

➤ JUNE 7-8, 2023

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

BOD/2023/06 DOC 08

FOR DECISION

STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES

Please note: In accordance with the GPE Transparency Policy, documents are public only after their appraisal by the relevant governance instance. Governance officials may circulate documents to their constituency for consultation purposes, except for documents of a confidential nature.

Key issues for consideration:

- Performance, Impact and Learning Committee Members (PILC) members enquired on how best to ensure transparency in the prioritization of countries in the Climate Smart Education System initiative proposal. The methodology for selecting countries to scale up this initiative has therefore been added as Annex D.
- PILC members emphasized the importance of gender hardwiring in all initiatives.
- In addition to confirming the allocation of funding, Finance and Risk Committee (FRC) members raised concerns over the risk of fragmentation.

Objective

1. This document provides an update on the initial allocation of US\$2 million for strategic capabilities, as approved by the Board in December 2020 ([BOD/2020/11/12-03](#)) and requests the Board to consider approval of a proposal to scale support for Climate Smart Education Systems and pilot new strategic capability initiatives and their funding as well as a delegation of authority to the CEO to approve a portion of those funds as outlined in this document.

Recommended decision

BOD/2023/06-XX—Strategic Capabilities: The Board of Directors:

1. In accordance with [BOD/2020/11/12-03](#), takes note of the update on implementation, and fund utilization for the initial allocation of US\$2 million for strategic capabilities, as set out in Annex A of BOD/2023/06 DOC 08.
2. Approves the Climate Smart Education System initiative proposal as set out in Annex B.
3. Recommends the development of proposals to test initiatives for 1) Gender Equality; 2) School Nutrition, 3) Technology for Education and 4) School safety as set out in Annex C and report back to PILC at its next meeting.
4. Recommends the approval of up to US\$15 million for the Climate Smart Education Systems initiative, from the GPE Trust Fund inclusive of a) US\$930,900 inclusive of agency fees of US\$60,900 for Save the Children, and US\$1,219,000 inclusive of agency fees of US\$79,800 to UNESCO as the grant agents, subject to the availability of funds;
5. Delegates authority to the CEO to approve country-specific grants ranging from US\$400,000 – US\$700,000 plus applicable agency fees to Save the Children and UNESCO up to a total combined allocation value of US\$12,850,100 from the GPE Trust Fund

6. Recommends the approval of up to US\$4 million to pilot initiatives for 1) Gender Equality; 2) School Nutrition, 3) Technology for Education and 4) School safety
7. Delegates authority to the CEO to approve such funds to applicable organizations in the form of grants from the GPE Fund or as Secretariat Administered Operating Expenses based on its assessment of the most efficient modality.

Background and overview

1. An overall provision of US\$40 million has been planned for strategic capabilities in the [September 2021 Financial Forecast](#), of US\$2 million was approved by the Board in [December 2020](#) to commence implementation of the new modality strategic capabilities. The GPE Secretariat has fully allocated the initial \$2 million to commence support for 1) monitoring evaluation and learning (MEL) capacity and 2) climate-smart education systems capacity, as set out in Annex A.
2. The PILC and FRC reviewed a proposal developed with Save the Children and UNESCO to allocate \$15 million to scale the Climate Smart Education System initiative to support an additional 18-20 countries, in light of strong demand, its unique value addition and the urgency of taking proactive measures to support more countries to address climate change impacts in education.
3. Based on an analysis of needs and demand from partner countries, the Secretariat proposes allocating up to \$1 million each to pilot support to improve cross-sectoral policy and implementation capacity for 1) Gender Equality; 2) School Nutrition, 3) Technology for Education and 4) School safety. We will also seek to catalyze co-financing from additional partners.
4. The decision to add US\$19 million in additional funding for strategic capabilities would bring the total potential allocation to US\$21 million, leaving a forecast of US\$19 million for future scale-up or additional initiatives.
5. The approval of these proposals by the Board were recommended by both Committees during their April meetings.

Annex A – Implementation update on the initial allocation of USD \$2 million; **Annex B** – Summary of proposal for the Climate Smart Education System initiative; **Annex C** – Summary of additional areas for development

The following annex is available on the Governance Portal: [Annex D](#) – Climate Smart Education System Initiative Partnership Framework proposal

Annex A – Implementation update

In December 2020, to “galvanize global, regional and national capabilities and resources needed to support the achievement of country reform priorities, the Board agreed to mobilize strategic capabilities to address key constraints to transformational change.” This annex outlines the progress to date in commencing the implementation of strategic capabilities with the initial allocation of US\$2 million by the Board at that time. Requests for additional funds will be considered by the Board based on an analysis of needs, and initial implementation progress. Of the current strategic capabilities under implementation, additional funding is being requested to scale the Climate Smart Education System initiative.

1. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) strategic capability

Evidence-based learning and adaptation is necessary to successfully implement transformative reforms, but previous evaluations have found that partner countries generally have capacity constraints to generate and use evidence for learning. To address this gap, the Secretariat allocated \$1.054 million to the MEL strategic capability, disbursed as Secretariat operating expenses through a competitively selected vendor of MEL capacity building services, Social Impact. Social Impact is working alongside the Secretariat to implement a program of MEL capacity development services in five countries. Between \$100,000–\$150,000 have been allocated per country. In the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) partner countries (Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), the MEL strategic capability is supporting ministries of education to develop and implement MEL strategies, based on their new sector plans. Simultaneously, the strategic capability is supporting the OECS Commission to harmonize and simplify regional MEL frameworks to ensure alignment with country systems. In the Gambia, the strategic capability is supporting the development and implementation of a MEL approach to the reforms prioritized in the partnership compact, which is nearing finalization.

Based on learning from this initial experience, there is strong country demand for MEL support (evidenced through partner country surveys, consultations and scoping missions). Even where grant funding (SCG, STG, KIX and other sources) for MEL is available, partner countries find it challenging to source MEL capacity support that is long-term and customized to their needs. Support for MEL approaches for partnership compact priorities is emerging as an area of high strategic value for GPE 2025 because reform priorities set out in partnership compacts are at the system level. Most organizations that provide MEL capacity-building services focus on narrower aspects of the education sector (for example MEL for a specific program) so MEL for countries' system reform priorities is often beyond their scope. A relatively consistent approach to assessing progress in system reform priorities can be useful to facilitate cross-country learning and allow the aggregation of results across partner countries.

The Secretariat will continue to support the MEL strategic capability with the \$1.054 million already allocated for implementation in the five countries mentioned above and up to two additional countries. This will enable the Secretariat to follow through on and learn from a more targeted application of this strategic capability on the partnership compact reform priorities and better

leverage its complementarity across system capacity grant support, research, innovation and learning in MEL. There is no request for additional funds at this time.

2. Climate Smart Education Systems strategic capability

Climate change is a threat multiplier with the potential to push over 100 million people into poverty by 2030. The education sector is one of the most climate-vulnerable, and GPE partner countries are among the hardest hit. Increased heat, pollution, and frequency of climate disasters are a huge threat to education outcomes. Data from 60 countries shows each 1°F increase in school year temperature reduces learning by one percent. Given the increasingly destructive impact of climate-related events and the strong demand from partner countries, the Secretariat has committed the remaining \$946,000 to the Climate Smart Education System strategic capability, allocated through a grant agent-implemented grant.

Through a competitive call for Expressions of Interest to all GPE-accredited grant agents in August 2022, the GPE Secretariat selected UNESCO and Save the Children to lead the implementation of the Climate Smart Education System Initiative in Zimbabwe and Malawi. Both countries have participated throughout 2022 in dialogue with the GPE Secretariat in preparation for testing this capacity support, with meetings at Wilton Park (June 2022) and at COP27 (November 2022). In Zimbabwe, the top priority for systems transformation is *“Improved Equitable Access to Quality Relevant Education”*, and one of the means they have set to achieve it is through the improvement of schools’ resilience and disaster risk management. Malawi is still working on its partnership compact, but policy dialogue is strongly surfacing the need and demand for this strategic capability following severe impacts of recent cyclones on education provision. The country acknowledges that climate change has adversely affected quality and inclusive education.

A GPE-wide partner country consultation informed the design of this strategic capability to ensure it is demand-driven and context sensitive, including a dedicated co-creation space in the December GPE Africa Constituency meeting, co-creation webinars, and a GPE survey. UNESCO and Save the Children have been working with the GPE Secretariat to develop the program documentation including the strategic capability initiative proposal, detailed theory of change and implementation arrangements, baseline assessment methodology, inception report outline, and strategies for MEL and communications (See Annex B for more details on the objectives of this initiative). In March 2023, the GPE CEO approved the strategic capability proposal under her delegated authority from the Board.

Implementation in Malawi and Zimbabwe is currently undergoing the following steps: (1) Identification of country need and demand; (2) Identification of country priorities (baseline assessment + TORs); (3) Development of costed technical workplan (4) Endorsement by the local education group; (5) Implementation of capacity support; (6) Monitoring, adaptation and learning; (7) Close out and evaluation.

As the first countries to draw on this strategic capability, special attention is being paid to the development of context-sensitive approaches to develop, adapt and deliver this offer, requiring

more upfront costs and high investment of time from all stakeholders. However, this effort upfront will inform the approaches to be taken (and provide efficiencies in terms of methodologies, standard operating procedures and templates). Zimbabwe and Malawi may be allocated additional funding to ensure their support is in the same budget range as other countries under a scaled initiative.

3. Education Data Leadership Program (EDLP)

Quality education data is essential to inform planning and policy decisions by governments. Without data, it is impossible to build effective, resilient and accountable education systems. The strategic focus of the EDLP is to leverage in-kind business expertise to strengthen education ministry capacities to collect, organize, store, share, and disseminate education data. In 2022, the GPE Secretariat initiated an assessment of countries' demand through consultations and country dialogues, which helped identify Kenya and The Gambia as the first pilot countries. Building on these efforts, GPE worked with a group of private sector partners (Microsoft, HP, Cisco, and Intel) – all of whom have committed to contribute in-kind support in the form of staff time and expertise to the EDLP – to formulate and determine areas where private sector capacities best match country priorities and needs. In the first quarter of 2023, the Secretariat started working with The Gambia and private sector partners to further define the scope and identify specific activities in 2 main areas: 1) data management for decision-making and 2) support at ministry and school leadership level to produce, present, and analyze education data. To date, this initial phase has provided a few lessons learned and insights:

- As countries' needs and private sector partners' capabilities vary, ensuring space for flexibility and adaptation as the pilot moves through its development cycle is essential.
- At times business partners tend to apply an existing product or solution to the problem instead of trying to come up with an approach that first identifies the needs and challenges to inform the creation of innovative solutions. This requires substantial dialogue and engagement to ensure a clear focus on problems and a context driven approach.
- Continuous involvement and commitment of all stakeholders is crucial and requires substantial investment of time and support from the secretariat.

No funding decision is needed from the PILC/FRC as this strategic capability pilot currently relies on in-kind support from the private sector. GPE will continue to roll out the pilot with the aim of assessing the feasibility of scaling the strategic capability to other countries and leverage additional resources into the education sector.

Annex B – Summary of the Climate Smart Education System initiative

This annex outlines the key elements of the proposal for a strategic capability to support countries capacity to prioritize, select and implement context-appropriate strategies for climate-smart education system reforms, including disaster risk reduction and resilience planning and implementation, use of climate data, cross-sectoral coordination and climate-relevant pedagogy and curricula. The full proposal can be found on the governance portal.

1. Background and rationale

GPE partner countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change; out of the top 60 countries ranked by UNICEF as having the highest children’s climate risk in the world, 55 are GPE partners. This vulnerability sets education systems back as each climate-related disaster drains resources from the system diverted to rebuild and recover. At the same time, the education sector’s potential to support adaptation, resilience and sustainable practices is not being realized. As GPE countries face intensifying climate-related risks, they are increasingly requesting support to help them address the impacts of climate change on and through education. In a survey shared in February 2023 to all GPE Partner and Eligible countries, 88.5% of survey respondents (23/26) indicated their demand for support in this area.

Informed by the dialogue and partnership design process with Save the Children and UNESCO, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and wider consultations, the Secretariat is proposing to scale this support to up to 18-20 additional countries. While implementation of this initiative in Malawi and Zimbabwe is still in its initial stages, the high demand and urgent opportunity for expanding GPE’s support in this area supports consideration of expansion in order to rapidly move to help countries get their education systems climate-ready. This is further supported by the immediate potential for stronger collaboration between GPE and climate funds such as Green Climate Fund to co-finance climate adaptation in the education sector.

2. Objectives

GPE’s Climate-smart Education System Initiative aims to ensure that: (1) Education ministries have enhanced capacities to develop evidence-based policies and plans for climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability; (2) Education ministries are better equipped to improve the resilience of schools to climate risks, including enhanced capacity to strengthen infrastructure, school safety and educational continuity management; (3) Education sector has timely access and capacity to use climate-related data and integrates it into its monitoring systems; (4) Education sector coordinates effectively with other sectors around climate change policy and programming (including disaster risk mechanisms), and is able to access increased climate financing for education sector activities; (5) Education system integrates climate change and environmental sustainability into curricula, pedagogy and teacher training.

This initiative will be aligned with other global and regional initiatives, plans, frameworks and approaches to deal with crises, including climate change, and enhance the resilience of partner countries. As this initiative is demand-driven and context-sensitive, not all countries will opt to advance on all five outcomes. Instead, it is proposed that all countries benefit from objective 1 to enable prioritization in national planning and support the selection of targeted areas for system improvement. Based on each countries' prioritized strategies, additional support may be offered through this initiative for outcome areas 2-5. The capacity development approach to be used in this collaboration promotes consultative, inclusive, and participatory processes and entails close collaboration with ministries of education through coaching, mentoring and technical support to ensure effective implementation and sustainable national and local ownership. The deployment of this support will be predicated on country demand and alignment with wider GPE processes, including endorsement of the initiative workplan at the country level by the local education group, and consideration of linkages with wider policies and partnership compact priorities.

3. Implementation arrangements

At the global level, this strategic capability will be managed by a coordination group composed of GPE UNESCO and Save the Children to ensure institutional alignment, general program coordination, and coordinated communication efforts. The Global Coordination Group will act as the project implementation unit overseeing the program's activities in the 18-20 countries, including the development of all relevant documentation, such as baseline assessments, costed technical work programs (in response to country-specific TORS), and global monitoring reports. At the country level, country project teams will be established in response to the country-specific workplan and its capacity and resource needs. Each grant agent will assign staff with relevant expertise in the areas required, and the GPE Secretariat will be included in all correspondence and planning related to the country-specific work plan, including the country teams supporting GPE's wider engagement in that country. The implementation process for the Climate Smart Education Systems Initiative will follow the following steps: (1) Identification of country need and demand; (2) Identification of country priorities (optional baseline assessment + TORS); (3) Development of costed technical workplan (4) Endorsement by the Local Education Group; (5) Implementation of capacity support; (6) Monitoring, adaptation and learning; (7) Close out and evaluation.

4. Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Monitoring, evaluation and learning is required at both global and country levels to inform the wide range of stakeholders in this initiative; from the ministries, local education group members, GPE Secretariat, GPE Board and committees, national civil society, and the wider field of actors working within the nexus of climate change and education. Monitoring evaluation and learning will have accountability purposes, as well as learning and adaptation objectives. A MEL strategy will be developed detailing the approaches to be adopted to track progress, reflect on lessons learned, adapt program tools, parameters and approaches, and disseminate learning to interested stakeholders. UNESCO and Save the Children will be responsible for monitoring the implementation

of workplans at country level, as part of on-going monitoring, evaluation and learning strategies tied to country-specific objectives. The Secretariat will report progress to the Performance, Impact, and Learning Committee (PILC) on a six-monthly basis. In addition, the Secretariat will evaluate this program as part of the evaluation of the entire strategic capabilities portfolio, scheduled for FY 2026.

5. Budget

A total of \$15 million is requested to support the scaling of support from the Climate Smart Education System Initiative. Following Board approval, the Trustee will be requested to transfer a *Global Coordination and Inception Grant* (inclusive of agency fees) to the grant agents, as detailed in the Partnership Framework budget. In order to enable the rolling development of country-specific allocation of funds between UNESCO and Save the Children, it is recommended to delegate authority to the CEO to approve country-specific grants based on country workplans for up to 18-20 countries. Each country workplan will detail activities and costs of each grant agent, including agency fees, up to a total cumulative allocation of US\$12,850,100.

Global Coordination and Inception Grant	Save the Children	UNESCO
1. Global coordination and management - Global project management unit - Development of scaling methodologies/templates and process improvements	210,000	350,000
2. Inception phase activities (18 countries) - Baseline assessment/inception report - Joint scoping mission and country consultation - Technical and costed proposal in response to country-specific TORs	540,000	540,000
3. Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning - Aggregation and analysis of country data for global reporting - Learning activities and adaptation of approaches	90,000	200,000
4. Communications - Development of communications materials on the initiative (country stories, blogs)	30,000	50,000
5. Agency fees (7%)	60,900	79,800
Total=\$2,150,700	930,900	1,219,800

6. Country prioritization

The criteria for scale-up of the initiative to additional countries is based on need, measured in terms of impacts of and vulnerability to climate change. The methodology considers the average of four indices, each of which has its own merits and disadvantages: (1) INFORM Climate Change Risk Index; (2) Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index; (3) The Germanwatch Global Climate Risk Index; and (4) The Children's Climate Risk Index (CCRI). The precondition for support is that the country is eligible for a System Transformation Grant, which directs support to lower-income countries. In order to ensure geographic diversity, eligible countries have been divided into geographic regions and Small Island Developing States have been separated as its own group due to the unique situation of these countries. Please see full methodology in [Annex D](#) of the proposal.

Annex C – Summary of additional areas for development

This annex outlines additional areas under development, proposed for further design and testing. The summary below includes a brief analysis of the needs in these additional areas, country demand and objectives for each proposed strategic capability. More detailed concept notes can be found on the governance portal.

As GPE looks toward some of the most pressing 21st-century challenges threatening children's health, safety and well-being, three inter-connected challenges, in addition to climate change, have increasing relevance for GPE's Strategy 2025. COVID-19, alongside multiple and overlapping crises (conflict, food, fuel, climate and economic), has heightened the drivers of **gender inequality, children's food insecurity and risk of violence**. For example, the risk of forced marriage, teen pregnancy, gender-based and sexual violence, including unsafe learning environments and gendered responses to family financial crises have increased since 2020, driving many children, especially adolescent girls, to leave school. Nearly half of the 345 million people facing acute hunger are children, and for the poorest students, enrolling in school, attending regularly and learning are often made more difficult by illness, hunger and malnutrition. Violence in and around school is also a widespread phenomenon, with an estimated 246 million children – many in GPE partner countries – experiencing violence in and around schools – on the way to school, on school grounds, and within classrooms. These challenges require cross-sectoral strategies, linking across gender, agriculture, social protection, health, public works and environmental ministries to address the intersecting drivers of vulnerability and inequality in education.

One additional cross-sectoral policy area holds much unfulfilled promise as an enabler of equitable education and improved learning: **technology**. As the education sector continues to adapt to ongoing and potential school closures caused by climate or conflict-related events, technology is increasingly seen as an accelerator to provide multiple pathways, particularly for hard to reach and vulnerable children, and enable them to learn. Yet governments face multiple challenges in unleashing its potential – the disconnect between education and technology policies, low government institutional capacity for technology-related decision-making, and challenges in procuring technology goods especially in resource poor/low connectivity environments.

In December 2020, the Board specifically identified the need to create and collaborate through cross-sectoral partnerships to mutually address shared challenges and leverage opportunities (BOD/2020/11/12 DOC 05). As country commitments at the Transforming Education Summit demonstrate, there is a need to move beyond the education sector to address the wider well-being needs of children. Putting the child at the center, strategic capabilities offer a significant opportunity to work across sectors to help address many of the underlying barriers to children's equitable access to quality learning opportunities. The offering of strategic capabilities, as a mechanism to reinforce and resource government capacity for cross-sectoral coordination in both policy and implementation, provides an important complement to other GPE instruments focused more directly on challenges endogenous to the education system.

Under this rationale, and in addition to the Climate Smart Education Systems Initiative, the Secretariat is requesting an allocation of up to \$1 million to further develop and test strategic capabilities in the following areas: (1) Gender Equality Initiative, (2) School Health and Nutrition Initiative, (3) School Safety Initiative, and (4) Technology for Education Initiative. The aim is to delegate the allocation of those resources to the CEO, to enable an agile process to test capacity approaches in each of these areas in 1-2 countries. Subject to early evidence of success, the Secretariat will report back to the PILC and FRC and seek guidance on the potential to request additional financing from the Board to scale the offers to more countries. The Secretariat will also be seeking matching funds for a full rollout of the successful initiatives beyond GPE investments.

Gender Equality Initiative: This initiative aims to provide advisory services to support ministries (both education and beyond) to improve gender equality in and through education. Specifically, the initiative's objectives include (1) mainstreaming gender equality in system transformation, including the production and use of data and evidence for policymaking, gender-transformative strategic and operational planning, budgeting, monitoring processes, coordination for gender equality within Ministries of Education and across government institutions, and policy dialogue for more funding for gender equality in education. It also aims to (2) strengthen gender-transformative policy dialogue more broadly by supporting development partners, government experts, civil society actors, youth to effectively take part in the planning, implementation and monitoring of activities to advance gender equality in and through education, including local education groups, gender and education experts and civil society and youth stakeholders.

At least 25 countries (96.2% of survey respondents from a GPE Survey) have indicated interest in drawing on support offered in this area, reflecting a need across multiple countries to provide consistent technical assistance on gender issues in complement to other GPE instruments (particularly when ministries and local education groups do not have access to specialized gender expertise). 14 GPE partner countries have also signaled strong political will by signing the Freetown Manifesto for Gender Transformative Leadership in education which this initiative is being designed to support, and 20 Heads of State and Governments also endorsed the Heads of State Declaration on Education Finance which includes a commitment to equity, including gender equality. For the design and initial implementation of this strategic capability, GPE will work alongside UNGEI and UNESCO-IIEP as coordinators of the Gender at the Centre Initiative (GCI), in collaboration with Education Cannot Wait and the LEGO Foundation. The strategic capability support will be developed building on lessons learned from the first phase of the implementation of GCI.

School Health and Nutrition Initiative: This initiative proposes to provide technical assistance for countries transitioning to nationally owned school meal programs, as well as ensuring cross-sectoral ownership and articulation of such programs. This could include support for: (1) Establishing mechanisms for consistent cross-sectoral coordination and policy articulation at the national, district and school levels; (2) Advising and generating capacity for improved governance and financial and administrative structures of school meals programs, with multisectoral steering groups; (3) Providing technical assistance to define national policy and ensure consistent quality

standards and efficiency; (4) Exploring and deploying innovative financing options to ensure sustainable financing of school meals programs, including domestic private sector contribution; (5) Connecting school meals programs with sustainable supply chains that support local agricultural markets and with broader health and nutrition services at school; (6) Strengthening decision-making in the design and implementation of school health and nutrition programs.

More than 30 GPE partner countries have committed to the School Meals Coalition, with the specific goals of restoring national school meals to pre-pandemic coverage by 2023, and reaching another 73 million of the most in-need children who had not previously been reached, by 2030. Furthermore, a survey of GPE's country partners indicated that at least 22 countries (84.6% of survey respondents) would like to draw on strategic capability support in this area. GPE has been working with the World Food Program and School Meals Coalition to design this initiative, which is proposed as a contribution to deliver on the coalition's commitment to support government capacity for school health and nutrition. Subject to its accreditation, WFP is proposed as the operational partner for this initiative, given its global leadership in this field and its role as the Secretariat of the School Meals Coalition. WFP will leverage its role as focal point and network connector at the country level for school health and nutrition programs, and its global role coordinating member states and technical stakeholders to accelerate access to quality school nutrition programs.

School Safety Initiative: This strategic capability proposes to build country capacity to prevent and respond to violence in and around schools. The support provided could include: (1) Support to Ministries of education and other key actors to generate action-oriented diagnostics to assess the situation and better understand progress, gaps and challenges in integrating violence prevention and response within national, sub-national education and school level systems; (2) Strengthen country capacity to formulate, implement and monitor evidence-based interventions and reforms; (3) Establishing or supporting mechanisms for consistent cross-sectoral coordination and policy articulation at the national, district and school levels.

In 2022, over half (56/108) of the countries that submitted national commitments to the Transforming Education Summit (TES) mentioned violence in schools as a key constraint to addressing the learning crisis and transforming their education system. 32 countries outlined comprehensive commitments regarding violence prevention and response and 9 of these countries explicitly named violence as a priority and outlined a range of commitments. Moreover, 11 GPE partner countries are signatories to Safe to Learn (STL) call for action, and 22 countries indicated interest in this area through a survey conducted with GPE Partner Countries (84.6% of respondents). GPE has been working with the Safe to Learn Coalition, a global initiative dedicated to ending violence in and through schools to design this initiative. The STL multi-sectoral coalition of 14 partners leverages its members' strengths and expertise to accelerate action toward ending violence in schools at both the global and country levels.

Technology for Education Initiative: This strategic capability proposes to strengthen countries' capacity to use technology to improve access and learning for children. Building on a series of

roundtables in 2022, GPE Secretariat will work with partners to further explore the ecosystem of capabilities, expertise, solutions and innovations tailored to country-specific needs around the use of technology for education. Some of the potential areas of support considered under this approach are (1) Strengthening cross-sectoral connections between education sector plans and ICT masterplans; (2) Building stronger institutional capacity and expertise for decision-making on education and technology; and (3) Building capacity of governments for procurement of technology goods and services. Support in these areas will be tested through (a) an in-depth co-creation process in a maximum of two countries to elaborate and ground-truth the design and test implementation; (b) offer a just-in-time technical advisory modality at the point of need directly connected to the development of partnership compacts or GPE program design.

GPE partner countries are increasingly viewing technology as a means to bridge gaps in learning, education infrastructure and teaching resources. At least 22 countries (84.6% of survey respondents form a GPE Survey) demand support in this potential area. GPE has been engaged with Tech4Ed partners who would be welcome advisors in the design of this initiative. These include: the EdTech Hub, the UNESCO-led Digital Transformation Collaborative, UNICEF's Gateways2Learning, Jacobs Foundation, country partners such as Estonia and Sierra Leone, and GBC-Ed. However, the partner selection for implementation of the capacity support will be determined based on the final design of the approach.

Education system transformation: While the above areas have emerged as critical barriers to effectively achieving quality learning for all children in GPE partner countries, particular pain points emerging in the GPE operating model may also benefit from a strategic capability approach. As the extension of KIX advances and unique needs surface which are not otherwise addressed by KIX or GPE's other funding instruments, additional proposals may be considered by the Board (for e.g. MEL for compact monitoring).