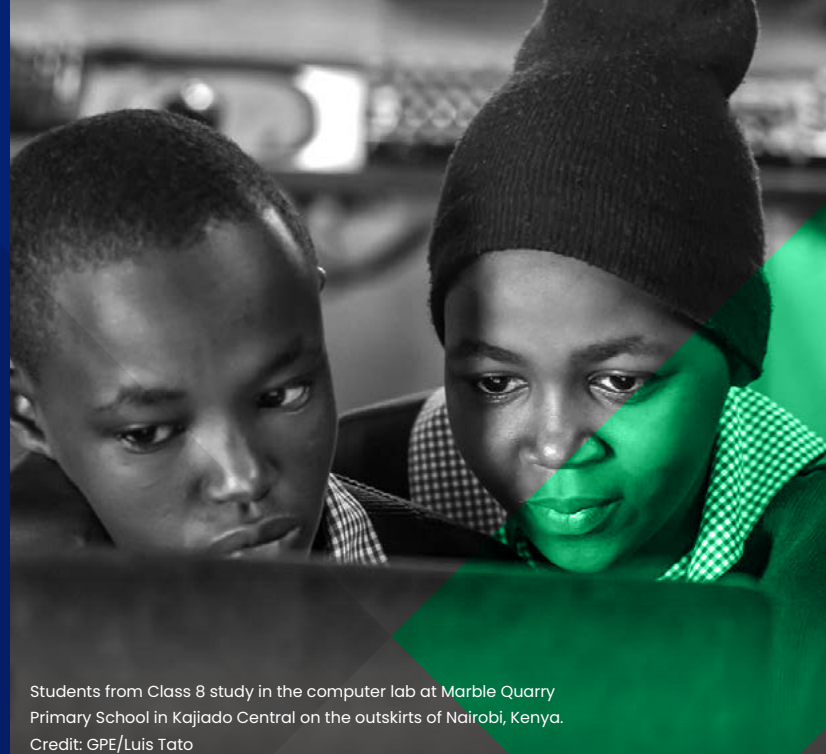


COORDINATED ACTION TO TRANSFORM EDUCATION

WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR?



Students from Class 8 study in the computer lab at Marble Quarry Primary School in Kajiado Central on the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya. Credit: GPE/Luis Tato

Education transformation comes about when stakeholders in a system change how they interact with one another, purposefully aligning their actions to arrive at dramatically improved outcomes. Toward this goal, **the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)** supports partner countries in getting the most out of policy dialogue and coordination. This brief is part of a companion series to the [Principles toward Effective Local Education Groups](#), although the contents can apply to any mechanism or platform where stakeholders gather to coordinate their actions around national education policy.

The private sector, here defined as the business community, is emerging as an important partner in rapidly evolving education systems, particularly since the onset of COVID-19 when diverse economic actors assumed a pivotal role in countries' response strategies and resilience building. The engagement of private sector partners in education sector coordination is increasing as mutual interests in economic growth, digital transformation and operational support strategies become clearer. Sector dialogue involving the private sector contributes to solving problems together, builds trust, and uses private sector assets and investments to make the education system more efficient and relevant to countries' economics needs.

WHAT DOES THE PRIVATE SECTOR GAIN THROUGH COORDINATED ACTION?

Knowledge about key education actors and systems

Through regular involvement in sector dialogue— which looks at overall progress and challenges in improving learning outcomes, joint strategies for addressing bottlenecks and for enhancing mutual accountabilities—you can better understand who the key decision makers in the education community are and how the system works at every level, especially when responsibilities are shared across ministries and/or are decentralized.

Your relationship building helps you to

- ▶ Understand how and where the business community can meaningfully contribute to education system development and define the expected results of public-private partnerships;

- Build trust with other stakeholders around shared values of quality, relevance, durability and affordability within different types of public-private partnerships and engagement;
- Identify alliances with different education actors to share roles, risks and investments in creating solutions; and
- Support the development of education systems aligned with national ambitions for economic growth, job creation, digital transformation and climate resilience.

Greater awareness of how you already support ministries of education

Using lessons from your role in supporting learning continuity during the pandemic, and in the digital transformation of school systems, you can draw attention to intersections between public education systems and private sector assets and raise the visibility of your corporate social responsibility investments.

Sector dialogue offers a valuable opportunity to

- Demonstrate how you already shoulder infrastructure and technology investments and risks;
- Discuss how you can mobilize private finance and social and environmental impact investments for prioritized education goals;
- Deploy your communication and social marketing strengths to address harmful social and cultural norms holding back the education of girls and marginalized groups; and
- Illustrate how your business acumen, advisory, consulting and market research capacities can support the scaling of education innovations and systems improvement.

Further opportunities to co-create effective education solutions

Your collaboration with nongovernmental organizations and nonprofits in developing high- and low-tech delivery modalities and contents (for example, through open education resources and courseware) has given you vast experience in creating low-cost, flexible solutions aligned with national curriculum and teacher training.

“The private sector provides a source of technical expertise, innovation and diverse resources and networks to address what are genuine development problems. Improving partnerships with the private sector based on the [Kampala Principles](#) can amplify the transformative power of [effective private sector engagement](#) to deliver the SDGs and leaving no one behind.”

[Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation](#)



Through greater involvement in policy dialogue, collaboration and learning networks, you can

- Offer your services in the co-design, elaboration, testing and adaptation of promising education solutions and work with decision makers to incentivize their take-up; and
- Use the lessons and data you have collected as evidence for scaling effective programming, while monitoring the outcomes of public-private cooperation and ensuring transparency and accountability.

Direct inputs to improving frameworks for partnering with the private sector

You can actively draw the attention of government decision makers to common challenges for the business community in partnering with the education sector.

Regular participation in dialogue puts you in a better position to both express and understand

- What you need from government to strengthen collaboration, such as transparent information on partnership opportunities (for example, tenders, special grants and contracts), simplified procedures for partnering, incentives and support for innovation, and clear processes for mediation; and
- The types of protective government regulations and public oversight needed to steward public-private partnerships, and to ensure that infrastructure, educational technologies and data are deployed safely and equitably.

WHY DOES THE PRIVATE SECTOR MATTER IN TRANSFORMING EDUCATION?

The types of smart partnerships in which you engage are often built on broader and long-term investments that lead to different types of catalytic impacts for the transformation of education:

- **Supporting education's contribution to economic development** – your knowledge of national and local job markets and skills in demand contribute to making education more relevant to countries' economic growth strategies, especially where you partner or bridge with secondary, technical and vocational education and training providers. You further contribute to countries' poverty reduction goals through your support for skills empowerment and second chance and vocational learning for women and marginalized youth.
- **Preparing learners for digital societies** – your historic support for countries' information and communication technologies in education policies also helps learners to prepare for a digital world through the acquisition of 21st-century digital skills. You facilitate cost savings for the digital

transformation of education systems through subsidizing the cost of telecoms expansion and ubiquitous internet connectivity needed for remote, hybrid and blended learning, as well as reducing data costs for low-income families in accessing public websites and educational apps. Your corporate social responsibility, technical expertise and operational know-how also support countries in developing, adapting and scaling low-cost, technology-based teaching and learning tools.

- **Systems for collecting and managing data and evidence** – your systems developers and data scientists are key partners to ministries of education in developing the hard- and software needed for more granular data collection and analysis on

"Education can have a transformative impact on individuals and communities, which is why Avanti is dedicated to providing connectivity that will improve access to quality education across Africa."

[Kyle Whitehill, Chief Executive Officer, Avanti Communications](#)

'LEARNING EQUALITY' IN UGANDA

With the support of **Learning Equality** and **UNICEF**, the **Ministry of Education and Sports** is using **Kolibri** to improve education access, learning outcomes and skills through digital learning. Kolibri, a free and easy-to-use digital learning platform, builds on existing learning technologies developed by the National Information Technology Authority. Uganda's National Curriculum Development Centre, which recognizes Kolibri as a flagship E-Learning Program in the Education Digital Learning Strategy 2021–2025, approves carefully chosen and aligned education resources at the primary and secondary levels.

Operational since 2018, Kolibri provided key support for children's at-home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The core of Kolibri and Learning Equality's development vision, however, goes beyond crisis response to addressing deeper equity gaps in education and ensuring learning continuity across communities. The platform includes an end-to-end suite of open license, adaptable learning contents, tools and teaching resources, and a self-directed tool to support curriculum alignment, which can be used offline in environments with little to no infrastructure or connectivity. In Uganda, this platform has enabled the expansion of remote, hybrid and blended education to learners with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, languages and learning needs. In parallel, Learning Equality works with government, development and private sector partners (including Google.org and the William and Flora Hewitt Foundation) to mobilize investment for scaling. Ministries of education have taken up the technology as part of a four-country collaboration (Jordan, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda).

FAB INC. IN SIERRA LEONE

The collaboration with the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education facilitated the creation of the **digital school census**, which is now transforming the country's education management system. Since the Annual School Census was converted to an Open Data Kit format in 2018, the ministry has strengthened its capacities for equitable education planning, budgeting and teacher deployment, with the digital school census serving multiple uses: (1) creating a more accurate mechanism for collecting enrollment and infrastructure data (including GPS coordinates and data on learners and teacher absenteeism) for all 11,000 primary schools in the country, including in some of the most rural and remote areas; (2) more evidence-based financial allocation decisions; (3) creation of a harmonized education workforce database; and (4) digitized and more regular school-level monitoring.

All of these areas are integral to the transformation of the education management system. More immediately, a key result of this "heavy lift" is the ability of decision makers to access information about year-on-year trends in the education system, and data related to nuanced questions for policy and investment. Fab Inc. has worked with government partners to create a [data for decision making platform](#) allowing policy makers to explore and understand their data in a simple visual way and to engage in real-time decision making.

schools, teachers and learners, thereby supporting more equitable planning, efficient resource allocation and effective knowledge management systems for transferring skills, practices and lessons.

- ▶ **Updating teacher management and professional development approaches** – your technologies contribute to more efficient teacher management systems through the development of harmonized databases on the education workforce, as well as expanding teacher's access to professional development opportunities through low-cost, online skills training.
- ▶ **Open access to remote and hybrid teaching and learning, including in crisis situations** – your open-source technologies and education resources generate context-sensitive, "ready-to-go" and easily scalable packages of online and offline learning in low-resource contexts, thereby unlocking more equitable access to education. They are also key to learning continuity and recovery in emergency situations and protracted crises.
- ▶ **Reinforcement of school infrastructure** – your social and environmental responsibility and innovative technologies create the conditions for more climate-proofed school buildings and climate-resilient learning communities, as well as rehabilitating school infrastructure in crisis-affected communities.

"In every country in the world, we need a coalition that can support investments [in education] and build the futures [of learning] together. If the future is built only by one actor, we will fail. It has to be multi stakeholder, it has to be whole of government, it has to be whole of society."

Borhene Chakroun, Director for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

- ▶ [Kenya: How the Private Sector Is Supporting Opportunities for Girls' Education](#). GPE. October 2022.
- ▶ [How Can EdTech Support Learning in Low-Income Communities? Lessons from India](#). GPE. May 18, 2022.
- ▶ [Connecting Learning Spaces: Possibilities for Hybrid Learning](#). Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development. September 2021.
- ▶ [Partnerships for Public Purpose: The new PPPs for fighting the biggest crises of our time](#). Brookings Institution. May 27, 2021.
- ▶ [Girls' Education Awareness Program](#). GPE. May 2021.
- ▶ [Making Private Sector Partnerships Work](#). OECD. January 2019.

Also see the "Private sector" page on [GPE'S "Partners Portal"](#) to better understand GPE and the private sector's roles and responsibilities in the partnership.

OTHER BRIEFS IN THE SAME SERIES:

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