A4L initiatives will be completed and made public at the end of 2020 and will capture key lessons learned from the country experiences.

Strengthening the partnership: Effective Partnership Rollout

23. Throughout the consultation process for GPE 2025, the Board has emphasized that the four **Effective Partnership Review (EPR)** principles must guide the new Operating Model, Financing and Funding Framework and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning strategy. The EPR was approved and is in the process of being rolled out. The Partnership Compact that strengthens decentralized mutual accountability for evidence-based solutions to key sector bottlenecks is a key element of the strategy proposals that are based on these principles. Under the **EPR Communications and Engagement Strategy,** the Secretariat is in the final stages of developing a web-portal with accessible information, resources and clarification of roles and responsibilities for country-level partners. The first series of webinars has been rolled out with the EC, JICA, the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and UNHCR. Although COVID19 paused momentum for **the LEG self-assessment pilot**, 14 countries engaged with the self-assessment tools and feedback is ongoing. The tools are now being revised, guided by learning and feedback from country level partners. They will be rolled out in the new Operating Model, particularly to support the Partnership Compact.

Results and Impact

24. GPE's comprehensive **Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy** approved in 2016 has been successfully implemented as planned. The final synthesis report of the Country-Level Evaluation, the Education Sector Plan Development Grant Evaluation, thematic reviews, and the Independent Summative Evaluation have all provided evidence vital to the development of the GPE 2025 strategic plan. These reports and their findings were shared with the Board in June. This corpus of evidence informed all aspects of the design and planned implementation of the Operating Model, the Financing and Funding framework, and the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework. The M&E strategy has demonstrated value for money in the improvements it has supported in our work going forward.

25. The final **Results Report for GPE 2020** is currently underway, and is scheduled to be delivered to the Board in September 2021, as agreed with the Coordinating Committee. The timing will be more suitable from the perspective of a final "bookends" report that looks at the trajectory of GPE between 2016 and 2020. In addition, in keeping with our commitment to evidence-based adaptive learning and the agility required for responding to the pandemic, an **independent formative evaluation of GPE's COVID response** is planned for the first half of 2021 and will be delivered to the Board in June. Lessons learned from this evaluation will also feed into our broader approaches and how we do business to help build back better.

GPE Finances

26. Over the course of 2020, we have seen a **significant increase in demand, approvals and disbursements** of GPE funding with over US$1.2 billion in grants approved during the first nine months of the year, bringing total grant approvals since the start of the current financing period in 2018 to US$2.2 billion with a further US$300 million in applications currently under review. COVID grant approvals as of the date of this report are now complete with US$500 million in grants approved. In the first three quarters of the year, we disbursed more than US$800 million from the GPE Fund meaning that both approvals and disbursements have significantly exceeded previous annual highs.

27. As the Board is aware, the creation of the COVID window required a significant increase in the authorized **carryover** to US$950 million in terms of funds that will be required from the next financing period (2021-2025) to cover outstanding grant disbursements on approvals made in the current financing period. However a number of factors have helped to reduce the projected carryover to just over US$800 million including in particular additional pledges from Germany of EUR 66 million including 25 million for the COVID window, and Switzerland (CHF 6.5m). The carryover is still significant and timely delivery of remaining donor contributions and new donor pledges will be key to ensuring we can sustain and increase our grant approval and disbursement numbers in the years ahead to meet this growing demand.

28. We continue to proactively monitor the **stewardship of GPE's funds** and when misuse does occur, our grant agents work to obtain repayment and learn lessons for the future. We currently have three misuse cases which the Secretariat is monitoring, and more details will be provided to the Board ahead of the upcoming meeting via email to the Board restricted list.

29. With regards to **Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)**, we are in the process of finalizing the Policy on the Protection against Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) for consideration by the Board in early 2021. In the meantime, we will be reporting on these cases in a similar fashion to misuse of funds. There are currently two SEAH cases which the Secretariat is monitoring, and more details will be provided to the Board via email to the Board restricted list.

Secretariat Management

30. We continue to optimize the Secetariat's operations in an effort to ever improve effectiveness and efficiency. In July, we implemented a significant **reorganization.** The principal features of this reorganization were twofold: one to consolidate the former Country Support and the Education Policy and Performance teams into a single effort and two to create a dedicated team to oversee grant operations. Staff are now settled into their new roles. The Secretariat's headcount remains, as it has since December 2016, at 108 and next year we will reassess our resources versus our mandate and report to the Board about staffing. The Secretariat's **Europe Office in Paris** continues to grow largely in line with our initial expectations, though COVID has posed some delays. We currently have 17 staff mapped there with another 2-3 in

the exploration stage. Towards a near-term target of 25, we expect to see a few more staff and vacant positions in Paris next year.

31. In an effort to ever improve our effectiveness as an organization, the Secretariat is finalizing a multi-year strategy to strengthen staff talent management and development, and diversity and inclusion. The Secretariat has undertaken several initiatives to start what will be a several year journey to improve diversity and inclusion at GPE. These include identifying an MT member to lead on D&I, setting up a staff-lead Diversity and Inclusion Task Force and electing GPE's first "Respectful Workplace Advisor." We have had the opportunity to seek advice from several offices within the Worldbank on these efforts and appreciate their willingness to work closely with us.

Conclusion

I opened this report on the opportunity we have to transform education. I would like to conclude by emphasizing how vital our mission is. Education is threatened by the consequences of the pandemic but also under attack in some parts of the world, with attacks in France, Afghanistan, and Cameroon, over the past few months. As we are reminded of the dangers faced by teachers and children around the world, I want to reiterate our mission to ensure quality education and safe learning environment for all.

My hope and strong belief is that there is no better time than now to talk about transforming education. We must make that pledge to all children and future generations. We must act now, and we must have the courage of delivering this promise.

ANNEX 1

Implementation of World Bank-GPE Hosting MoU

BOD/2018/12-01–Institutional Arrangements:

The Board of Directors:

2. Resolves to:

j. Further instruct the GPE CEO to ensure as a standing item in her report to the Board information on how the World Bank hosting arrangement is working in operation.

July 1, 2020 to December 30, 2020

This is the fourth update to the Board on the implementation of the World Bank - Global Partnership for Education Hosting Memorandum of Understanding (WB-GPE Hosting MOU). My thanks to Mamta Murthi, who took on the role of Vice President of the Human Development Practice Group at the World Bank as of July 1, 2020, for the warm working relationship.

On the whole, the implementation of the WB-GPE MOU provisions are in line with the MOU. We have had productive discussions with our host unit on new office space at the World Bank premises for the Secretariat once conditions allow a return to office and we have had positive initial discussions to advance early ideas for innovative financing options. Active solutions to operational issues such as matching the Bank's IT support with GPE's business model are under discussion, and dialogue with the Bank as Trustee and Legal support to advance innovative financing options and currency risk management are positive.

The below is a table showing the specific provisions of the WB-GPE Hosting MOU and their reference in the MOU by which, per the Board's instructions, the implementation of the hosting arrangement is reported to the Board.

WB-GPE Hosting MOU Text and Reference

Governance	**Reference**	**Notes**
The World Bank is a facilitator and will not seek to interject itself in any way to the governance structures of GPE.	Art. II (6)(a)	In line with MOU.
Host VP ensures the provisions of MoU are executed for smooth operation of GPE Secretariat within the World Bank.	Art. II (4)(c)	In line with MOU.
Strategic	**Reference**	**Notes**
The World Bank will strive to ensure strong strategic alignment on the overarching vision, mandate, objectives, and modalities of the GPE Secretariat.	Art. II (3)c	In line with MOU.
Hosting the GPE Secretariat within the HD VPU will allow greater alignment on education sector planning, coordination on Sustainable Development Goal 4 monitoring, ensure harmonization with the education aid architecture, and permit the GPE Secretariat to benefit from the World Bank's country-level footprint.	Art. II (7)b	In line with MOU.
GPE Policy Compliance	**Reference**	**Notes**
HR policy and procedures - including caps on grade levels, calibration of GPE Secretariat staff with all other World Bank staff, defined compensation bands. GPE staffing levels may increase even if Bank staffing levels are constant or reduced.	Art. II (1)c; Art. II (3)b; Art. II (5)c; Art. II (11)(a)(b)(c);	In line with MOU.
CEO Performance – GEC will use World Bank's suite of performance evaluation tools to inform GPE Board review of CEO, which will make a performance rating recommendation to HD VPU that is entered into World Bank HR systems.	Art. II (12)a	In line with MOU.
Corporate and operational procurement policy – The GPE Secretariat will consult semiannually with World Bank Corporate Procurement on projected procurement needs for GPE over the subsequent six (6) months.	Art. II (1)c; Art. II (3)b; Art. III (2); Art. III (3)(a)(b)(c)	In line with MOU.

IT policy - The GPE Secretariat and the World Bank will cooperate to ensure compatibility and security of IT infrastructure.	Art. III (4)(a)(b)(c)	Software solutions to support Secretariat business processes limited and often not well suited.
Travel policy – GPE staff will conform to World Bank travel and security policies and practices.	Art. III (5)(a)(b)(c)	In line with MOU.
Management of Secretariat	**Reference**	**Notes**
Host VPU review of GPE Secretariat will focus on alignment of staffing plans with available resources, and conformity with the World Bank's HR and resource management policies and procedures.	Art. II (5)b;	In line with MOU.
Roles of the World Bank	**Reference**	**Notes**
Host – Access to the full suite of the World Bank's administrative support services, including HR, information technology systems, legal, accounting, travel, security, facilities, and internal justice, use of support services and facilities of World Bank offices globally and ability to locate staff there like all other World Bank units.	Art. II 6(a); Art. II (8)a; Art. II (8)b; Art. III (6)	Software solutions to support Secretariat business processes limited and often not well suited.
Trustee – Services include receipt of contributions, holding and investing of funds, transfer of funds to implementing agencies as well as financial and fiduciary management.	Art. II 6(b); Art. II (3)b; Art. II (9)a; Art. VI (2)	In line with MOU.
Grant Agent - All Grant Agent staff who serve on a GPE body are required to recuse themselves from decisions that affect the World Bank. The GPE Secretariat can reasonably hold the World Bank acting as Grant Agent accountable.	Art. II (6)c; Art. II (3)b; Art. II (9)(b)(iii)	In line with MOU.
Board Member - The World Bank representative will provide governance and financial oversight to ensure that the GPE is structured, governed and functioning efficiently, effectively and ethically, and will monitor and assess the overall	Art. II (6)d	In line with MOU.

effectiveness and risks associated with GPE's work and implementing risk mitigation measures.		
Other Administrative Issues	**Reference**	**Notes**
Communications - GPE Secretariat's communications staff will maintain regular and ongoing contact with World Bank External and Corporate Relations (ECR) regarding communications and outreach plans for GPE to ensure alignment and close coordination.	Art. III (1)	In line with MOU.
Future Capabilities	**Reference**	**Notes**
The establishment of an expanded fundraising model to facilitate receipt of contributions or in-kind support from non-traditional donors.	Art. IV (2)	Not applicable.
Innovative financing mechanisms.	Art. IV (3)	Consultation with Legal/Trustee ongoing on engagement with Business Community.
Currency risk management through hedging.	Art. IV (4)	Alternative mechanism under exploration by Trustee and Treasury.
The provision of funds directly to national governments and other nontraditional entities in grant execution.	Art. IV (5)	Not applicable.
Hosting of other institutions.	Art. IV (6)	Not applicable.
Rapid disbursement through fast-track procedures or hosted facilities.	Art. IV (7)	Not applicable.
Ability to locate GPE Secretariat staff outside of Washington, DC.	Art. II (11)c;	In line with MOU.