

# Review of the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange

Final report

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## Acronyms and glossary

ECE	Early childhood education
Country representative	Members and participants of KIX regional hubs, also known as KIX country or national delegations
GEI	Gender equality, equity and inclusion
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
KIX	Knowledge and Innovation Exchange
KIX Africa 19	Regional hub for GPE partner countries in East, West and Southern Africa
KIX Africa 21	Regional hub for GPE partner countries in West and Central Africa and the Indian Ocean
KIX EMAP	Regional hub for GPE partner countries in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Central Asia and Asia-Pacific (previously KIX EAP)
KIX LAC	Regional hub for GPE partner countries in Latin America and the Caribbean
LMICs	Low- and middle-income countries
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
MTE	Mid-term evaluation of KIX
Partnership compact	A road map to transformation articulating how a GPE partner country intends to work with others around a priority reform with the potential to catalyze system-wide change
Primary research outputs	Outputs capturing the direct results and findings of research, including situational analyses, scoping studies, synthesis reports and research reports
RLP	Regional learning partners: the organisations or consortia responsible for coordinating KIX regional hubs
ROSIE	Research on scaling the impact of innovations in education
Scaling outputs	Outputs that capture insights about how to scale the impact of the education intervention in focus
Secondary knowledge products	Videos, podcasts, newsletters, blog posts, policy briefs and other knowledge-sharing vehicles that communicate research findings and results to diverse audiences
TPD	Teacher professional development
Thematic outputs	Outputs that present new knowledge in a thematic area of focus (e.g., teacher professional development, out-of-school children and youth, data systems and data use)

## 1 Executive summary

This report presents a review of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX). The purpose of the review is to inform the GPE Board’s ‘in-principle’ decision in December 2024 about the future direction of GPE’s support for KIX. The review will also inform an evaluation of KIX, which is commencing as this review finishes.

The review is primarily a desk-based analysis of existing qualitative and quantitative sources, complemented with 10 interviews with internal GPE KIX and IDRC KIX staff and informants from outside KIX.

The review answers three questions, the findings of which are presented below.

### 1. To what extent and how well have recommendations from the 2022 mid-term evaluation (MTE) been addressed?

Of the six recommendations in the mid-term evaluation (MTE), five have been very well addressed, in that all committed actions in response to the MTE recommendations have been implemented or are in process of implementation, and one has been well addressed, in that most of the committed actions have been implemented.

- 1. Leverage GPE’s system transformation work in partners countries:** *Very well addressed.* In the past two years there has been significant progress in strengthening the alignment between KIX and the wider GPE operating model at multiple levels.
- 2. Strengthen links between the main components of the program:** *Very well addressed.* KIX has introduced a suite of measures to strengthen the links between applied research projects and regional hubs including new guidance for grantees, updated onboarding process for new research projects and a change in protocol to enable regional learning partners (RLPs) to introduce research projects to country delegations.
- 3. Provide differentiated support to countries according to engagement levels:** *Very well addressed.* KIX’s support to and engagement with countries through regional hubs has become more varied, with a greater range of engagement options for countries to opt into. The country support mechanism is the most comprehensive addition to the tools available to RLPs for responding to country needs and demands and is already demonstrating value in its first year of implementation.
- 4. Identify key roles to participate in the regional hubs:** *Very well addressed.* Regional hubs have made progress on engaging more closely to country policy processes and involving senior government officials in their activities. They have shown a thoughtful approach to determining who to target in different activities, in each country and with each theme they work in.
- 5. Simplify communication to motivate, engage and align different stakeholders:** *Well addressed.* Significant steps have been taken to improve communication and strategic engagement at program level through the development of a communication and outreach strategy, the introduction of communication protocols and improvements to KIX’s public website. However, the new communications and outreach strategy does not address the ongoing challenge of coordinating communications at country level.
- 6. Refine the MEL model:** *Very well addressed.* KIX worked quickly and collaboratively to simplify the MEL system, reducing the number of outcomes from 12 to 7, and indicators from 33 to 22, along with other refinements aimed at limiting the administrative burden on grantees.

## **2. Is KIX fulfilling its overall objective, i.e., supporting partner countries to have and use the evidence and innovation they need to accelerate access, learning outcomes, and gender equality through equitable, inclusive, and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century?**

KIX is fulfilling its overall objective through three interconnected results areas: knowledge generation, capacity strengthening and knowledge mobilisation.

Regarding knowledge generation, KIX has generated a substantial evidence base on education innovations through global and regional applied research projects, regional learning partners, KIX observatory, ROSIE and research synthesis. Projects have produced research across six themes: data systems and use; early childhood education; gender equality, equity and inclusion; teacher professional development; learning; and out of school children and youth, and in over 70 countries. ROSIE has generated knowledge about scaling from the perspectives of innovators and national education decision-makers. The KIX COVID-19 Observatory synthesized education-related policy and practices responses of GPE partner countries on the African continent. In all, KIX has generated 250 thematic research products and 88 scaling research products, exceeding all targets relating to knowledge generation (which are all at the output level).

Capacity strengthening is embedded throughout the work of applied research projects and hubs and is supporting change in policy and practice with evidence. Applied research projects support capacity strengthening of a range of stakeholders, which varies depending on the stage of innovation and thematic area. Hubs have demonstrated success with various approaches in supporting evidence including Learning Cycles and Communities of Practice. KIX has exceeded all output and outcome targets relating to capacity strengthening.

KIX's strategic focus on knowledge mobilisation is creating opportunities to put the research into the attention of education stakeholders across all GPE partner countries. The interplay of KIX's knowledge generation, mobilisation and capacity strengthening efforts have resulted in numerous cases of education stakeholders using knowledge and innovations to inform policy and practice at national and local levels, with most outcomes reported in the past year. The changes brought in since the MTE are likely to have a significant multiplicative effect on knowledge and innovation use.

KIX greatly exceeded all output targets relating to knowledge mobilisation and some outcome targets including outcome cases of education stakeholders identifying new policy and practice options, uptake of KIX-supported research or innovation, and hub participants mobilising knowledge with other education stakeholders. There are a few targets at outcome level which have not been met: the number of instances of sharing of research evidence by applied research projects, ROSIE or observatory through hubs is slightly below the target. The number of citations of KIX-supported research and the number of mentions and endorsements of KIX-supported research are both under target. The number of outcome cases of policy development and / or delivery is also under target. These latter outcome targets are at the intermediate outcome level, which means they are further outside the control of KIX than other outcomes and more difficult to observe and record. The forthcoming evaluation will further explore the differences in achievement of outcomes.

## **3. How does KIX align with and add value to, the broader evidence-based dialogue and knowledge exchange architecture (globally, regionally and at country level)?**

KIX shares many key characteristics with the five comparator programs including being Southern led, focusing on research uptake and a high-level commitment to gender equality, equity, and inclusion (GEI). The comparator programs each have specific approaches, whether that's school-level research by and for teachers (Schools2030), impact evaluations of education interventions (LAI), implementation science (WWHGE), or education ecosystems approaches (SHARE and KDNLC). KIX on the other hand, brings elements of each of these under one umbrella and draws on the advantages of each of these types of research to meet the demands and priorities of partner countries.

What makes KIX unique in the field is the scale and interconnected design of the program, in terms of the number of countries, breadth of research and the marrying of knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation and country support. KIX's position with GPE allows KIX to reach a large number of countries, giving it a unique capability to identify and respond to country, regional and global trends. Two components of KIX are not seen in any other program: the regional hubs as a dedicated and consistent approach to knowledge mobilisation, and the ROSIE initiative (research on scaling the impact of innovations in education).

There are opportunities for both components to coordinate with other initiatives in the field of evidence in education, which has expanded over the past five years. There is a potential role for hubs to play in convening similar programs at country level towards greater coordination of evidence use. Similarly, ROSIE is well positioned to convening other programs working on scaling in education to further socialise the lessons learned on scaling in KIX.

#### **4. Recommendations**

The review makes eight recommendations, five for the forthcoming evaluation of KIX and three for KIX more generally.

- 1.** Given the recent evaluation of applied research projects it would be valuable for the forthcoming evaluation to include primary data collection from regional hubs. This would help support learning across hubs at a crucial time of focus with the implementation of the country support mechanism, the strengthening of engagement between hubs and applied research projects and deepening of relationships with other GPE mechanisms.
- 2.** The 2024 evaluation of KIX applied research projects presents several important findings relevant to the evaluation questions of the forthcoming evaluation of KIX. It will be important of the evaluation to validate and update some of these findings in light of the broader context of KIX (beyond the applied research portfolio) and to include more recent progress reflecting many of the changes brought about in the costed extension. These include findings related to the engagement between applied research projects and other GPE mechanisms, the interaction between applied research projects and regional hubs, communication between stakeholders at national level and capacity strengthening outcomes.
- 3.** It will be important for the forthcoming evaluation to develop a strategy to assess the effectiveness of KIX against the three ultimate outcomes to go beyond what this review was able to assess. This could include the use of a rubric to synthesise evidence from multiple sources, the use results from KIX's Research Quality Plus review process and a comprehensive approach to assessing gender equality, equity and inclusion in KIX.
- 4.** The evaluation should consider a strategy to substantiate and analyse outcome cases. KIX has amassed a larger number of accounts of policy and practice change categorised across a

range of indicators. While there is an internal review process in place to approve the outcome cases, and support to grantees to improve the quality in documenting outcome cases, there is still a need to validate and qualitatively analyse the outcome cases, which is not a simple task.

5. The evaluation should consider validating the value proposition presented in this review with a broader range of internal and external stakeholders, given that this review did not draw on a substantially wide range of perspectives. Crucially, this could include examining the value proposition at country level, where the value of KIX may be weighed differently than at program or global level.

#### **For KIX more generally**

6. Distinguish more strictly between the hubs as regional multi-stakeholder networks of education actors, and the regional learning partners as the coordinating entity for the hubs. The hub is more than the RLP and the investment of KIX has established these networks as important learning and knowledge exchange spaces in their own right. This is increasingly more important as RLPs take on the additional role of country support, which may or may not draw on the hub.
7. Consider paying more attention in MEL processes to the implementation of the country support mechanism and strengthening links between hubs and research projects. These are both strategic priorities for KIX and could benefit from more fine-tuned monitoring. For example, it is important to hear from projects how they are leveraging hubs, not just the perspective of hubs.
8. Consider changes in the use of outcome cases for monitoring. The quantity of outcomes being documented by grantees is not only a burden on the grantees themselves, but also makes it difficult to identify and substantiate highly significant outcomes. Focusing on fewer outcomes but investing more in improving quality and significance could enhance learning among projects and the program as a whole. This could also unlock capacity to build in additional steps in the review process to substantiate outcome cases to ensure quality, accuracy and highlight notable outcomes.

## 2 Purpose of the review

Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has commissioned a review of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX), in collaboration with the GPE Secretariat. The review has been conducted as a precursor to an evaluation of KIX to be conducted by a separate team launched in September 2024.

The purpose of this initial review is to inform the GPE Board's 'in-principle' decision in December 2024 about the future direction of GPE's support for KIX. The review provides analysis and conclusions about KIX's response to the Mid-Term Evaluation in 2022, its fulfilment of its objectives and its value proposition in the broader context. The review will also inform the evaluation by providing a foundational desk-review and recommendations on further areas of enquiry for the evaluation to consider.

The primary user of the review is GPE's Performance, Impact and Learning Committee (PILC). The review will be used by PILC in October 2024 to inform their recommendations to the GPE Board on the integration of KIX in the GPE2030 financing framework.

## 3 Review questions

The review aims to answer three questions. A full review matrix is provided in Annex 5.

1. To what extent and how well have recommendations from the 2022 mid-term evaluation (MTE) been addressed?
2. Is KIX fulfilling its overall objective, i.e., supporting partner countries to have and use the evidence and innovation they need to accelerate access, learning outcomes, and gender equality through equitable, inclusive, and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century?
3. How does KIX align with and add value to, the broader evidence-based dialogue and knowledge exchange architecture (globally, regionally and at country level)?



## 4 Methodology

The review is primarily a desk-based analysis of existing qualitative and quantitative sources. It used a predominantly qualitative analysis design supplemented with quantitative data where applicable, for instance when assessing key performance indicators. The methodology is based on a methods report completed in July 2024, which readers can refer to for further details about the approach.

The primary data source for the review is existing program documentation and other relevant documents provided by the program teams as well as documents discovered by the reviewer for the comparative analysis component.

A limited number of interviews with GPE KIX and IDRC KIX staff were conducted to supplement and clarify the program documentation. Interviews were also conducted with two of the comparator programs and two experts in the field to supplement the comparator analysis for question 3 (see below) and provide a perspective on the broader evidence in education landscape. The reviewer was unable to secure interviews with three of the comparator programs and one GPE Secretariat staff member, but this was not considered detrimental to the findings. Table 1 provides a summary of interviews and Annex 2 lists all conducted interview.

Table 1: Summary of interviews proposed and conducted

Interviewee type	Number of interviews proposed	Number of interviews completed
GPE Secretariat	3	2
IDRC KIX	4	4
Comparator program	5	2
Landscape perspective	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>

Analysis of documentation and interviews was conducted with a qualitative coding approach using ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis software.

To address question 3, the review included a comparative analysis component to position KIX among other similar programs. Five comparator programs were selected through a systematic process involving IDRC and GPE Secretariat stakeholders. Programs were shortlisted based on their similarity with KIX in terms of broad aims, where programs work and key approaches. The full shortlist of programs, as well as the steps involved in selection is presented in Annex 3. The five selected programs were:

1. Schools2030 Global Program by Aga Khan Foundation
2. FCDO What Works hub for Global Education (WWGE)
3. USAID SHARE
4. Learning for All Initiative by J-PAL
5. Knowing-Doing Network Leadership Coalition by Brookings

## 5 Limitations

- The review included no primary data collection, other than the interviews described. This meant review relied heavily on program documentation, reporting and commissioned evaluations and studies, which has limited the perspectives from which findings are drawn.
- The small numbers of interviews made it difficult to draw on specific points raised by interviewees without breaking confidentiality. To mitigate this, the review does not highlight points from particular interviews.
- Very little of the reviewed documentation covered activities and learning from the period of late 2023 until mid-2024 when the review took place. To mitigate this, the review drew on interviews with KIX team members to understand more recent progress and explored the more recent data in the KIX MEL system.
- Not all anticipated interviews were able to be scheduled. Interviews did not take place with three of the five comparator programs which meant there was less primary data available to answer question 3. However, sufficient secondary data was available for the three programs to mitigate the lack of interviews. Two of these were programs which were previously reviewed in the 2022 comparative analysis study and publicly available documentation was found for the third.

## 6 Findings

### 6.1 KIX's response to the mid-term evaluation

**Question 1: To what extent and how well have recommendations from the 2022 mid-term evaluation been addressed?**

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

Of the six recommendations in the mid-term evaluation (MTE), five have been very well addressed, in that all committed actions in response to the MTE recommendations have been implemented or are in process of implementation, and one has been well addressed, in that most of the committed actions have been implemented.

- 1. Leverage GPE's system transformation work in partners countries:** *Very well addressed.* In the past two years there has been significant progress in strengthening the alignment between KIX and the wider GPE operating model at multiple levels.
- 2. Strengthen links between the main components of the program:** *Very well addressed.* KIX has introduced a suite of measures to strengthen the links between applied research projects and regional hubs including new guidance for grantees, updated onboarding process for new research projects and a change in protocol to enable regional learning partners (RLPs) to introduce research projects to country delegations.
- 3. Provide differentiated support to countries according to engagement levels:** *Very well addressed.* KIX's support to and engagement with countries through regional hubs has become more varied, with a greater range of engagement options for countries to opt into. The country support mechanism is the most comprehensive addition to the tools available to RLPs for responding to country needs and demands and is already demonstrating value in its first year of implementation.
- 4. Identify key roles to participate in the regional hubs:** *Very well addressed.* Regional hubs have made progress on engaging more closely to country policy processes and involving senior government officials in their activities. They have shown a thoughtful approach to determining who to target in different activities, in each country and with each theme they work in.
- 5. Simplify communication to motivate, engage and align different stakeholders:** *Well addressed.* Significant steps have been taken to improve communication and strategic engagement at program level through the development of a communication and outreach strategy, the introduction of communication protocols and improvements to KIX's public website. However, the new communications and outreach strategy does not address the ongoing challenge of coordinating communications at country level.
- 6. Refine the MEL model:** *Very well addressed.* KIX worked quickly and collaboratively to simplify the MEL system, reducing the number of outcomes from 12 to 7, and indicators from 33 to 22, along with other refinements aimed at limiting the administrative burden on grantees.

The mid-term evaluation (MTE) was conducted in 2022 to assess initial progress of KIX and provide recommendations for adjusting the program. Six recommendations were presented in the final report. Following this, IDRC and the GPE Secretariat committed to a set of actions in response to the recommendations. The review assesses the extent to which each recommendation has been addressed by examining the implementation of the commitments made in the GPE Secretariat management response. An assessment rubric<sup>1</sup> is used based on how many actions have been implemented or have plans in place for implementation.

The review was unable to assess the quality of implementation of committed actions. This is because most of the actions are ongoing processes and do not have specific, measurable targets to define when they could be considered completed. In most cases, the sources of data for this review detail the plans that have been developed and implemented but not the results of the implementation or reflections on how well the plans have been implemented so far.

The review does, however, offer some suggestions for further exploration in the KIX evaluation that go beyond what has been implemented to look at how actions taken have addressed the underlying findings of the MTE.

Table 2 below presents a summary of commitments, actions and the assessment rating for each recommendation. Below this, each recommendation is explored in turn.

Table 2: Assessment of KIX’s response to MTE recommendations

RECOMMENDATION	COMMITMENTS MADE	KEY ACTIONS TAKEN	ASSESSMENT RATING
1. Leverage GPE’s system transformation work in partners countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve links between local education groups and regional hubs.</li> <li>• Explore options for hubs to support country system transformation.</li> <li>• Consider new grant making modalities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthened relationships between KIX and other GPE mechanisms at secretariat, regional and country levels.</li> <li>• The new country support mechanism is opening up new opportunities for hubs to support country system transformation efforts.</li> </ul>	<b>Very well addressed</b>
2. Strengthen links between the main components of the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop systematic links between hubs and research projects.</li> <li>• Support knowledge mobilisation of research from projects around select thematic portfolios.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical measures put in place to strengthen relationships between research projects and hubs, including improving the onboarding process, developing new guidance and amending the protocol</li> </ul>	<b>Very well addressed</b>

<sup>1</sup> The assessment rubric defines three levels: 1. Very well addressed: Clear evidence that most (>75%) of the actions committed to in the GPE management response have been implemented or have plans in place for implementation. 2. Well addressed: Clear evidence that some (50-75%) of the actions have been implemented or have plans in place for implementation. 3. Not very well addressed: Little or no evidence that majority of actions have been implemented or plans in place for implementation.

<p>3. Provide differentiated support to countries according to engagement levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage links between KIX country delegations, local education groups and national policy dialogues.</li> </ul>	<p>for introducing new projects to countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional hubs are engaging countries through a hybrid approach allowing them to offer both broad and targeted support as appropriate.</li> <li>• The country support mechanism is already yielding results.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Very well addressed</b></p>
<p>4. Identify key roles to participate in the regional hubs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and target key education ministry stakeholders to engage more systematically in KIX.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions under recommendations 1-3 are contributing to this.</li> <li>• hubs have a thoughtful approach to determining who to target in a given situation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Very well addressed</b></p>
<p>5. Simplify communication to motivate, engage and align different stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Augment strategic communications around KIX.</li> <li>• Build on partner engagement strategies to build greater understanding around KIX and what it has to offer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New communication and outreach strategy published in December 2022.</li> <li>• Actions under recommendations 1-3 have sharpened KIX's communication to various stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Well addressed</b></p>
<p>6. Refine the MEL model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and simplify the MEL framework for all KIX partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KIX's impact pathway and results framework were simplified in March 2023.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Very well addressed</b></p>

### 6.1.1 MTE recommendation 1: Leverage GPE's system transformation work in partners countries

The main rationale behind this recommendation was the launch of the GPE 2025 Strategic Plan in 2020, which introduced a new Operating Model to support country education system transformation. The mid-term evaluation concluded that this was an opportunity for KIX to formalise connections with GPE 2025. Specifically, for KIX to strengthen its role as an “intellectual engine of GPE” by advising and supporting policy and practice change through innovation and evidence (source: Mid-term Evaluation Final Report).

In response to the recommendation, the GPE Secretariat made three commitments in June 2022: improve links between local education groups and KIX regional hubs, explore options for hubs to support country system transformation with evidence, and consider new grant making modalities enabling governments to co-create research related to systems transformation priorities and approaches.

**Finding: The recommendation has been very well addressed: all the committed actions have been implemented or are currently being implemented. In the past two years there has been significant progress in strengthening the alignment between KIX and the wider GPE operating model at multiple levels.**

At KIX and GPE secretariat level there has been more communication about KIX research and learning and support opportunities; more concerted efforts to champion KIX among other mechanisms of GPE (including Education Out Loud, country grants, and country operations), and more engagement between KIX and GPE’s thematic leads, particularly on research synthesis. At regional level, regional learning partners (RLPs) have been joining GPE regional constituency meetings and three rounds of quarterly meetings have taken place in each region between GPE Country Team Leads, KIX hubs and IDRC. At country level, the local education group coordinating agencies and GPE government focal points are invited to policy dialogues organised by regional hubs.

The increased coordination between KIX and other GPE mechanisms is opening opportunities for KIX to support GPE’s system transformation efforts, particularly in the development of partnership compacts, which is the stage many GPE partner countries are at the time of this review. Regional learning partners have contributed to partnership compact processes in several countries including El Salvador, Honduras and Burkina Faso by facilitating conversations among different stakeholders and sharing evidence relevant to partnership compacts from KIX applied research projects. The country support mechanism (see Box 1) is a notable addition to KIX since the MTE which is giving structure and process to engagements between regional hubs and countries around specific evidence needs identified through partnership compacts.

*Suggestions for further exploration in the forthcoming evaluation:*

- While hubs have taken strong steps to improve coordination with other GPE mechanisms, applied research projects may be lagging in this respect. The 2024 evaluation of applied research projects found that “limited GPE involvement, especially at country-level, throughout the program timespan, constitutes a significant missed opportunity to contribute to the sustainability of grantees’ research results”. Given that new rounds of research projects are launching this year, there is a new opportunity for KIX to address this from the outset.
- The MTE made a specific suggestion related to this recommendation which was not mentioned in the management response to the MTE. The suggestion was that country representatives (members of the regional hubs) – as key actors in the country education systems – be leveraged to support system transformation by providing feedback on partnership compacts and reviewing GPE system transformation/capacity grants. The idea that the hub as a network has a role to play in the system transformation process may have been overlooked in favour of the role of the regional learning partner as a coordinating entity for country support.

Box 1: Country support mechanism allows KIX to deepen support to countries

Following the MTE and in response to the demand they were receiving from countries, KIX developed the country support mechanism (CSM), a third mechanism implemented by the Regional Learning Partners (RLPs) to complement the established applied research portfolios and regional hub knowledge mobilization components. The aim is to provide direct and rapid responses to needs for evidence, policy support and capacity strengthening to GPE member countries on issues that are relevant to national educational challenges and linked to specific policy moments. Following its launch in early 2023, each of the four RLPs developed detailed plans to operationalise the CSM. It is the responsibility of the RLPs, with IDRC’s oversight and sign-off, to identify needs,

broker relevant support, implement support directly if appropriate and monitor results. The CSM is providing a structure and a mandate for RLPs to respond to existing needs and be more systematic with existing engagement with countries. There are examples of RLPs supporting partnership compact processes which are already yielding outcomes in all four regions:

- Since 2021, KIX LAC regional learning partner, SUMMA, has been supporting the development of the partnership compact in El Salvador through producing a country review, providing technical support through workshops, reviewing and editing documents associated with the partnership compact.
- In February 2024 KIX EMAP hub National Coordinator contributed to Tajikistan’s Joint Sector Review, organised by the Ministry of Education, with the support of GPE, by bringing in findings from KIX knowledge products and research projects related to 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, distance learning and inclusive education.
- In September 2023, KIX Africa 19 organised a benchmarking visit for a delegation from Uganda to learn from Kenya’s experience with competency-based curriculum – a priority identified in Uganda’s partnership compact.
- In Burkina Faso, KIX Africa 21’s approach of documenting innovations in the region helped identify curriculum approaches to support education in emergency situations.

### 6.1.2 MTE recommendation 2: Strengthen links between the main components of the program

The rationale behind this recommendation in the MTE was the lack of formal links between the knowledge exchange and the knowledge generation mechanisms (i.e. the regional hubs and the applied research projects) and lack of clarity among grantees of the connections among them. The GPE Secretariat committed to address this by working with IDRC to develop systematic links between hubs and applied research projects.

**Finding: The recommendation has been very well addressed: all the committed actions have been implemented or are currently being implemented. KIX has introduced a suite of measures to strengthen the links between applied research projects and regional hubs including new guidance for grantees, updated onboarding process for new research projects and a change in protocol to enable RLPs to introduce research projects to country delegations.**

There were three practical measures put in place to address this recommendation. The first was to develop a new guidance note for grantees on mutual responsibilities for coordination between the components. The note was updated in late 2023 and socialized among hubs and new applied research projects in the Data Systems and Data Use and Gender Equality and Social Inclusion cohorts. The guidance provides detailed information about how applied research grantees can engage with hubs to further amplify results at different stages of their projects.

The second measure was to change the onboarding process for new applied research projects. Drawing on learning from the first phase, the IDRC KIX team developed a training video for research projects explaining what the hubs are and how to take advantage of them. They also request that projects develop an engagement plan that explicitly considers how to draw on the hubs.

Third, KIX changed the process for introducing research projects to country delegations. Instead of sending letters of introduction from the KIX Secretariat the RLPs now send the letters. This strengthens the relationship between RLPs (and hence hubs) and research projects and reinforces the role of hubs as knowledge brokers.

This is resulting in a large increase in engagements between hubs and applied research projects. For instance, in 2023-24, RLPs reported 62 instances of interaction with research projects as compared to 44 instances in 2022-23. Instances of interaction include projects sharing their outputs with hubs, presenting results at hub events, and delivering workshops to hub participants based on their thematic expertise and research. For example, several projects presented their research at The Second KIX Continental Research Symposium 2023 in Cote d'Ivoire hosted jointly by Africa 19 and Africa 21 as well as at the KIX EAP 2023 Education Policy and Innovation Conference.

One example of how this interaction is leading to research uptake opportunities is in Africa 21. The RLP invited all the regional projects working in Africa 21 countries to present to the hub focal points. This led to interest from the Comoros delegation to want to work with the STEPS regional project on issues of STEM education, in line with their partnership compact priority.

*Suggestions for further exploration in the forthcoming evaluation:*

- Strengthening links between hubs and research projects is an ongoing process. For projects included in the 2024 evaluation of applied research, the feedback on progress at that time was mixed. The evaluation found that “most grantees are increasingly interacting with regional hubs, but assessment of their usefulness varies across grantees. A lack of clarity about the role of regional hubs persists.”
- This suggests that as the measures continue to roll out, it is important to monitor the consistency of implementation. Currently the only systematic data which is collected is from hubs about instances when projects share research with hubs or participate in hub events. This doesn't sufficiently capture strategic engagement between hubs and projects and more concerted efforts to strengthen relationships. It also puts all the onus on RLPs to record data and hence demonstrate engagement.
- There is also insufficient evidence that research projects in the first phase of KIX leveraged hubs in earlier stages of research (e.g. to inform their research agendas) rather than just as a research communication channel. The guidance from IDRC to research projects, for example, focused on advantages of hubs for research communication and doesn't pay sufficient attention to the value of hubs for projects to better understand regional contexts and country priorities. There are suggestions that this is being addressed in the new cohort but no evidence is available at the time of this review.

### **6.1.3 MTE recommendation 3: Provide differentiated support to countries according to engagement levels**

The recommendation was proposed by the MTE evaluators to address the finding that some countries were more engaged in hubs than others and were already requesting additional support beyond what hubs were originally designed to provide. While the GPE Secretariat and IDRC agreed that there was an opportunity for hubs to provide additional support to countries, they added that this should not just be for highly engaged countries, but that further support should be considered for countries facing barriers to engagement.



**Finding: The recommendation has been very well addressed: all the committed actions have been implemented or are currently being implemented. KIX’s support to and engagement with countries through regional hubs has become more varied, with a greater range of engagement options for countries to opt into. The country support mechanism is the most comprehensive addition to the tools available to RLPs for responding to country needs and demands and is already demonstrating value in its first year of implementation.**

RLPs have drawn on learning from the first phase of KIX to develop more targeted activities such as exchange visits, policy dialogues and communities of practice, to complement the more open participation activities which have been well established such as webinars and other events. This gives them more tools to draw on when responding to differing levels of engagement among member countries.

The country support mechanism (see Box 1) represents the most comprehensive addition to the tools available to RLPs for responding to country needs. The demand for in-depth, technical support for countries is not new; these requests are regularly received by RLPs, and they have been able to respond to some. The problem was that they were not easily addressed through the original regional hub mechanism as hubs were designed for collective learning on consensus issues. The country support mechanism is providing RLPs with a systematic approach to identify and scope out potential responses to technical support needs from countries. In its first year it is already demonstrating its value, as described in Box 1.

*Suggestions for further exploration in the forthcoming evaluation:*

- Supporting countries which have been less engaged was also identified as a priority by the GPE Secretariat and IDRC in their respective management responses and this was also committed to as part of the proposal for the costed extension to KIX. There could be many reasons why some countries are less engaged in KIX than others, and KIX does not expect all countries to engage to the same degree. Nonetheless, while there have been multiple meetings and guidance notes to support hubs in developing their strategies to meet the needs of the highly engaged countries, there has been less attention (in the range of sources reviewed) on documenting progress made in understanding and addressing barriers to engagement.

#### **6.1.4 MTE recommendation 4: Identify key roles to participate in the regional hubs**

The MTE found that hub participants are sometimes too far from policy decision making. It also found that hubs needed to be more diverse, involving “non-traditional actors”. The recommendation, however, focused on the former and suggested stakeholder mapping to identify institutional roles to target and developing voluntary cooperation frameworks with country governments. The response from the GPE Secretariat and IDRC agreed with the overall recommendation and committed to work together with hubs to better target decision makers closer to the centre of policy making. They were also mindful of the need for inclusive dialogue and engaging other actors such as parliamentarians, national academia, and civil society organizations.

**Finding: The recommendation has been very well addressed: all the committed actions have been implemented or are currently being implemented. Regional hubs have made progress on engaging more closely to country policy processes and involving senior government officials in**

**their activities. They have shown a thoughtful approach to determining who to target in different activities, in each country and with each theme they work in.**

Much of the progress made towards the commitments in response to this recommendation are related to actions already discussed under the previous recommendations. For instance, the efforts to engage hubs in partnership compact processes has naturally given them opportunities to support high level policy making. Likewise, the new role for hubs to introduce research projects to country delegations is an opportunity to raise awareness of the knowledge mobilisation role of hubs among senior delegation members. The country support mechanism offers new opportunities for hubs to maintain consistent and deeper engagement with countries ready to engage further. These developments should lead to higher-level engagement with country policy processes.

A key piece of learning for hubs, however, is that their engagement needs to be with a range of roles, within government, outside government, in policy roles and technical roles. When hubs launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, they were restricted to running virtual events. These tended to attract a broad audience with fewer senior stakeholders involved than originally anticipated in KIX's design. Since the end of the pandemic, hubs have shifted to a hybrid-model of engagement which has maintained the open events but introduced more focused events targeted at specific roles. These tend to be more relevant for and attended by country representatives in senior roles – inside and outside government.

Hubs have found that there is no blanket rule for identifying the 'best' individual to engage. It varies from country to country and across themes. Sometimes working with local education groups is fruitful but it can be challenging in some countries, for instance where these groups are not used to working with researchers. For some themes, such as education data and teacher professional development, hubs have worked more with technical teams on the implementation side and less on policy. Hubs have also learned that targeting advisors who work alongside senior officials is often more effective.

*Suggestions for further exploration in the forthcoming evaluation:*

- There is a potential tension in the expectations of who hubs should be engaging with. The MTE suggests that hubs need to better target stakeholders with greater influence over the education system. This was interpreted in the GPE Secretariat management response as needing to identify and target key education ministry stakeholders. This is likely to be an appropriate strategy where policy development and government decision making will help strengthen the education system. However, KIX's learning is showing that there are important actors and decision-making spaces outside of government to which knowledge mobilisation can be employed to strengthen the education system.

### **6.1.5 MTE recommendation 5: Simplify communication to motivate, engage and align different stakeholders**

The MTE found that that KIX was not well understood by key stakeholders, including country representatives involved in regional hubs, and components such as ROSIE and the regional hubs were not well understood by applied research projects. The response from the GPE Secretariat and IDRC affirmed this view and committed to augmenting strategic communications around KIX and building on partner engagement strategies to build greater understanding around KIX and what it has to offer.

**Finding: The recommendation has been well addressed: most of the committed actions have been implemented or are currently being implemented. Significant steps have been taken to**

**improve communication and strategic engagement at program level through the development of a communication and outreach strategy, the introduction of communication protocols and improvements to KIX’s public website. However, the new communications and outreach strategy does not address the ongoing challenge of coordinating communications at country level.**

A new communication and outreach strategy was published in December 2022 which outlines communication objectives, key messages intended to be more easily understood, primary and secondary audiences and the general communication approaches employed. The strategy acts as a touchpoint to build a common understanding of what KIX is and what it is trying to achieve.

As well as developing a new strategy, the KIX teams at IDRC and GPE have also improved communication in practical ways. A communications protocol was introduced in August 2023 to coordinate sharing of plans and priorities between KIX hubs and applied research projects, key contacts at the GPE Secretariat and at the country level in ways that build relationships and minimize transaction costs. The concerted effort to strengthen the connections between hubs and other GPE mechanisms has resulted in more frequent contact at regional and country level which is raising awareness and improving understanding of KIX by GPE and country stakeholders. KIX has also improved communication through its website by adding new pages for each country, pulling together relevant projects and articles.

*Suggestions for further exploration in the forthcoming evaluation:*

- The evaluation of applied research projects, found that “the multiplicity of actors and structures (the GPE Secretariat, the KIX Program, KIX projects, regional hubs, national delegations, KIX focal points, local education groups) with unclear lines of communication, especially at national level, seems to be a significant impediment that curtails grantees’ ability to engage effectively with policy circles.” This suggests that coordination of communications at country level remains a challenge for KIX. The communication and outreach strategy does not address this challenge, for instance, by defining roles and responsibilities of those communicating for an on behalf of KIX at country level. More recent actions taken since the development of the strategy suggest that KIX is addressing this practically but so far this is not reflected at a strategic level.

#### **6.1.6 MTE recommendation 6: Refine the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) model**

The final recommendation of the MTE was to refine the MEL model, specifically to reduce and standardise the indicators in the KIX results framework, promote more use of MEL data, define indicators for ultimate outcomes and consider external validation of MEL data. The recommendation was accepted in general by the GPE Secretariat and IDRC and commitments were made to simplify the MEL system.

**Finding: The recommendation has been very well addressed: all the committed actions have been implemented or are currently being implemented. KIX worked quickly and collaboratively to simplify the MEL system, reducing the number of outcomes from 12 to 7, and indicators from 33 to 22, along with other refinements aimed at limiting the administrative burden on grantees.**

In March 2023, IDRC delivered an amended KIX results framework, which was developed in consultation with grantees and based on lessons learned using the KIX MEL system. The changes included adjustments to the theory of change, consolidating outcomes from 12 to 7, embedding the country support mechanism and aligning more closely with the GPE 2025 Strategic Plan; adjustments to the indicators reducing the number from 33 to 22; reductions in the number of data collection tools and adjustments in the reporting frequency of some grantees. Additionally, refinements were made to the approach to training grantees to using the MEL system, including to improve the practice of sensemaking or drawing actionable insights from the MEL data.

The first phase of the evaluation of applied research in KIX, which took place after the changes to the MEL system, found mixed responses to the changes. Most grantees (two thirds of the interviewed projects) acknowledged the usefulness of the amended KIX MEL approach and rated MEL support very highly. Some projects, however, still found it challenging despite the simplification efforts, and described it as “heavy”, “cumbersome” and “burdensome”. One grantee said the MEL system does not provide feedback on project objectives, and another said it is not always clear why certain information is being asked for.

MEL is a common challenge for large, multi-project, knowledge-based programs like KIX for several reasons: knowledge contributions are far upstream of the three ultimate outcomes meaning the impact pathways are uncertain and non-linear; external factors play a big role in supporting and hindering progress; and insights depend on data gathered by grantees who are generally unused to detailed reporting on outcomes. In the face of these challenges, KIX’s approach to MEL is appropriate and in line with good practice<sup>2</sup>. For example, in its use of Outcome Mapping to define behaviour change pathways, balancing learning and accountability purposes of MEL, and the focus on monitoring research uptake and outcomes of research use as well as outputs.

*Suggestions for further exploration in the forthcoming evaluation:*

- There are opportunities to further improve the MEL system, particularly in response to changes introduced since the MTE. The country support mechanism, for instance, could be given more prominence in the MEL system to ensure implementation is effective and lessons are learned quickly. Engagement between regional hubs and applied research is another area of strategic focus which could benefit from a narrower spotlight through MEL.

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<sup>2</sup> According to Shaxson and Pasanen, 2016 (<https://media.odi.org/documents/10259.pdf>)

## 6.2 KIX's fulfilment of its objectives

**Question 2: Is KIX fulfilling its overall objective, i.e., supporting partner countries to have and use the evidence and innovation they need to accelerate access, learning outcomes, and gender equality through equitable, inclusive, and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century?**

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

KIX is fulfilling its overall objective through three interconnected results areas: knowledge generation, capacity strengthening and knowledge mobilisation.

Regarding **knowledge generation**, KIX has generated a substantial evidence base on education innovations through global and regional applied research projects, regional learning partners, KIX observatory, ROSIE and research synthesis. Projects have produced research across six themes: data systems and use; early childhood education; gender equality, equity and inclusion; teacher professional development; learning; and out of school children and youth, and in over 70 countries, generating 250 thematic research products and 88 scaling research products, exceeding all targets relating to knowledge generation.

**Capacity strengthening** is embedded throughout the work of applied research projects and hubs and is supporting change in policy and practice with evidence. Applied research projects support capacity strengthening of a range of stakeholders, which varies depending on the stage of innovation and thematic area. Hubs have demonstrated success with various approaches in supporting evidence including Learning Cycles and Communities of Practice. KIX has exceeded all targets relating to capacity strengthening.

KIX's strategic focus on **knowledge mobilisation** is creating opportunities to put the research into the attention of education stakeholders across all GPE partner countries. The interplay of KIX's knowledge generation, mobilisation and capacity strengthening efforts have resulted in numerous cases of education stakeholders using knowledge and innovations to inform policy and practice at national and local levels, with most outcomes reported in the past year. The changes brought in since the MTE are likely to have a significant multiplicative effect on knowledge and innovation use.

While KIX has greatly exceeded output targets relating to knowledge mobilisation, there are a few targets at outcome level which have not been met: the number of instances of applied research projects, ROSIE or observatory sharing research evidence through hubs is slightly below the target. The number of citations of KIX-supported research and the number of mentions/endorsements of KIX-supported research are both under target. The number of outcome cases of policy development and / or delivery is significantly under target.

KIX's impact pathway (see Figure 1) describes how it intends to fulfil the overall objective through three results areas: knowledge generation, capacity strengthening and knowledge mobilisation. KIX's

reporting to the GPE Secretariat, and its results framework are structured around these three results areas and so these provide the lens through which this question can be answered.

It has not been possible, with the sources available in this review, to assess achievement of the ultimate outcomes defined in the KIX impact pathway. There are two reasons for this: KIX's results framework does not define indicators at ultimate outcome level and assigns responsibility for assessment at the ultimate outcome level to the end evaluation. Second, the outputs, immediate and intermediate outcomes do not follow linear pathways towards the ultimate outcomes, so it is not possible to create proxy measures of progress towards ultimate outcomes using the indicators defined in KIX's results framework.

The approach taken in this review is to examine each of the three results areas: knowledge generation, capacity strengthening and knowledge mobilisation. For each result area, an assessment of progress against relevant indicators is provided based on KIX's monitoring system, documentary sources and previous evaluations.

All quantitative data relating to indicators mentioned in this report describe cumulative progress since the beginning of the program until 31 March 2024, and is compared against targets defined in the August 2021 version of the results framework (which is the latest version to include targets). Outputs, outcomes and indicator definitions are taken from the updated version of the results framework to align with the program as it is currently managed.

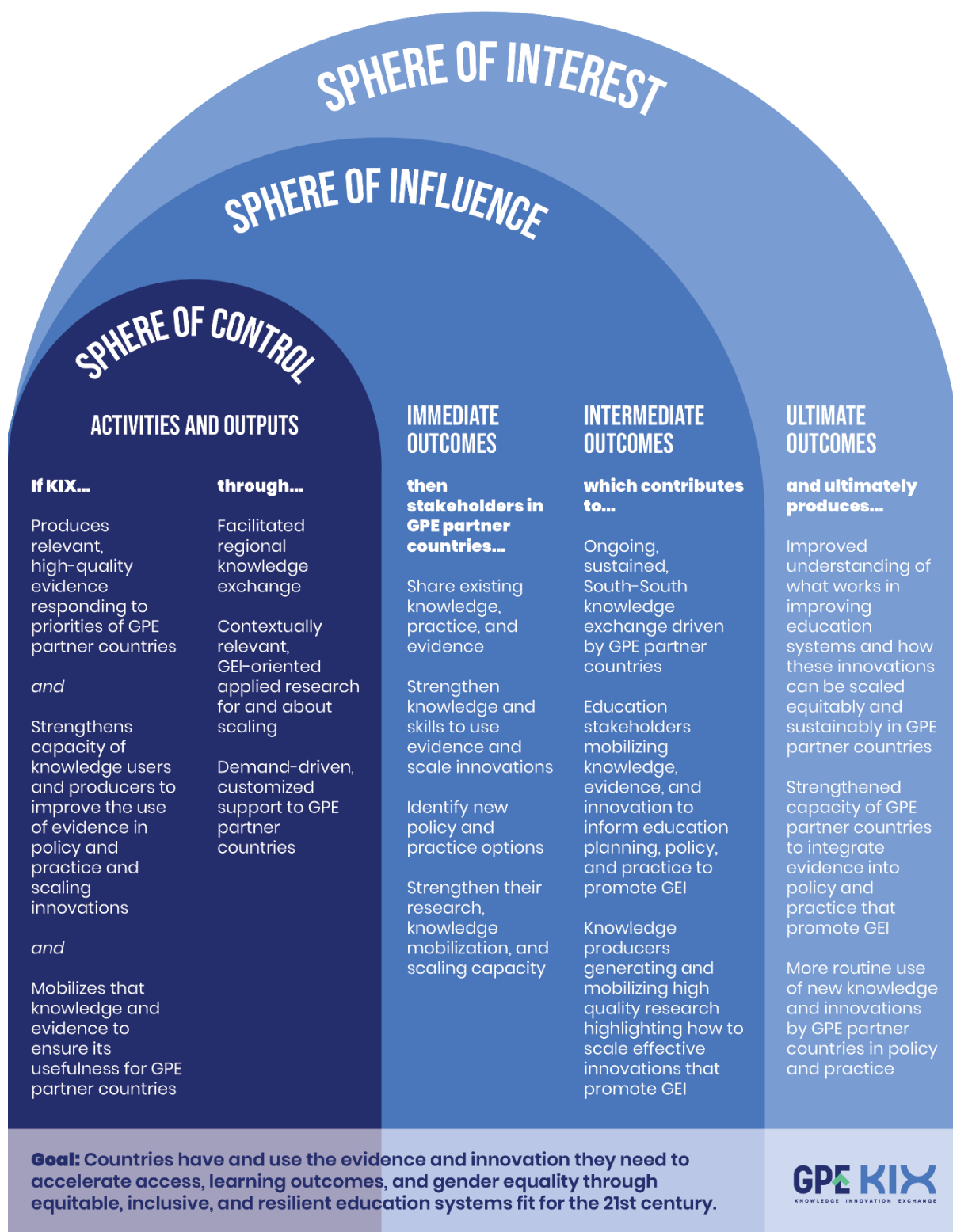


Figure 1: KIX Impact pathway

### 6.2.1 Knowledge generation

**Finding:** KIX has generated a substantial evidence base on education innovations through global and regional applied research projects, regional learning partners, KIX observatory, ROSIE and research synthesis. Projects have produced research across six themes: data systems and use; early childhood education; gender equality, equity and inclusion; teacher professional

**development; learning; and out of school children and youth, and in over 70 countries, generating 250 thematic research products and 88 scaling research products, exceeding all targets.**

Output / outcome	Relevant indicators	Target (up to 31 March 2024)	Total achieved (up to 31 March 2024)
<b>Output:</b> KIX produces contextually relevant, high quality, gender equality and inclusion oriented thematic and scaling evidence responding to priorities of GPE partner countries.	Number of thematic research outputs presenting new knowledge or innovation in KIX thematic areas and/or GPE PC specific education priorities	176	250
	Percentage of thematic research outputs related to GEI	40%	76%
	Number of scaling research outputs presenting insights on how to scale the impact of education innovations	84	88
	Percentage of scaling research outputs related to GEI	40%	72%

Table 3: Indicators relevant to knowledge mobilisation (green colour indicates target has been met or exceeded, orange indicates the target has not been met)

In total, applied research projects and regional learning partners produced 250 new **primary thematic research outputs**, which greatly exceeds the end of program target. This includes outputs such as working papers, case studies, synthesis reports, journal articles and books.

With respect to **gender equality, equity and inclusion (GEI)**, 76% (191/250) of all primary thematic research outputs were related to GEI as reported by grantees. This includes 33 primary thematic research outputs from projects directly working on GEI in education. As reported in the evaluation of applied research projects, IDRC’s assessment of research quality in 2022-23 rated projects positively on both gender and inclusion ratings, with most projects “acceptable or good” or “very good” on both<sup>3</sup>.

KIX has contributed to **research on scaling**. 88 primary research outputs relating to scaling have been produced, which meets the expected target. This includes research from ROSIE, applied research projects and regional learning projects. Of note is a series of reflection briefs from ROSIE on topics including equity considerations when scaling for impact, engaging champions for scaling in education and balancing research for and about scaling.

The evaluation of applied research portfolio found that KIX research has primarily focused on the ‘what works’ and ‘whether it works in new contexts’ questions but that “KIX program has been less of a learning lab on sustainable scaling.” The evaluators noted, however, that projects are at different stages of scaling and therefore not all projects will be generating the same level of learning on the scaling process.

<sup>3</sup> The evaluation did not provide definitions of “acceptable or good” or “very good” but these are defined in KIX’s research quality plus (RQ+) protocol.



The **KIX Observatory** on COVID-19 responses in educational systems in Africa was a unique initiative launched by KIX in the early stages of the pandemic in response to demand from GPE countries. Over an 18-month period, the project published seven research reports synthesizing policy and practice responses to the pandemic in 40 GPE partner countries in Africa. This included reports on financing education, school reopening, teacher training and the long-term impact of pandemic on education systems. The learning from the Observatory has already been taken up by Ethiopia and Senegal in building their back-to-school campaigns, which particularly focused on girls and vulnerable learners.

In addition to primary research, KIX has produced (or is in the process of producing) five **research synthesis papers**, bringing together the learning about education innovations from projects across the five core themes mentioned above. These syntheses enhance the evidence base as they offer a single point of entry into the findings and insights from numerous applied research projects. They directly link to themes identified by country representatives and therefore integrate well into regional hubs' knowledge mobilisation efforts. Finally, they are an effective way to ensure the evidence from projects is readily available to the broader education research community and education policy makers and practitioners in the future. The long-term value of KIX's knowledge generation should not be overlooked in favour of the more easily observed instrumental uses of evidence.

## 6.2.2 Capacity strengthening

**Finding: Capacity strengthening is embedded throughout the work of applied research projects and hubs and is supporting change in policy and practice with evidence. Applied research projects support capacity strengthening of a range of stakeholders, which varies depending on the stage of innovation and thematic area. Hubs have demonstrated success with various approaches in supporting evidence including Learning Cycles and Communities of Practice.**

Output / outcome	Relevant indicators	Target (up to 31 March 2024)	Total achieved (up to 31 March 2024)
<b>Output:</b> KIX strengthens capacity of knowledge users and producers to improve the use of evidence in policy and practice, scale innovations, and promote GEI.	Number of activities aimed at strengthening capacity of educational stakeholders engaged in learning exchange, applied research or country support	297	475
<b>Immediate outcome:</b> Educational stakeholders from GPE partner countries strengthen their knowledge and skills, including those related to GEI, to use evidence and scale innovations to address educational issues in their home countries.	Number of outcome cases of educational stakeholders from GPE partner countries reporting new knowledge and skills	142	173
	Number of the above outcome cases which relate to GEI	58	117

Table 4: Indicators relevant to capacity strengthening (green colour indicates target has been met or exceeded, orange indicates the target has not been met)

KIX supports capacity strengthening of education stakeholders through applied research projects and regional hubs (implemented by RLPs). In total, RLPs and applied research projects have held 475 capacity strengthening activities involving more than 25,000 education stakeholders from 83 GPE countries, greatly exceeding the target number of 297.

**Applied research projects** support capacity strengthening of a range of stakeholders, which varies depending on the stage of innovation and thematic area. For example, projects at the stage of adapting and testing an innovation will be working alongside practitioners supporting them to use that innovation, whether that's with teachers to test and adapt training materials, or with technical staff in Ministries to test and adapt education data systems. Projects at a later stage of implementation will be working with different parts of the system to embed the innovations in broader policy and practice, for example with teacher training institutes to embed new teacher professional development (TPD) approaches, or Ministry of education officials to support scaling of early learning programs.

Applied research projects recorded a total of 126 outcome cases demonstrating new knowledge and skills of education stakeholders, 95 of which relate to GEI, which exceeds the target of 102 outcome cases with 50 related to GEI. Examples of these outcomes are provided in Box 2.

The evaluation of applied research projects found that "capacity strengthening of education stakeholders ... has been a core component of all projects, mostly focused on the implementation and testing of the innovations" and attributes this to the participatory nature of the research projects. The evaluation also found that capacity strengthening focused more at the local level than national with local actors such as teachers, district officials, teacher trainers and school principals being the subjects of reported capacity outcomes more than ten times that of national level decision makers (across the sample of projects included in the evaluation).

However, there are suggestions from KIX interviewees that this finding may not be an accurate characterisation of the full set of outcomes of KIX capacity strengthening. It is suggested that the forthcoming evaluation consider reviewing other sources of evidence to further investigate how KIX research projects contributed to capacity strengthening within national education systems.

Box 2: Examples of capacity strengthening outcomes from applied research projects

- The CLADE research team in Haiti identified that, since January 2023, the leaders of the Haitian Women's Association (SOFA) belonging to the intervention areas have internalized discourses and practices in favour of the prevention of sexual and gender violence in the school space. This has caused them to become key actors to influence the municipal government level, and those who provide the sustainability that is required for the project.
- A government official from the Tanzania's Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST), having participated in the LEARN Plus Impact Study Endline and Cost Study validation workshop in December 2023, used the research findings to increase their knowledge and understanding of the unique and innovative approaches and strategies of the Enhanced School Readiness Program (E-SRP). This uptake has been noted by the MoEST stakeholder that it is the first step in the scaling process.
- In November 2022, the Ministry of Education in Tonga organized a national workshop with 24 participants from different Ministry departments including education planners, staff working in curriculum development, teacher development, human resources to present

factsheets from the MICS-EAGLE project. These participants were important as they belonged to the departments beyond the data team in the Ministry of education and had not been aware of the education data in MICS. The workshop itself has been fruitful and is being used to inform the education sector plan currently being worked on.

**Regional learning partners** employ a range of approaches to build capacity of country representatives to integrate evidence into policy and practice, including training, technical learning visits and learning exchanges. Through these approaches, country representatives, including senior government officials and technical staff from within and outside government, have opportunities for cross-country learning on topics raised by GPE partner countries. Of note are the Learning Cycles of EMAP hub and Communities of Practice (CoPs) of Africa 19 and LAC hubs – see Box 3 below for examples of these.

RLPs documented 47 outcome cases of country representatives reporting new knowledge and skills, 22 of which relate to GEI, exceeding the target of 40 outcome cases with 8 related to GEI. Half of these outcomes were recorded in the last year and cover a range of knowledge areas. Africa 19's cases focused mostly on country representatives (CRs) developing knowledge on disability-inclusive education through an experiential learning visit in Kenya. Africa 21's outcome cases are varied and include CRs developing knowledge on AI for education and learning assessment during COVID-19. EMAP's cases also show CRs learning on a range of topics including monitoring and communicating data about educational progress, girls' education and issues of gender inequality, learning assessments and education reform, and results-based financing for education system management. LAC's cases shows that country representatives are learning about different methodologies including theory of change, scaling, and implementation science.

Box 3: Examples of regional hub capacity strengthening approaches

- The EMAP hub uses a unique approach to capacity strengthening called Learning Cycles which combines professional development and coaching. Each Learning Cycle takes participants over a 10-week course to learn from experts, develop their projects and learn from each other. Five Learning Cycles have taken place since 2020 with two more planned for 2024. Topics have included equitable access to education with geospatial data, integration of 21st century skills in curriculum and teacher professional development at scale. Regarding the latter, which ran from September to November 2022, nearly all country representatives shared having learned about the necessary equity, efficiency and sustainability considerations for designing and scaling TPD.
- Representatives from The Gambia, Kenya, and Lesotho jointly led a CoP with the Africa 19 hub on Foundations of Educational Quality. Members included curriculum and assessment officers from ministries of education from half of the countries in Africa 19 and provided an opportunity to hear from teachers on the realities of implementing a competency-based curriculum (CBC). The participation of country representatives from Uganda in the CoP led to the opportunity for KIX to provide additional support through the country support mechanism.
- The KIX LAC Community of Practice on Gender Equality involves participants from El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, and Honduras. It provided a forum for country

representatives to learn from each other’s experience while reflecting on gender equality issues in their own countries. Participants from the Ministries of Education reported gaining new insights on the role of teachers as agents of change and approaches and challenges to implement initiatives with a gender perspective.

### 6.2.3 Knowledge mobilisation

**Finding: KIX’s strategic focus on knowledge mobilisation is creating opportunities to put the research into the attention of education stakeholders across all GPE partner countries. The interplay of KIX’s knowledge generation, mobilisation and capacity strengthening efforts have resulted in numerous cases of education stakeholders using knowledge and innovations to inform policy and practice at national and local levels, with most outcomes reported in the past year. The changes brought in since the MTE are likely to have a significant multiplicative effect on knowledge and innovation use.**

Output / outcome	Relevant indicators	Target (up to 31 March 2024)	Total achieved (up to 31 March 2024)
<b>Output:</b> KIX supports use of evidence from applied research, knowledge exchanges and country support through engagement with relevant education stakeholders in GPE partner countries, the production and sharing of secondary knowledge products, and dissemination through the KIX digital platform, regional hubs and project- and country support-specific mobilization strategies.	Number of secondary knowledge products tailored for a particular use	447	828
	Percentage of secondary knowledge products related to GEI	40%	46%
	Number of activities where KIX or other (in case of hubs) research is presented or knowledge exchange among country representatives takes place	345	1,229
<b>Immediate outcome:</b> Educational stakeholders from GPE partner countries identify new policy and practice options, including those related to GEI, in response to education priorities of their home countries.	Number of outcome cases of educational stakeholders identifying new policy and practice options, including those related to GEI	25	45
	Percentage of the above outcome cases which relate to GEI	20%	53%
	Number of instances of applied research projects, ROSIE or observatory sharing research evidence through hubs	126	124

<b>Intermediate outcome:</b> Applied research projects generate and mobilize high-quality research for education systems in GPE partner countries and beyond, highlighting how to scale effective innovations that promote gender equality, equity and inclusion.	Number of outcome cases of uptake of KIX-supported research or innovation by education stakeholders in GPE PCs and international development community	88	94
	Number of citations of KIX-supported research	25	11
	Number of mentions/endorsements of KIX-supported research	119	102
<b>Intermediate outcome:</b> Educational stakeholders mobilize knowledge, evidence and innovations, including those related to GEI, to influence education planning, policy and practice in their countries	Number of outcome cases of policy development and / or delivery, including those related to GEI, which use KIX knowledge and innovation	20	10
	Percentage of the above outcome cases which relate to GEI	20%	60%
	Number of outcome cases of educational stakeholders engaged in hub activities building stronger or new relationships with other education stakeholders and mobilising knowledge to inform education planning, policy and practice in their countries	15	26

Table 5: Indicators relevant to knowledge mobilisation (green colour indicates target has been met or exceeded, orange indicates the target has not been met)

Mobilising knowledge means bringing relevant knowledge into the places where it can make a difference in policy and practice. This idea is baked into KIX’s approach at multiple levels – projects are supported to develop knowledge mobilisation strategies and regional hubs are designed primarily as a knowledge mobilisation mechanism directly linked to key country stakeholders.

The time-lag in producing research and seeing signs of uptake has been a consistent challenge with KIX, which has put a big emphasis on recording use of knowledge and innovation. Most of the outcomes related to research and innovation use have been recorded in the past year and have taken years of engagement of KIX grantees working closely with education stakeholders to come to fruition.

The costed extension of KIX in 2023 is likely to have a significant multiplicative effect on uptake of KIX research and innovation. It is allowing more time for deepened engagement with education stakeholders, leveraging the foundations which were places in the first phase of KIX. The recent strengthening of connections between KIX and GPE country mechanisms is leading to new pathways for research uptake aligned with partnership compacts and the stronger links between research projects and regional hubs has potential to greatly expand the uptake possibilities for KIX research.

KIX’s reporting and monitoring data provide insights into knowledge mobilisation outputs and events, indications of research uptake and outcome cases of use of research and innovation in policy and practice.

### **Knowledge mobilisation outputs**

Grantees produced 828 secondary knowledge products, nearly double the target number of 447, including blogs, videos, media articles, newsletter, policy briefs and more, all intended to communicate research. They also recorded 1,229 events with the purpose of knowledge mobilisation, involving around 35,000 participants from 87 GPE countries, greatly exceeding the target number of 345 events.

Events such as the 2nd KIX Africa Continental Research Symposium demonstrate KIX's proficiency in mobilising knowledge. The conference, organized by the two Africa hubs, convened over 250 ministry, civil society, research, multilateral and academic participants from 38 countries to discuss the content, progress and uptake of 80 different research projects in policy dialogues, including research from outside of KIX. It is the only conference of its kind in the education space in Africa that brings together researchers and policy makers.

As reported under question 1 above, research projects and regional hubs are increasingly engaging with each other which has a dual affect: hubs have ready access to new knowledge, often through presentations from the researchers themselves, and research projects have access to an engaged audience to refine their messaging and improve their relevance for countries. There have been 124 instances of applied research projects, ROSIE or observatory sharing research evidence through hubs, which is slightly below the target of 126.

### **Mentions, endorsements and citations of research**

According to KIX monitoring data, there were 102 instances of KIX-supported research being mentioned or endorsed by education stakeholders, media and other academics, which is below the target of 119.

These accounts, predominantly from global research projects, demonstrate that research is reaching those that can make use it, but given the emphasis on knowledge mobilisation, and the quantity of outputs produced, the number of mentions of research recorded by projects is relatively low. This may be due to the emphasis on recording accounts of research use and strengthened capacity (see subsequent sections for details of these) in KIX monitoring, leading grantees to spend less time monitoring the lower-level indicator of research mentions.

In terms of academic use, 10 citations of KIX-supported research were recorded by global and regional grant projects, which falls short of the target of 25. Two possible reasons for this are that it takes longer than expected for published work to be picked up and cited, or that projects do not have systematic methods in place to pick up on citations. Either way, academic use of research is a lower priority for KIX than use in policy and practice, and perhaps a less useful indicator.

### **Outcomes of use of research and innovation in policy and practice**

The evaluation of applied research projects found that "KIX grantees have successfully adapted a wide range of education innovations to new contexts and demonstrated their positive impact on a wide variety of education stakeholders." Backing this up with monitoring data, applied research projects recorded 94 outcome cases of uptake of KIX-supported research or innovation by education stakeholders, exceeding the target number of 88. Likewise, RLPs recorded 45 cases of country representatives exploring new policy and practice options, of which 54% relate to GEI, exceeding the target of 25 with 20% relating to GEI. RLPs also recorded 10 cases of policy development or delivery

using KIX knowledge and innovation, of which 60% relate to GEI. This is below the target of 20 outcome cases.

The outcome cases describe change at national and sub-national level and with policy and practice. Several examples are shown in Box 4 to provide a sense of variation, breadth of coverage and depth of engagement KIX has achieved.

Notable by its absence from this set is ROSIE, which had not recorded any outcome cases of research uptake (up to 31 March, 2024), compared with the target of 10. This is possibly, as reported by one interviewee, due to challenges with the monitoring tools. This could also be related to the meta-research nature of ROSIE meaning it doesn't have the same instrumental uses as other research projects which often have direct uptake pathways with stakeholders they are working with.

Box 4: Examples of research use in policy and practice

- In October 2021, the Maldives government announced that higher secondary education would be accessible across all 20 atolls in the Maldives, encompassing 34 government schools. A key contributing factor to this was the participation of a team of five national experts from the Maldives in the KIX EMAP Learning Cycle 2 on "Equitable access to education with geospatial data" and their production of a case study.
- Following a national policy dialogue in Niger and support for the development of a national roadmap for education by the KIX Africa 21 hub, the Ministry of Education established a committee of senior ministry officials, researchers, and members of civil society to surface education innovations that would strengthen Niger's education system.
- In Uzbekistan, the Presidential Educational Institutions of the Republic (PIIMA) adopted the TPD@Scale model to provide ongoing in-service education and teacher training to improve instructional quality and student learning outcomes.
- In 2023, Honduran government authorities including the Ministry of Education and municipal governments publicly and institutionally supported the importance of preventing gender violence in public schools, placing special emphasis on rural schools, paving the way for prevention strategies that will be implemented in the following months. This happened following engagement with the KIX project Strategies to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and foster equity in rural school.
- South Sudan has developed a national ECE policy which will help formalize the subsector and scale the provision of quality ECE services nationally. The KIX project Integrating early child education in sectoral planning (BELDS) contributed to this through positive political momentum generated through the use of their ECE Accelerator Toolkit and conducting a subsector analysis workshop.
- LABE, a local partner of Kyambogo University, has decided to scale the child-to-child model to refugee communities in Northern Uganda. It has found the materials and approach from Kyambogo U more useful and is scaling them beginning in March 2024.

## 6.3 KIX's alignment and value in the broader context

**Question 3: How does KIX align with and add value to, the broader evidence-based dialogue and knowledge exchange architecture (globally, regionally and at country level)?**

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

KIX shares many key characteristics with the comparator programs including being Southern led, focusing on research uptake and a high-level commitment to GEI. The comparator programs each have specific approaches, whether that's school-level research by and for teachers (Schools2030), impact evaluations of education interventions (LAI), implementation science (WWHGE), or education ecosystems approaches (SHARE and KDNLC). KIX on the other hand, brings elements of each of these under one umbrella and draws on the advantages of each of these types of research to meet the demands and priorities of partner countries.

What makes KIX unique in the field is the scale and interconnected design of the program, in terms of the number of countries, breadth of research and the marrying of knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation and country support. KIX's position with GPE allows KIX to reach a large number of countries, giving it a unique capability to identify and respond to country, regional and global trends. Two components of KIX are not seen in any other program: The regional hubs as a dedicated and consistent approach to knowledge mobilisation, and the ROSIE initiative (research on scaling the impact of innovations in education).

There are opportunities for both components to coordinate with other initiatives in the field of evidence in education, which has expanded over the past five years. There is a potential role for hubs to play in convening similar programs at country level towards greater coordination of evidence use. Similarly, ROSIE is well positioned to convening other programs working on scaling in education to further socialise the lessons learned on scaling in KIX.

This question is answered by examining changes in the context of evidence in education since KIX was designed and combining this with a comparative analysis of KIX with five similar programs working on evidence in education to situate KIX and assess its value in the current context. This section draws on a previous comparative analysis conducted for KIX in 2022. Three of the five comparator programs were also included in the 2022 study.

The comparator programs are listed in Box 5. There were five parameters for comparison:

1. Types of evidence/knowledge (e.g. academic, applied, participatory, practitioner, policy)
2. Approach to supporting the use of evidence (e.g. research communication, country engagement, relationship building, capacity strengthening, inclusive policy dialogue)
3. Approach to scaling the impact of innovation (including strategies to support and learn about scaling)
4. Approach to GEI (focusing on gender equality, equity and inclusion outcomes)



5. Approach to selection of strategic priorities and allocation of resources (Thematic and geographic coverage including the breadth, depth and quality of engagement at regional and country level)

A table of the programs, including KIX, summarising findings against the five parameters is provided in Annex 4.

Box 5: Summary of five comparator programs (*programs included in the 2022 study are marked with \**)

1. **\*Schools2030**: A ten-year participatory learning improvement programme based in 1,000 government schools across ten countries. Led by Aga Khan Foundation and funded by 11 private donors plus USAID. (Launched in 2020)
2. **\*What Works hub for Global Education (WWHGE)**: A global research partnership that aims to improve how evidence is used at all levels of government and all stages of the delivery cycle to inform and implement education policies that improve learning. Led by Blavatnik School of Government (University of Oxford) and funded by UK FCDO and Gates Foundation. (Launched in 2021)
3. **\*Supporting Holistic and Actionable Research in Education (SHARE)**: A five-year cooperative agreement (2020–2025) between USAID and the University of Notre Dame that advances global education priorities to improve learning outcomes. (Launched in 2020)
4. **Learning for All Initiative (LAI)**: A research fund managed by Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) to improve global learning outcomes by uncovering the next generation of promising evidence-based approaches that can be tested, replicated, and adapted by policymakers to their local contexts. Funded by five private donors plus UK FCDO. (Launched in 2023)
5. **Knowing-Doing Network Leadership Coalition (KDNLC)**: A global impact network of 11 organisations with a common goal of learning how education systems transformation occurs, to improve access to holistic learning for children and young people. Led by Brookings Institution’s Center for Universal Education and funded by LEGO Foundation. (Launched in 2023)

### 6.3.1 Changes in context

The field of evidence generation and use in education has changed significantly in the six years since KIX was designed and launched. In previous decades, prior to KIX, the main supporters of evidence in education were multilateral organisations such as the World Bank, UNICEF and UNESCO and bilateral donors such as UK FCDO and USAID. While they are still very much active, other actors have moved into the space, most notably philanthropic donors such as Gates Foundation, Jacobs Foundation and Aga Khan Foundation have begun to fund education research programs and promote evidence use.

There has been a shift to more locally defined research priorities and co-production of knowledge with research users – increasingly at community level which has historically not so much been a focus in the field. This is coming from concerted efforts for greater localisation and decolonisation among global North donors, OECD and initiatives such as Education.org and Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE), and greater demand for evidence from education stakeholders in the global South. This latter trend has been driven by two factors: COVID-19 exposed weaknesses in education systems and introduced additional challenges to provision of inclusive education and these systems are turning to evidence to help with the recovery. Additionally, funding for education is decreasing

globally which is driving education systems to improve efficiency and make smarter decisions, both of which require evidence.

According to sources, there hasn't been a marked change in the type of research being conducted although there are signs of welcome advances in methodological approaches, according to one key informant. Among these are the incorporation of neuroscience, implementation science, behavioural science and political economy into education research, which have the potential to improve its applicability. Sources suggested that while there is more research being produced overall, there is a need for more longitudinal and cost effectiveness studies.

There has been a growth in specialist knowledge brokers whose role it is to translate research into actionable insights relevant to the needs of policy makers and practitioners. These include think tanks, NGOs, consultancies, donors and multilaterals, sometimes working in networks. There is a general recognition among education research donors that production of evidence is insufficient and as the amount of evidence has increased it has become crucial to focus on supporting uptake. Evidence synthesis is one approach which has come to the fore in recent years.

Despite greater attention to and investment in evidence synthesis and uptake, actual use of evidence in policy and practice has not markedly improved, as reported in a recent Strategic Review by UNESCO<sup>4</sup>: "Despite living in an era with a surplus of globally produced data and research, there is still limited uptake in policy, planning, and implementation."

The challenges which KIX was designed to respond to are still prevalent five years on; namely "a fragmentation of knowledge and approaches, insufficient access to tools and evidence-based research, and an absence of a strong global ecosystem to support the generation and uptake of evidence and innovations in the education sector."<sup>5</sup> While there has been more attention in addressing these challenges from a wider range of actors over the past five years, they are complex challenges requiring long term attention and coordination across the sector. When KIX was designed, it was at the leading edge of research programs designed to address these challenges and with its attention to localisation and knowledge mobilisation it has remained at the forefront of a growing group of programs with similar aims.

The following sub-sections delve into these themes in more detail by examining the five comparator programs and exploring the similarities and differences with KIX.

### 6.3.2 Types of evidence/knowledge

**Finding: KIX reflects many of the features of the comparator programs, including Southern-led research, synthesis research, participatory and systems approaches, but brings them together under one umbrella. KIX is unique in the breadth and diversity of research being produced but this could lead to a potential challenge with strategic coherence in its methodological approach.**

All five comparator programs have a core aim to generate evidence on education, yet there is variation in types of research undertaken. WWHGE and LAI are both designed to generate evidence from impact evaluations with an emphasis on economic research and a link to the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel which seeks to promote 'smart buys' in education (all three are funded by UK

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<sup>4</sup> Steiner-Khamsi et al (2024) Strategic review: Improving the use of evidence for education policy, planning and implementation. UNESCO.

<sup>5</sup> Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX): Proposal, 2019.

FCDO). WWHGE includes more synthesis of existing research and uses implementation science, whereas LAI is more focused on new research on innovations at different stages of scaling. SHARE and KDLNC have similar approaches grounded in systems thinking and implement their research through in-country partners. Schools2030 is unique in that it works at school level directly with teachers to implement its research on ‘micro-innovations’.

KIX is unique in the breadth and diversity of research being produced. It reflects many of the features of the comparator programs but brings them together under one umbrella. For example, like WWHGE it produces synthesis research and (more recently) cost-effectiveness evidence, which is highly relevant in the current context. Like LAI it is generating evidence on scalability of innovations at different stages. Like SHARE, KDLNC and Schools2030, the research is participatory and highly engaged in the systems in which it is to be used. KIX is similar to four of the comparator programs in that research is predominantly Southern-led, representing a welcome shift in the context.

One potential challenge with KIX’s breadth and diversity of its research is that there is less strategic coherence in its methodological approach than comparator programs. Schools2030 is firmly rooted in classroom research, LAI and WWHGE are predominantly funding experimental and quasi-experimental studies and SHARE has a unifying ‘evidence ecosystem’ approach across its projects. KIX is beginning to strengthen the commonalities and complementarities across its portfolio by organising funding windows around key themes; this may address this challenge.

### 6.3.3 Approach to supporting the use of evidence

**Finding: KIX is similar to most of the comparator programs in the practice of involving research users in the applied research projects from the outset, reaching community members, teachers, implementers and policy makers. KIX is unique among this set of programs in that it has a dedicated mechanism for knowledge mobilisation in the regional hubs. There is an opportunity for further cross-program coordination on evidence use at country level and the hubs could play a role in this respect.**

As noted in the general trends above, there is an increasing recognition of the importance to consider potential use of research throughout the research cycle. This is reflected in the comparator programs, all of which have stated aims to support use of evidence. The intended users and approaches vary, however.

Teachers are the primary intended users of research for Schools2030, the only program to target teachers specifically, and reaches them through direct participation in research projects. Schools2030 also works closely with policy makers through existing relationships with Aga Khan’s education programs in country and engages global audiences through high level events.

SHARE and KDLNC’s approaches are driven by an understanding of and existing engagement with the education systems at national and sub-national levels – this was a key factor in selection of research partners in both programs. Similarly, LAI selects projects to fund on the basis of existing buy-in from the implementer, whether they are government, NGO or private sector. KDLNC adds the dimension of a global network which serves a space for learning from local to global level.

WWHGE focuses attention on education and finance ministries and uses various tactics to support evidence use such as South-South exchanges, supporting government education evidence lab (EdLabs) and convening policy dialogues.

Like SHARE and KDNLC, KIX takes a systemic approach to supporting evidence use, engaging actors across education systems in policy and practice and at local, national and global levels. KIX is similar to most of the comparator programs (LAI, Schools2030, SHARE and KDNLC) in the practice of involving research users in the applied research projects from the outset, which varies from project to project but includes community members, teachers, implementers and policy makers.

KIX is unique among this set of programs in that it has a dedicated mechanism for knowledge mobilisation in the regional hubs. The hubs serve a similar function as WWHGE's convenings, Schools2030 global forum and KDNLC's impact network but do so in a more deliberate and comprehensive way. The hubs are a constant and active link between research and country education systems, with frequent and recurring interactions with stakeholders in 89 countries. While other programs have access to wider networks, for example, WWHGE and LAI are connected to the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (GEEPA) through their common donor, FCDO, and SHARE and KDNLC both tap into country networks through their partners, KIX's position in GPE's operating model gives it incomparable opportunities to align with and respond to the priorities of education systems across the world.

Given that all the comparator programs work in KIX countries and have relationships of their own with key education stakeholders, there is an opportunity for further cross-program coordination on evidence use at country level. KIX's regional hubs could play a role in this respect.

#### 6.3.4 Approach to scaling the impact of innovation

**Finding: KIX's research on scaling the impact of innovations in education (ROSIE) initiative is unique among the comparator programs as the only dedicated initiative to improve understanding of scaling in education through action research. There is an opportunity, however, for further socialisation of KIX's learning on scaling, and convening with other programs who could apply the lessons, such as LAI and Schools2030.**

Three of the comparator programs describe scaling in their approaches. Schools2030 aims to identify and incubate promising innovations to support adaptation and scale from classroom to classroom. It also aims to scale the mindset, attitudes and conditions for innovations to flourish, at Ministry, District and school levels. Schools2030 is contributing to learning about scaling innovations in schools through its membership with the School Action Learning Exchange (SALEX) network. WWHGE focuses on implementation science as a key ingredient in enabling scaling of cost-effective interventions and supports studies to test scalable models across contexts. LAI support projects which have carefully considered the potential implementation of a proposed intervention at scale. It has a dedicated funding stream to support scale-focused projects, including adaptation of proven solutions, piloting solutions in policy and practice, and scaling up piloted solutions.

The other programs, SHARE and KDNLC, don't discuss scaling explicitly beyond the aim of enhancing impact through sharing learning beyond the research countries.

Of the comparator programs, KIX is most similar to LAI in that it has an explicit approach to scaling built into the design. While LAI's approach is focused on scaling up innovations which have been tested through randomised control trials, KIX's approach is not limited to any particular methodologies. KIX and Schools2030 are the only programs which explicitly aim to contribute to learning about scaling in education although KIX is the only program which integrates this into its research. The ROSIE component of KIX is therefore unique among the comparator programs as the

only dedicated initiative to improve understanding of scaling in education through action research. There is an opportunity, however, for further socialisation of KIX's learning on scaling, and convening with other programs who could apply the lessons, such as LAI and Schools2030.

### 6.3.5 Approach to gender equality, equity and inclusion

**Finding: KIX shares the same high-level commitment to gender equality, equity and inclusion (GEI) as the comparator programs and has similar expectations for research projects to consider GEI in research design. KIX adds to this a dedicated research theme on GEI and explicitly embeds GEI in its theory of change and results framework.**

All the comparator programs include considerations of gender equality, equity and inclusion as a general principle and most include research in their portfolios which explicitly explores aspects of GEI in education<sup>6</sup>. SHARE, KDNLC and LAI all have clear expectations that research projects will be responsive to inequality and marginalisation and give researchers space to determine this based on their own contexts. WWHGE and LAI both express the aim to use evidence to support reforms which benefit the most marginalised. WWHGE has measures in place for equity in knowledge production including promoting women authors and authors from the global South. Schools2030 uses tools which embed pluralism and inclusion and train all participating teachers in 'value-based education' to help them identify their biases.

KIX shares the same high-level commitment to GEI as the comparator programs but embeds this in different ways. For instance, KIX has a dedicated research theme on GEI and a forthcoming synthesis paper drawing together the learning on evidence from projects working on this theme. Like WWHGE, KIX has measures in place to address knowledge inequities, ensuring that research from marginalised voices is included. Like SHARE, KDNLC and LAI, KIX expects all research to consider GEI in research design. One key difference is that KIX explicitly embeds GEI in its theory of change and results framework, something which was not seen in any of the comparator programs.

### 6.3.6 Approach to selection of strategic priorities and allocation of resources

**Finding: KIX's research agenda is refined through engagement with education stakeholders at country level to identify priorities. This participatory approach is similar to two of the comparator programs but is more demand-led than most. KIX's position with GPE and its regional hub mechanism allows KIX to reach a large number of countries, giving it a unique capability to identify and respond to country, regional and global trends.**

How programs decide where they work and what they work on differs. LAI accepts proposals across all low- and middle-income countries in relation to four thematic areas aligned to UK FCDO priorities: Foundational learning, girls' education, climate and education and long-term impacts of education interventions. Similarly, KDNLC didn't start with a set of target countries but selected partners on the basis of proposals; but instead of proposing research projects, prospective partners pitched their organisations as members of the network. WWHGE focuses its research on four primary countries and seven further project countries selected to build on FCDO's existing education research portfolio and align with UK priorities on foundational learning and girls' education. Schools2030 and SHARE both selected countries based on donor priorities; for Schools2030 this was a pragmatic decision to work in countries where Aga Khan Foundation has education offices, and SHARE has worked in 19 countries

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<sup>6</sup> For example, a SHARE study on language education for deaf learners, an LAI scale project on life skills for adolescent girls, and a Schools2030 projects on inclusivity of children with disabilities.

aligned with USAID’s priorities and missions. Like LAI and WWHGE, SHARE’s high-level themes are based on donor priorities, but within this the research questions are determined through a multi-stakeholder participatory process in each country based on their evidence ecosystem approach. Similarly, KDNLC’s research agenda is collaboratively developed through their impact network approach, leaning heavily on local expertise.

KIX’s approach to defining research themes is most like that of SHARE and KDNLC, where themes are initially set at high level and refined through participatory processes with education stakeholders at local level. While SHARE and Schools2030 both have country level mechanisms to respond to demand, a key difference is that KIX uses the regional hub mechanisms as a regular feedback loop to maintain relevance of research to country priorities at country, region and global levels. None of the comparator programs have a mechanism like this.

While the comparator programs tend to be confined to a smaller number of countries, often determined by donor priorities, KIX is able to work with all GPE partner countries. This gives it a far broader base for determining research priorities, more possibilities for comparative research and greater access for research uptake.

### 6.3.7 KIX’s comparative advantage

**Finding: The design of KIX, with the three interconnected mechanisms of knowledge generation, capacity strengthening, and knowledge mobilisation is distinct in the field and offers unique opportunities to use research to meet the needs and priorities of GPE partner countries and scale the impact of education innovations.**

KIX’s regional hub mechanism is unique among the comparator programs, offering an unrivalled reach into country education systems. Indeed, some of the comparator programs are keen to partner with KIX to take advantage of the regional hubs and the opportunity they provide to engage with key country education stakeholders.

KIX’s variety of research approaches, diversity of contexts and scale of knowledge generation is unique in the field, with no other initiative having comparable coverage in terms of number and diversity of countries and number of concurrent research projects.

KIX, with its partnership with Brookings Institution is a leader in the field in learning about scaling in education. However, as noted in section 6.2 above, the evidence for the instrumental uptake of KIX’s research on scaling is not yet clear. There are increasing opportunities to strengthen mobilisation of learning from ROSIE as other initiatives such as SALEX join the discussion on scaling in education.

In its design, KIX was at the forefront of many the changes which have become more notable in recent years in the knowledge arena, including a focus on Southern-led research and building in knowledge brokering strategies. While many of the comparator programs prioritise Southern-led research, these are mostly more recent additions to the field and KIX already has five years’ experience to draw on. In its new phase, KIX is increasingly meeting the need for synthesis and cost-effectiveness research, which were both highlighted as areas which need strengthening in the education evidence ecosystem.

The first recommendation of UNESCO’s recent strategic review on improving the use of evidence for education policy, planning and implementation<sup>7</sup> states “advocate for more and better evidence for policy and systems that support the use of evidence in policy, with consistent, predictable, and

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<sup>7</sup> Steiner-Khamsi, G et al, 2024

long-term funding, the involvement of local and global stakeholders, and coproduction between researchers, decision makers, and those affected by their decisions.” KIX has proven itself to be an exemplar of the kind of initiative which UNESCO is advocating for.

## 7 Conclusions

The review set out to provide an analysis and conclusions about KIX's response to the Mid-Term Evaluation in 2022, its fulfilment of its objectives and its value proposition in the broader context.

The review finds that KIX responded swiftly and comprehensively to the recommendations of the MTE, identifying priority actions and mobilising the KIX team, grantees and GPE colleagues in implementing them. All but one of the recommendations has been very well addressed through actions already taken or plans put place for longer-term progress. The review found that the recommendations to improve communication could be better addressed through more strategic consideration of the challenges in country-level communication. For most recommendations the review has highlighted opportunities for the subsequent evaluation to explore further in assessing quality of implementation.

The review finds that KIX is fulfilling its overall objective through three interconnected results areas: knowledge generation, capacity strengthening and knowledge mobilisation. KIX has been able to learn through its first five years of operation to optimise the advantages of its knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation and capacity strengthening mechanisms. This is resulting in numerous cases of research uptake and strengthened capacity. Regional hubs are creating opportunities to put research into the attention of education stakeholders across all GPE countries. The participatory nature of applied research projects is strengthening capacity and supporting uptake through the process of research.

Finally, the review has highlighted the comparative advantages of KIX in the broader education evidence ecosystem. KIX's regional hub mechanisms is unique and offers an unrivalled reach into country education systems. KIX's variety of research approaches, diversity of contexts and scale of knowledge generation is unique in the field, with no other initiative having comparable coverage. Above all, it is the combination of Southern-led, participatory research and knowledge mobilisation which centres on the expressed needs of GPE countries that sets KIX apart from comparators.



## 8 Recommendations

### For the forthcoming evaluation of KIX

1. Given the recent evaluation of applied research projects it would be valuable for the forthcoming evaluation to include primary data collection from regional hubs. Given the different approaches of the hubs in the four regions and the recent introduction of the country support mechanism, as well as strengthening of engagement with countries and research projects, this is a good opportunity for cross-hub learning. More specifically, the evaluation could include an analysis of the hubs through social network analysis in selected countries. This could help understand the dynamics of knowledge mobilization, where is knowledge come from and going to and what value the different components of KIX add along the process. It could also help communicate how KIX hubs intersect with policy and practice communities in the countries.
2. The 2024 evaluation of KIX applied research projects presents several important findings relevant to the evaluation questions of the forthcoming evaluation of KIX. It will be important of the evaluation to validate and update some of these findings in light of the broader context of KIX (beyond the applied research portfolio) and to include more recent progress reflecting many of the changes brought about in the costed extension. These include findings related to the engagement between applied research projects and other GPE mechanisms, the interaction between applied research projects and regional hubs, communication between stakeholders at national level and capacity strengthening outcomes.
3. It will be important for the forthcoming evaluation to develop a strategy to assess the effectiveness of KIX against the three ultimate outcomes to go beyond what this review was able to assess. This could include the use of a rubric to synthesise evidence from multiple sources, the use results from KIX's Research Quality Plus review process and a comprehensive approach to assessing gender equality, equity and inclusion in KIX.
4. The evaluation should consider a strategy to substantiate and analyse outcome cases. KIX has amassed a larger number of accounts of policy and practice change categorised across a range of indicators. While there is an internal review process in place to approve the outcome cases, and support to grantees to improve the quality in documenting outcome cases, there is still a need to validate and qualitatively analyse the outcome cases, which is not a simple task.
5. The evaluation should consider validating the value proposition presented in this review with a broader range of internal and external stakeholders, given that this review did not draw on a substantially wide range of perspectives. Crucially, this could include examining the value proposition at country level, where the value of KIX may be weighed differently than at program or global level.

### For KIX more generally

6. Distinguish more strictly between the hubs as regional multi-stakeholder networks of education actors, and the regional learning partners as the coordinating entity for the hubs. The hub is more than the RLP and the investment of KIX has established these networks as important learning and knowledge exchange spaces in their own right. This is increasingly

more important as RLPs take on the additional role of country support, which may or may not draw on the hub.

7. Consider paying more attention in MEL processes to the implementation of the country support mechanism and strengthening links between hubs and research projects. These are both strategic priorities for KIX and could benefit from more fine-tuned monitoring. For example, it is important to hear from projects how they are leveraging hubs, not just the perspective of hubs.
8. Consider changes in the use of outcome cases for monitoring. The quantity of outcomes being documented by grantees is not only a burden on the grantees themselves, but also makes it difficult to identify and substantiate highly significant outcomes. Focusing on fewer outcomes but investing more in improving quality and significance could enhance learning among projects and the program as a whole. This could also unlock capacity to build in additional steps in the review process to substantiate outcome cases to ensure quality, accuracy and highlight notable outcomes.

## 9 Annex 1: List of documents reviewed

1. GPE reports
  - a. GPE Results Report 2020
  - b. GPE Results Report 2021
  - c. GPE Results Report 2022
  - d. GPE Results Report 2023
  - e. GPE Annual Report 2021
  - f. GPE Annual Report 2022
  - g. GPE Annual Report 2023
2. KIX Annual Reports
  - a. KIX Annual Report 2019-2020
  - b. KIX Annual Report 2020-2021
  - c. KIX Annual Report 2021-2022
  - d. KIX Annual Report 2022-2023
  - e. KIX Annual Report 2023-2024
3. KIX program documents
  - a. KIX original proposal
  - b. KIX extension proposal
  - c. KIX 1.0 theory of change
  - d. KIX 2.0 theory of change
  - e. KIX 1.0 results framework
  - f. KIX 2.0 results framework
  - g. KIX theory of change and results framework: Summary of changes
  - h. KIX contributions to GPE's operating model
  - i. KIX contributions to GPE partner countries' priorities
  - j. Country support mechanism guidelines
  - k. Inter-hub meeting on the country support mechanism
  - l. Concept note: Strengthening systematic interactions between KIX hubs and applied research projects
  - m. Inter-hub meeting on the connections between KIX hubs and research projects
  - n. KIX comms and outreach strategy
  - o. KIX 2.0 scoping studies
  - p. KIX 2.0 calls for applied research projects
  - q. Announcements of newly funded research projects as part of KIX 2.0 calls
  - r. KIX portfolio (master spreadsheet 2020-2027)
4. MTE documents
  - a. KIX mid-term evaluation report, exec sum, annexes
  - b. IDRC MTE management response
  - c. GPE MTE Management response
  - d. KIX MTE status update/GPE MOPAN assessment information
5. KIX MEL sources
  - a. In-depth analysis of the monitoring data with a focus on GEI
  - b. In-depth analysis of the monitoring data with a focus on knowledge mobilization

- c. Phase 1 report of the KIX applied research evaluation
  - d. Phase 2 report of the KIX applied research evaluation
  - e. IDRC applied research evaluation management response
  - f. Annual country representatives pulse survey
  - g. KIX monitoring data and information
6. KIX research and knowledge mobilisation outputs
- a. ROSIE outputs
  - b. Lessons learned about promoting knowledge production and utilization in LMICs
  - c. Article: 3 outcomes of evidence co-creation
  - d. Article: UNICEF co-creation research
  - e. Blog series on knowledge mobilization
7. Sources on the external context
- a. Comparator Analysis of Global Education Knowledge Exchange Initiatives in GPE Partner Countries
  - b. Original KIX 'market' analysis (slide deck)
  - c. Strategic Review: Improving the Use of Evidence for Education Policy, Planning and Implementation
  - d. OTT report on evidence uptake in education
  - e. Chapter of a forthcoming book edited by NORRAG on knowledge brokering for education systems
  - f. Article: It's past time to fix the broken international architecture for education
  - g. Article: The pathway to progress on SDG 4 requires the global education architecture to focus on foundational learning and to hold ourselves accountable for achieving it
8. Sources on comparator programs
- a. Schools2030: Design Thinking for Teacher Innovations Assessing the Process
  - b. Schools2030: Global Evaluation Strategy
  - c. Schools2030: Theory of change
  - d. Schools2030: Annual report 2021
  - e. Schools2030: Annual report 2023
  - f. Schools2030: Phase 2 strategy
  - g. WWHGE: Improving implementation to improve learning outcomes: The What Works hub for Global Education
  - h. WWHGE: Annual review 2024
  - i. WWHGE: Business case
  - j. SHARE: SHARE 2021-2023 Research Studies
  - k. SHARE: One page overview
  - l. SHARE: Presentation to BE2 KSS Community
  - m. SHARE: Annual report 2021
  - n. SHARE: Quarterly report, June 2022
  - o. LAI: Request for Proposals for Education Research
  - p. LAI: Annual review 2023-24
  - q. LAI: Business case
  - r. LAI: The next generation of rigorous education research: J-PAL launches the Learning for All Initiative

- s. KDNL: Frequently asked questions

## 10 Annex 2: List of interviews

### 10.1 Interviews conducted

Interview type	Name / Org	Q1	Q2	Q3
GPE Secretariat	Ian Macpherson, GPE KIX program lead, GPE	✓	✓	✓
GPE Secretariat (joint interview)	Fazle Rabbani, Former Regional Manager East and Southern Africa, GPE, and Nilse Ryman, Former Regional Manager for Eastern Europe, Middle East and Central Asia; Asia & Pacific; and Latin America and the Caribbean, GPE	✓	✓	
IDRC KIX	Naser Faruqi, Director of Education and Science and KIX Executive Committee, IDRC	✓	✓	
IDRC KIX	Tricia Wind, KIX Program Lead, IDRC	✓	✓	✓
IDRC KIX	Serhiy Kovalchuk, Program Officer, IDRC	✓	✓	
IDRC KIX	Hamidou Boukary, Senior Program Specialist, IDRC	✓	✓	
Comparator program	Bronwen Magrath, Schools2030 Global Manager, Aga Khan Foundation			✓
Comparator program	Grace Cannon, Senior Project Manager, Knowing-Doing Network Leadership Coalition, Brookings Institution			✓
Landscape perspective	Maria Brindlmayer, Head of Secretariat, Building Evidence in Education & Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (GEEAP)			✓
Landscape perspective	Emma Broadbent, independent consultant (Co-author of OTT paper)			✓

## 11 Annex 3: Short list of comparator programs

Programs were identified and short listed from sources provided by IDRC and the GPE Secretariat, including a 2022 comparator analysis commissioned by KIX, a 2024 paper from OTT Consulting commissioned by BE2, and a 2018 Education Commission report. Suggestions were also provided by IDRC and the GPE Secretariat.

The short-listed programs were assessed against selection criteria:

1. Aims to support evidence and innovation in education
2. Supports education systems in lower and/or lower-middle income countries
3. Works with multiple countries (>=5) and multiple regions (>=2)
4. Include at least two of KIX’s key approaches: knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation and capacity strengthening.

A final selection of up to five programs which met the criteria was made with the aim of limiting the number of programs from the same donor. Of the five programs which met the criteria and were funded by UK FCDO, two were selected which best matched KIX’s scope and were still operational.

### 11.1 Programs which meet all criteria

*(Green = meets criteria, Red = does not meet criteria, Yellow = unsure, Blue = selected program)*

Program name	Source	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4
<a href="#">Schools2030 Global Program by Aga Khan Foundation</a> (KIX GRANTEE)	2022 Comparator Analysis of Global Education Knowledge Exchange Initiatives in GPE Partner Countries	Yes	Yes	Yes (10 countries in Africa, LAC, Asia and Europe)	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation)
<a href="#">FCDO EdTech hub</a>	2022 Comparator analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes (7 countries in Asia, and Africa)	Yes (knowledge generation, capacity strengthening)
<a href="#">FCDO What Works hub for Global Education (WWGE)</a>	2022 Comparator analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes (4 primary countries in Asia and Africa and 7 further countries)	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation)
<a href="#">USAID SHARE</a>	2022 Comparator analysis	Yes	Yes	Yes (19 countries in Africa, Asia and LAC)	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation)
<a href="#">FCDO’s Girls Education Challenge</a>	2024 OTT report: What does the evidence about “evidence uptake” in education	Yes	Yes	Yes (17 countries in Africa and Asia)	Yes (knowledge generation, capacity strengthening)

<a href="#">Learning for All Initiative</a> by J-PAL	IDRC KIX suggestion	Yes	Yes	Likely but unknown so far as recently started	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation; also focus on scaling)
<a href="#">Knowing-Doing Network Leadership Coalition</a> by Brookings	IDRC KIX suggestion	Yes	Yes	Yes (it's a network of organisations in 11 countries in Africa, Asia, LAC and North America)	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation)
FCDO's <a href="#">RISE</a>	IDRC KIX suggestion	Yes	Yes	Yes (7 countries in Africa and Asia)	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation)

## 11.2 Programs which do not meet all criteria

(Green = meets criteria, Red = does not meet criteria, Yellow = unsure)

Program name	Source	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4
<a href="#">UNESCO-The Global Education Coalition</a>	2022 Comparator analysis	Yes	Yes	Unclear (it's a coalition not a program)	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation, capacity strengthening)
<a href="#">Global Education Evidence Advisory Group</a>	2024 OTT report: What does the evidence about "evidence uptake" in education	Yes	Yes	Unsure (does not work in specific countries but generated broadly applicable reports)	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation)
<a href="#">Evidence in Education Network hosted by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)</a>	2024 OTT report	Yes	Yes (not exclusively)	Unclear (it's a network not a program)	Yes (knowledge generation, capacity strengthening)
<a href="#">Jacobs Foundation's School Learning Action Exchange (SALEX)</a>	2024 OTT report	Yes	Yes	Unclear (it's a learning community not a program)	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation)



<a href="#">USAID’s Data Ecosystems for Development in Education (DECODE) Activity</a>	2024 OTT report	Yes	Yes	Unclear (no countries specified)	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation, capacity strengthening)
<a href="#">Education Sub Saharan Africa (ESSA)</a>	2022 Comparator analysis	Yes	Yes	No (4 countries in Africa)	Yes (knowledge mobilisation, capacity strengthening)
<a href="#">Jacobs Foundation’s EdLabs</a>	2024 OTT report	Yes	Yes	No (4 countries in Africa, LAC and Europe)	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation)
<a href="#">Global Education Program by The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation</a>	2022 Comparator analysis	Yes	Yes	No (3 states in India and 2-3 countries in SSA)	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation, capacity strengthening)
<a href="#">Education Workforce Initiative (EWI)</a>	2018 Education Commission report: Investing in Knowledge Sharing to Advance SDG 4	Yes	Yes	No (3 countries in Africa and Asia)	Yes (knowledge generation, knowledge mobilisation)
<a href="#">Education.org (Insights for Education)</a>	2022 Comparator analysis	Yes	Yes	No (2 countries in Africa and expanding)	Yes (knowledge mobilisation, capacity strengthening)

## 12 Annex 4: Summary of comparator programs

COMPARATOR PROGRAM	TYPES OF EVIDENCE/KNOWLEDGE	APPROACH TO SUPPORTING THE USE OF EVIDENCE	APPROACH TO SCALING THE IMPACT OF INNOVATION	APPROACH TO GEI	APPROACH TO SELECTION OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES
1. KIX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applied, southern-led research in more than 70 countries.</li> <li>Evidence on promising education system innovations.</li> <li>Thematic syntheses.</li> <li>Synthesis of policy and practice responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide range of evidence users at local, national, regional and global level.</li> <li>Regional hubs for knowledge mobilisation and capacity strengthening of country education stakeholders.</li> <li>Projects supported with knowledge mobilisation strategies.</li> <li>KIX’s participatory and applied research approach seeks to involve research users from the outset.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applied research projects aim to support the scaling of promising and proven innovations.</li> <li>ROSIE initiative designed to work with projects to study issues related to scaling in education and strengthen capacity of researchers to build scaling into their projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender equality, equity and inclusion (GEI) is one of the research themes with projects focused on it.</li> <li>All research projects consider GEI dimensions with varying coverage and intensity.</li> <li>GEI is embedded in output and outcome monitoring.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broad research themes prioritised through country engagement to identify demand.</li> <li>Works with 89 low- and middle-income countries that are partners of GPE.</li> <li>Regional hubs convene a network of governmental and non-governmental education stakeholders from each country to maintain relevance.</li> </ul>
2. Schools2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher-led learning on school-level ‘micro-innovations’.</li> <li>Cross-school and cross-country research on how to improve learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers are the primary intended users of evidence, primarily through direct involvement in research and secondarily through local, national and global forums.</li> <li>Uptake is supported through Aga Khan Foundation’s established relationships with local education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From classroom to classroom: incubating promising innovations to support adaptation and scale.</li> <li>Classroom to system level: scaling the mindset, attitudes and conditions for innovations to flourish.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pluralism and inclusion are foundations of the tools they use (VITAL: valuing inclusion in teaching and learning)</li> <li>All teachers go through the ‘value-based education’ program which helps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 countries selected based on presence of existing Aga Khan Foundation programs and relationships with education stakeholders.</li> <li>Program designed differently in each country in collaboration</li> </ul>

		stakeholders in each country.		them identify their biases.	with national advisory committee.
<b>3. WWHGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthesis of existing rigorous evidence.</li> <li>• New evidence on cost effectiveness of student learning interventions with an emphasis on implementation science.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and finance ministries are primary intended users.</li> <li>• Aims to increased state capability to produce, invest in, and use evidence, e.g. through EdLabs, policy dialogues and South-South immersion visits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on implementation science as a key ingredient in enabling scaling of cost-effective interventions.</li> <li>• Efficacy+ studies test scalable models across contexts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed to contribute to FCDO’s Girls’ Education Action Plan.</li> <li>• Measures in place for equity in knowledge production including women authors and authors from the global South.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8-10 countries selected based on alignment of priorities with UK policy, World Bank and GPE.</li> </ul>
<b>4. SHARE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-country and cross-region research on foundation skills development, higher education, and education in crisis and conflict.</li> <li>• Research led by Southern-based partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept of evidence ecosystems is the core of SHARE’s approach: first, understand the system, then draw on the system actors to define the research, then strengthen capacity of the system to use evidence.</li> <li>• Advisory boards act as brokers of research and include Ministry officials, development partners and academics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generalising lessons from country to regional and global.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stated aim to include the perspective of marginalized and highly vulnerable populations, especially women.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 countries in USAID geographic regions</li> <li>• High level themes are from USAID’s learning priorities.</li> <li>• Research agendas established through participatory process.</li> </ul>
<b>5. LAI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact evaluations of new innovations and interventions at larger scale and in new contexts.</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary research involving economists and cognitive psychologists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stated aim to bridge the gap between research and policy by summarizing research insights and supporting policymakers to use evidence.</li> <li>• Projects expected to demonstrate demand for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of scaling is one of the selection criteria. LAI favours projects with active partnerships with government.</li> <li>• Specific grants available for innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects encouraged to consider inequality and marginalization across a range of demographic factors and how evidence can combat discrimination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research themes decided at proposal stage and aligned to UK FCDO’s priorities.</li> <li>• Countries depend on research proposals</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority for southern-led research.</li> <li>• Four main themes: Foundational learning, girls' education, climate and education and long-term impacts of education interventions.</li> </ul>	evidence and strategies to catalyse use of evidence at proposal stage.	adaptation, policy pilots and ready-to-scale projects.	
<b>6. KDNLC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southern-led applied research on implementation of policy and practice related to inclusive breadth of skills.</li> <li>• Research agenda developed by local CSOs in collaboration with local partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended users identified at country level based on CSO partner's existing relationships in the local education policy ecosystems.</li> <li>• At global level, the approach is decentralised and draws on the ideas of impact networks for diffusion of learning from local level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No formal consideration of scaling.</li> <li>• Consideration of Equity and inclusion are contextually driven based on the research partners' understanding of what matters in that country.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 countries selected through competitive process, selected for organisations with capacity, networking and mission.</li> <li>• Research agenda developed after selection of partners and in collaboration.</li> </ul>

## 13 Annex 5: Review matrix

Review question	Sub-questions to guide the review	Sources of data	Analysis approach	Review criteria and standards for answering the review question
1. To what extent and how well have recommendations from the 2022 MTE been addressed?	<p>a. To what extent have the commitments in the management response to the MTE been implemented successfully?</p> <p>b. What, if any, are the challenges in implementing these and how have they been addressed?</p> <p>c. What actions to address the recommendations are still in progress or planned to be implemented in the future?</p> <p>d. Which recommendations, if any, have not yet been addressed in previous actions or in future plans?</p>	<p>Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GPE reports</li> <li>- KIX Annual Reports</li> <li>- KIX program documents</li> <li>- MTE documents</li> </ul> <p>Interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GPE Secretariat</li> <li>- IDRC KIX</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Qualitative analysis</li> <li>- Internal triangulation</li> </ul>	<p>A three-part rubric will be used:</p> <p><u>Very well addressed:</u> Clear evidence that most (&gt;75%) of the actions committed to in the GPE management response have been implemented or have plans in place for implementation.</p> <p><u>Well addressed:</u> Clear evidence that some (50-75%) of the actions have been implemented or have plans in place for implementation</p> <p><u>Not very well addressed:</u> Little or no evidence that majority of actions have been implemented or plans in place for implementation.</p>
2. Is KIX fulfilling its overall objective, i.e., supporting partner countries to have and use the evidence and innovation they need to accelerate access, learning	<p>a. To what extent is KIX achieving its milestones as planned?</p> <p>b. Which milestones, if any, are not being met and how is this explained?</p> <p>c. What challenges has KIX encountered towards fulfilling its objective?</p>	<p>Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GPE reports</li> <li>- KIX Annual Reports</li> <li>- KIX program documents</li> <li>- KIX MEL documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Qualitative analysis</li> <li>- Quantitative analysis of monitoring data</li> <li>- Internal triangulation</li> </ul>	<p>Program results will be assessed against milestones and targets as defined in the program results framework.</p>

<p>outcomes, and gender equality through equitable, inclusive, and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century?</p>	<p>d. To what extent and how do the changes made to KIX since the MTE contribute to its objectives?</p> <p>e. To what extent is KIX generating high-quality evidence of what works in improving education systems and how that can be scaled equitably and sustainably?</p> <p>f. To what extent is KIX strengthening capacity to integrate evidence into policy and practice that promotes GEI?</p> <p>g. To what extent is KIX promoting the use of knowledge and innovations in policy and practice, both in specific policy opportunities, and on a more routine basis?</p> <p>h. What, if any, are the unintended, positive and negative, results produced by KIX and to what extent do these contribute to its objectives?</p>	<p>- KIX research and knowledge mobilisation outputs</p> <p>Interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GPE Secretariat</li> <li>- IDRC KIX</li> </ul> <p>Focus group discussion with GPE regional managers</p>	
<p>3. How does KIX align with and add value to, the broader evidence-based dialogue and knowledge exchange architecture (globally, regionally and at country level)?</p>	<p>a. To what extent has the broader evidence-based dialogue and knowledge exchange architecture in the education sector changed since KIX was launched and how has KIX adapted to such changes, if any?</p> <p>b. What are the similarities and differences between KIX and other programs working to strengthen evidence and innovation in education systems in lower and lower-middle income countries?</p> <p>c. To what extent does KIX fill key gaps in the broader evidence-based dialogue and knowledge exchange architecture which are relevant for the aims of GPE 2025?</p>	<p>Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GPE reports</li> <li>- KIX Annual Reports</li> <li>- KIX program documents</li> <li>- Sources on the external context</li> <li>- Additional documentation found on comparator organisation websites</li> </ul> <p>Interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GPE Secretariat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Qualitative analysis</li> <li>- Internal triangulation</li> </ul> <p>KIX's unique value proposition will be assessed against the comparison parameters defined in the comparator analysis approach.</p>

<p>d. To what extent does KIX duplicate efforts served by other initiatives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- IDRC KIX</li><li>- Comparator programs</li></ul> <p>Focus group discussion with GPE regional managers</p>
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