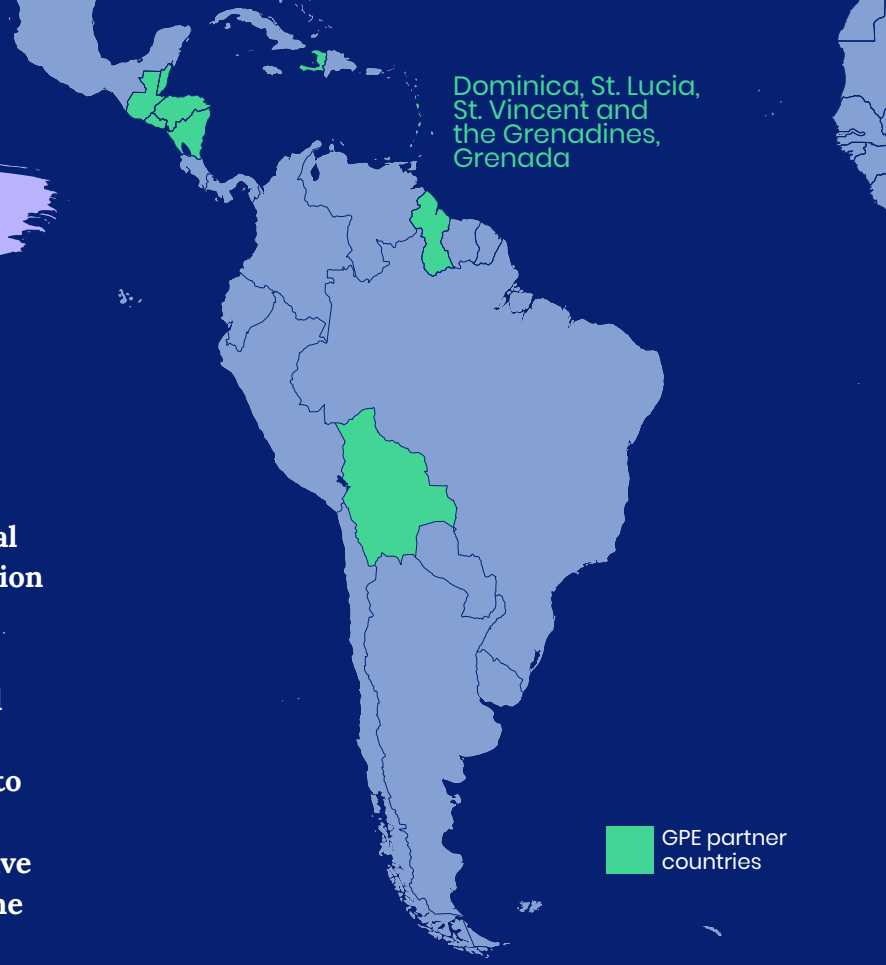
MARCH 2026

GPE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



Latin America and the Caribbean is a region with great opportunity for transformation but faces challenges in addressing learning gaps and creating jobs, with an estimated economic growth of 2.3% in 2025 (the lowest among global regions) and 2.5% for 2026. Investing in education is a powerful engine for inclusive growth and long-term prosperity. Since 2003, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has supported 12 countries across Latin America and the Caribbean with over US$346 million in grants to improve the quality of education for every girl and boy through safe schools and comprehensive curricula fit for the 21st century that support the transition to the world of work.

THE CHALLENGE

Across the region:

- There are issues of **education access and inequality** based on children's ethnicity, gender, parental income and educational background, and whether they live in rural areas.
- Schooling is often interrupted by climate shocks, migration flows and other emergencies, with **slow recovery from learning loss** despite high primary school enrollment. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, 52% of 10-year-olds could not read and understand a simple text. This is estimated to have risen to 79% in 2022, tied to the region having experienced some of the longest school closures in the world due to the pandemic.
- School **dropout** is high, especially for boys, and **school safety** is a primary concern due to bullying and school-related gender-based violence.
- There is a **skills mismatch** between education and labor market needs, with students lacking foundational learning and technical skills. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 reported that 50% of 15-year-olds lack basic reading skills, 57% lack science skills and 70% lack basic math proficiency compared to their peers in other countries—the equivalent of being **5 years behind in schooling**.

GPE RESULTS

OVER $346 MILLION
to 12 countries through 68 GPE grants.

22 ACTIVE GRANTS
totaling **$137 million** (as of March 2026) across 12 partner countries, including **two regional grants** across the Caribbean totaling $20 million.

$22 MILLION INVESTED
in **early learning** through 10 grants across 8 partner countries since 2021.

GPE Transforming Education

MULTIPLY POSSIBILITY FUND EDUCATION

For all sources visit: www.globalpartnership.org/data.

GPE APPROACH

GPE adopts a partnership model to transform education systems through sustainable, innovative financing that supports country-led reforms. GPE has had a presence in **Latin America and the Caribbean** since 2002, with **Guyana**, **Honduras** and **Nicaragua** being the first countries from the region to join the partnership. Today, there are **12 GPE partner countries** across the region—home to an estimated 24.5 million children.

For their education reforms, partner countries prioritize: improving the quality of education by changing curriculum to be more comprehensive, including a focus on 21st-century skills and technology for education (Tech4Ed); ensuring every girl and boy—including indigenous populations—has equal access to suitable learning environments and resources; and strengthening leadership and accountability across the education sector.

Across the region, GPE provides **financial support** and **technical assistance** on climate-smart education, safe learning and Tech4Ed.

To promote country-to-country learning and research on addressing educational challenges, the **GPE Knowledge and Innovation Exchange Latin America and the Caribbean (KIX LAC)** hub is active across the region with 6 current projects on: **gender equality and inclusion** in education, including teacher training and using data; **play-based learning** for early childhood education; how to get children **back in school**, especially those who have had their learning disrupted due to political/economic instability or situations of mobility, and reduce the likelihood of youth criminalization and teen pregnancy; and how to build education system **resilience** to respond to school disruption. The GPE KIX LAC hub also holds high-level meetings so that countries can exchange best practices on: peer mentoring for teachers, gender equality and flexible education pathways.

GPE's Education Out Loud funds civil society organizations and coalitions that advocate for inclusive education—especially of girls and indigenous populations, including preserving their language heritage—as well as for school safety across the region.

INVESTING IN GIRLS' EDUCATION FROM THE EARLY YEARS

Two countries in the region, **El Salvador** and **Honduras**, are eligible to access funding through the **Girls' Education Accelerator**—GPE's targeted funding window to improve education for girls where they lag the furthest behind due to fragility, conflict or harmful social norms that are heavily entrenched. Between 2021 and 2025, the Accelerator raised $225 million used for programs and policies that delivered quality education for 3.6 million girls. El Salvador is the first partner country to access funding through the Accelerator to help achieve its priority education reform of increasing access to quality early childhood education (ECE), especially for girls. Building on its national ECE policy *Crecer Juntos* (Growing Together), El Salvador is revising curricula, defining quality standards for educational services and developing teacher training with a gender perspective. Using a $12 million GPE Multiplier grant, the government leveraged $171.5 million in financing from the Inter-American Development Bank—a leverage ratio of just over 1:14—to improve learning for more than 850,000 students. Combined financing from the Accelerator ($5 million) and a $10 million GPE Multiplier grant was used to create gender-sensitive learning materials in collaboration with local authors and publishers to ensure cultural relevance and a framework is being developed so that assessments also do not reinforce stereotypes or mislead about girls' abilities. These efforts are addressing social norms that are harmful for girls and keep them from learning from early childhood to the end of secondary school.



Students present their work at Centro Escolar Olof Palme in El Salvador, one of the early education centers that receives funds through the Girls' Education Accelerator.

GPE

GPE Transforming Education

MULTIPLY POSSIBILITY FUND EDUCATION

PARTNER COUNTRY SPOTLIGHTS

BELIZE

A partner country since 2023, Belize has received over $6 million in GPE grants. Belize has been a strong proponent of the partnership approach, creating its first local education group to foster greater coordination and alignment among education partners in the country as well as convening partners and stakeholders for the first-ever joint education sector review.

In 2023, GPE and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) teamed up to transform education in Belize. A $5 million GPE Multiplier grant leveraged an additional $15 million in cofinancing from IDB to support the country's Skills for the Future Program. This combined GPE-IDB support aims to close the learning and access gaps that widened during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to strengthen the country's education data system, especially in tracking the learning progress of vulnerable groups and monitoring initiatives for gender equality. The program is advancing Belize's goal to make education relevant for today's world by building 6 science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM) laboratories and Virtual Lab technologies for 15 secondary schools to promote 21st-century skills.

> ***"GPE is pleased to collaborate with the IDB to support the government of Belize in attaining its education goals,"*** **said Laura Frigenti, CEO of GPE.** ***"There is no more relevant agenda for countries than to prepare today's students for the world of tomorrow, with skills that match the challenges our world is facing."***

GUATEMALA

A partner country since 2006, Guatemala has received close to $11 million in GPE grant support to achieve its priority education reform to ensure all students, especially those from indigenous communities and living in rural areas, have access to quality education. Migration—both national and international—is a key challenge, disrupting education continuity and preventing students from completing school across the country. A $10 million GPE Multiplier grant mobilized $47 million from local private foundations to improve education for 2 million children and youth, including reintegrating 28,000 returning migrants into the national education system. The program provides alternative learning pathways and skill certification that allows youth to stay in their communities, find gainful employment, be self-reliant and contribute to local economic development. In Guatemala's highlands, where education access is limited and migration often seems the only path, only 3 in 10 students who complete grade 6 continue to grade 7, with girls at even greater risk. To address this, the ministry of education and local municipalities in collaboration with GPE and UNICEF set up 34 virtual learning environments to provide free access to technology, tutoring and digital skills in safe, monitored spaces. Youth are using these centers to gain practical skills for school, work and to reenter formal education to complement their learning in nearby schools.

> **Students like 11-year-old Meybelin Yesenia Cobox Urízar are discovering new opportunities:** ***"I'm learning how to use a computer and type, which will help me when I become a vet."***