



GRANTS FOR GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Summary Portfolio Status Report as of June 30, 2015

Background and purpose

The Global and Regional Activities (GRA) program was created in 2010 to support research, capacity building, knowledge development and sharing at the global, regional, and country levels. The GRA program is complementary to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) country level activities. It fosters innovation through the systematic provision of services and products that enlighten, engage, and energize partners to apply new knowledge and evidence-based good practices to resolve persistent education challenges, as outlined in the GPE's 2012-2015 Strategic Plan.

In 2013, the GPE Board of Directors approved a total of 15 grants¹ in the amount of US\$31 million (*ref. BOD/2013/02-02 and BOD/2013/07-01*) to address three thematic and knowledge gap areas:

- (i) learning outcomes and education quality;
- (ii) out-of-school children and equity; and
- (iii) education financing and systems building

The GPE Secretariat monitors implementation progress through semi-annual reports submitted by grant recipients, based on individual Results Agreements and in accordance with the GRA Program Operational Manual. This annual summary portfolio status report captures overall implementation progress and key results as of June 30, 2015. It is organized into five sections as follows.

Section 1 provides a brief summary of outputs and products across the portfolio

Section 2 presents selected results across the three thematic and knowledge gap areas

Section 3 sets out some of the key challenges identified over the reporting period

Section 4 highlights how GRA outputs link to the wider GPE business model and activities

Section 5 is a table containing basic information for the entire portfolio, including managing entities, geographic coverage, key dates, disbursement status and links to individual grant Results Agreements

¹ The 16th grant awarded to CISED for learning assessment and outcomes in Central Asia was cancelled in 2015.

Section 1: Cumulative outputs to date

In addition to numerous and often non-quantifiable technical assistance services, the GRA portfolio has generated a large number of outputs in terms of guidelines and methodological tools, seminars and workshops at regional and country levels, and other reference documents and papers.

The table below provides a summary of these outputs, as described in the individual progress report as of June 30, 2015.

Outputs/ Products	Number produced to date (30 June 2015)
1. Guidelines and methodological tools	29
2. Regional level seminars and workshops	23
3. Country level seminars and workshops	38
4. Other reference documents and papers	20

Note: The number of outputs produced are minimum figures. Some progress reports cited multiple outputs without providing a precise count and these have been estimated as 3.

Section 2: Results across the three thematic areas

Section 2.1: Learning outcomes and education quality

GPE has awarded 7 grants of US\$17,300,283 to partners to undertake research, knowledge sharing and capacity development activities that seek to better understand and promote good practice in quality education. Projects within this grant category include activities undertaken by 10 different agencies in at least 53 countries. The projects' focus is on issues related to improving learning and teaching, evidence based innovative approaches, including curricula development, in order to improve early reading in multilingual contexts, Early Childhood Education and early grade literacy, learning assessments and oral reading assessment tools and on teachers' participation in sector dialogue including the LEGs. Four projects aim to pilot innovation and produce evidence based results to inform policies and implementation on teaching reading in bilingual and multilingual contexts. All projects aim to offer research and innovation and systematic approaches to support better policy development and implementation around the education quality and teaching and learning issues.

Selected results from three projects are as follows:

- The Reading Assessment project launched a Catalogue of Learning Assessments in April 2015, summarizing 57 assessments from 26 countries of whom 21 are GPE partners and an accompanying searchable database has been designed.

- The ELAN project (learning to read and write in African languages and in French in the context of bilingual primary education) has implemented pilots on reading and writing in grades 1 and 2 of primary education in 75 schools in 8 countries. Four countries have adopted a bilingual curriculum (Mali, Niger, Burundi, Madagascar). In Mali, the language policy was approved, formalizing 13 Malian national languages, guidelines on bilingual education were developed and ELAN activities were integrated in the Ministry of Education’s education sector plan. Four additional countries have recently joined ELAN Initiative (Cote d’Ivoire, Togo, Guinea, Madagascar).
- The PEARL project convened a regional meeting of Pacific Island countries in May in order to raise awareness, share and compare the limitations of tools used by different countries to measure early childhood incomes, school readiness and early grade reading. In Tuvalu, training materials for school readiness including “how to” guides, readers, materials and resources have been developed and 32 new community play based activity groups are operational, supporting 619 families and 767 children. Early grade literacy materials for grade 1 term one have been prepared and teacher training for 32 primary schools was completed. In Samoa, a draft early human capability index has been completed and is ready for piloting.

Section 2.2: Education financing and systems building

GPE has awarded 3 grants of US\$3,993,972 to 4 partners in support of research, the development of new methodologies and public tools, capacity development, and evidence-based advocacy around issues related to school grants and equity, national systems and financial flows including National Education Accounts (NEA), reporting on education outcomes through district and school profile cards. Overall, these three projects are being executed in 14 countries worldwide.

Selected results from two projects are as follows:

- In Zimbabwe the NEA project has produced commendable results at national level building capacity to use education financing data to inform policy making. The annual public expenditure review for the education sector was based extensively on the project’s work. This will become standard practice in the future, as the project findings and recommendations are validated.
- The School Profiles project being implemented in four countries, Laos, Nepal, Madagascar, Togo, and Zambia has computerized examination results and is using these as a tool to help monitor and pilot the system. Dissemination of the tools developed including school profile cards, and training modules developed by the project are being disseminated and piloted in countries not currently participating in this project.

Section 2.3: Out-of-school children (OOSC), access and equity

Five grants totaling US\$9,767,454 have been awarded to three partners (UNICEF, UIS and the World Bank) to undertake projects in over 60 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. The projects seek to enable a better understanding of the persistent challenges to access, the multiple barriers confronted by out-of-school children and ensuring equity for the most marginalized, including girls and children with disabilities. The grants are complementary in their scale and scope, focusing on developing conceptual frameworks and country level profiles, improving data collection and use, conducting detailed diagnostic work and thematic studies, preparing operational manuals to support country level analysis and planning. National capacity development and training is a feature of all projects. Four of the projects are co-financed. All projects aim to offer systematic approaches to support better analysis, policy and planning and supporting evidence based advocacy around out of school children, access and equity issues.

Selected results from 3 projects are as follows:

- The OOSC Reduction project, supported over 58 countries on OOSC surveys using the OOSC operational manual which provides a step by step guide to conducting a country study. The results of this survey informed the work of the OOSC Children and Data Challenge project (see next bullet). A framework for monitoring OOSC, including children with disabilities, has been developed together with an inclusive education teacher preparation toolkit. Fourteen countries have received technical support on inclusive education.
- Under the OOSC Children and Data Challenge project, a highly regarded and influential global report on OOSC was launched at the Education World Forum and a new website on OOSC was launched at <http://allinschool.org>. An operational manual for analysis of data on OOSC describing their methodological framework was developed; providing indicator definitions; setting out step by step instructions for the analysis of data, barriers and policies; and offering advice implementing the findings of an OOSC study through developing a country strategy and in education sector policy.
- The Disability/Health and Education project has developed training manuals and materials on school health and nutrition, vision screening and deworming. Regional workshops were conducted in Asia and Africa bringing together ministry of health and education teams from 15 countries to share experiences and build knowledge and capacity to develop strong evidence based, inclusive school health plans within wider education sector plans and implement inclusive school health plans including de-worming and eye health/vision screening. Immediately following a regional workshop in Zambia, the joint Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health team organized a multi-sector, multi-partner workshop to review and agree a way forward to finalize the draft 2013 school health and nutrition policy.

Section 3: Key challenges

In reviewing the implementation progress of the GRA grants, a range of challenges have been identified that are encountered across the portfolio. These include:

1) Coordination and synergy

GRA grants aim to increase capacity, improve knowledge sharing, boost accountability and strengthen south-south cooperation. The identification of areas of overlap and synergies, can be a basis to build cooperation and boost coordination, making the outputs and impacts of the GRA portfolio greater than the sum of its parts. There is scope for further efforts by the GPE Secretariat and Partners.

2) Validity

A number of grants are conducting research in their field of activity. For GRA knowledge products to be credible, project supervising and implementing agencies need to demonstrate that results intended for dissemination are well evidenced, based on sound measurements and testing (internal validity) and make clear the extent to which findings can be generalized (external validity). The GPE Secretariat can encourage good practice across the portfolio.

3) Scaling up and Sustainability

Most of the GRA grants are expected to deliver results in two or three years. Where surveys have been conducted and databases established, it is not clear that these can or will be repeated or kept up to date. The GPE Secretariat can assess with GRA managers the value and viability of sustaining and/or scaling up key activities.

4) Dissemination of Knowledge Products

The development of operational manuals and guidelines and early findings from projects has been a significant sign of progress over this reporting period. However the acknowledgement of GPE funding and associated branding of publications has not been consistent. The production of a range of knowledge products has been encouraging and the challenge going forward is to maximize dissemination. The GPE Secretariat will continue to work with grant recipients to ensure compliance with the GRA Operational Manual guidance on branding and will review dissemination strategies, including the potential for endorsement of knowledge products by GPE Partners.

5) Use of Knowledge Products

Alongside effective dissemination strategies, the use of GRA project results, research findings and knowledge products at the country level during education sector analysis, planning and review processes, is an important indicator of success. The GPE Secretariat will work with internal teams and GRA grant teams to increase the availability and timely use of GRA knowledge products

6) Grant Monitoring and Management

This reporting period has seen a sharp increase in the number of supervising and managing agencies requesting changes to results agreements, implementation period and budget reallocations. The recently formed GRA team in the GPE Strategy Policy and Performance unit will ensure that all requests are handled professionally and that additional guidance is developed, as appropriate, to complement the 2012 GRA Operational Manual.

Section 4: Linking the GRA Outputs to GPE Assistance

In order to have an ongoing forum in which to connect global and regional activities to the country-level work of the Global Partnership, the GPE Secretariat has established five Thematic Clusters around the strategic objectives. These are:

1. Planning and Systems
2. Education Financing
3. Equity and Inclusion
4. Teaching and Learning
5. Humanitarian

These Clusters, which have cross-team Secretariat membership, have been tasked with analyzing the results of the GRA projects and identifying potential linkages to country-level work. Moreover, in March 2015, the GRA portfolio was presented to the GPE Secretariat. The presentation, organized as a BBL, provided the opportunity for the GPE Secretariat staff to have a comprehensive update on the status of the GRA portfolio, challenges and country impact, as well as discuss how to develop and strengthen linkages between GRA outputs and GPE technical assistance.

The GPE Secretariat has continued to disseminate information on the GRA program during this reporting period. A Knowledge Exchange and Capacity Development brochure was published in June 2015, which prominently features the GRA program, as well as other GPE initiatives. The brochure has been disseminated at major international education conferences and is available on the GPE website.²

In addition, the Secretariat has published the first in a planned series of blogs. The blog³, entitled *Quality Preschool Education for All: Is it Possible?*, describes a GRA funded regional workshop which included participants from 8 countries in Zanzibar to discuss how to operationalize and bring to scale quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programs in Africa. The blog described how the workshop took a practical look at what works in the delivery of cost-effective quality pre-primary education, and what levels of technical knowledge, planning and budgeting are needed to scale up the programs.

² <http://www.globalpartnership.org/content/promoting-knowledge-exchange-and-capacity-development>

³ <http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/quality-preschool-education-all-it-possible>

Section 5: Overview of the GRA Grants (June 30, 2015)

GRA Project	Partner Organizations (ME=Managing Entity, SE=Supervising Entity)	Geographic Focus	Documents	Start date	Approved grant in USD	Expenditure to 31 Dec 2014
FOCUS AREA 1: LEARNING OUTCOMES						
Development of methodologies to link reading assessments across regions and draw lessons regarding best early assessment practices	ME: UIS Partner: Hewlett Foundation	53 GPE partner countries	Results Agreement	Sep-13	462,246	201,387
Learning outcomes in early grades in reading: Integrations of curriculum, teaching, learning materials, and assessment	ME: UNESCO IBE Partner: University of Geneva	Niger, Senegal, Burkina Faso, + 1 other pending	Results Agreement	Nov-13	2,998,996	775,787
ELAN – Effectiveness of teaching and learning in bilingual context	SE: AFD Partner: OIF	Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo	Results Agreement	Jan-13	1,408,200	572,531
OPERA – Teaching and learning effectiveness for learning outcomes	SE: AFD Partner: Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie	Burkina Faso and the IFADEM African partner countries	Results Agreement	Jul-13	996,855	413,457
Pacific Early Grade Readiness and Learning Program (PEARL) Quality/Learning Outcomes	ME: World Bank	Tonga and Papua New Guinea, beneficiaries: all Pacific island countries	Results Agreement	Jul-14	8,505,075	*331493
Delivering on strategic objective on teachers	ME: UNESCO Partner: Education International	Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Benin, Mali, Senegal Uganda, Nepal, Haiti	Results Agreement	Jan-14	1,984,850	*323,418
Learning Outcomes – Asia Region/ Learner assessment for instructional progress	ME: UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education	Regional: Asia Pacific region	Results Agreement	Apr-14	944,061	111,793
CANCELLED: Central Asia Learning Outcomes – Students' reasoning Skills	ME: CICED	Regional East Europe, Central Asia			1,850,919	N/A

GRA Project	Partner Organizations (ME=Managing Entity, SE=Supervising Entity)	Geographic Focus	Documents	Start date	Approved grant in USD	Expenditure to 31 Dec 2014
FOCUS AREA 2: EDUCATION FINANCING AND SYSTEMS BUILDING						
Education Financing: Development of methodologies to improve national reporting on financial flows	ME: UIS	Guinea, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Nepal Uganda	Results Agreement	Sep-13	2,119,074	614,530
Education Financing: School Grants	ME: IIEP	Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Honduras, Nicaragua	Results Agreement	Jul-13	996,829	221,598
School Profiles: Systems Improvement	ME: UNICEF Partners: IIEP, Pole de Dakar	Global; four countries have started: Laos, Madagascar, Togo, and Zambia)	Results Agreement	Feb-14	878,069	482,420
FOCUS AREA 3: OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN, ACCESS AND EQUITY						
Out-of-School Children: Closing the data gap	ME: UIS Partners: UNICEF, World Bank, UNESCO	Global: Africa, Arab states, Asia, Latin America	Results Agreement	Sep-13	1,099,527	197,915
Significant reduction in Out-of-school children	ME: UNICEF Partners: UIS, national governments	Global: post-conflict and transitional countries	Results Agreement	Aug-13	3,284,900	*1997728
Addressing the out-of-school children data and policy gaps	ME: World Bank Partners: UNESCO, UNICEF, UIS, national governments	Global with a strong emphasis on GPE countries	Results Agreement	Mar-14	1,583,027	437,280
Disability/health and education in support of learning for all	ME: World Bank	Global: 15 GPE countries	Results Agreement	Aug-14	3,000,000	*240072
Addressing school-related gender-based violence	ME: UNICEF Partner: UNGEI	Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia Zambia	Results Agreement	Mar-14	800,000	0

* = expenditure to 30 June 2015

Sources: GRA Grant applications files and semi-annual progress reports from the implementation agencies

List of Acronyms

AFD	Agence Française de Développement
CICED	The Center for International Cooperation in Education Development
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GRA	Global and Regional Activities
IBE	UNESCO International Bureau of Education
IIEP	UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning
OIF	Organisation International de la Francophonie
OOSC	Out-of-school children
SRGBV	School-Related Gender Based Violence
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls Education Initiative
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Fund