

# **ENHANCING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE PROGRAMME IN ERITREA**

## **PROGRESS REPORT TO THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION**

**February 2015 - January 2016**



Ingullet Nomadic School, Sub-Zoba Golij, Zoba Gash Barka. Dawit Habte April 2015

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## Programme Summary

<b>Country</b>	Eritrea
<b>Programme/ Project Name</b>	Enhancing Equitable Access to Quality Basic Education for Social Justice
<b>Donor</b>	Global Partnership for Education
<b>PBA Reference</b>	SC 140006; SC 140237
<b>Total contribution from GPE</b>	<b>US\$ \$16,567,231.32</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$15,339,599.48 under Grant SC140006 for programme implementation</li> <li>• \$740,720 under grant SC140237* for supervision allocation</li> </ul>
<b>Programmable amount</b>	US\$ 15,339,599.48
<b>Funds used to date</b>	US\$ \$11,042,602.46
<b>Unspent Balance</b>	US\$ \$4,296,997.02
<b>Duration of Grant</b>	March 2014 – December 2016
<b>Report Type</b>	Progress Report
<b>Reporting period</b>	February 2015 - January 2016
<b>Report Due Date</b>	22 February, 2016
<b>Geographic Focus area</b>	National
<b>Focus Population</b>	Disadvantaged communities in Zobas Anseba, Gash Barka, Northern Red Sea and Southern Red Sea. The target is 44,576 out-of-school children (at least 18,722 females) to be enrolled into elementary education and 30,000 adult women and men to benefit from adult education.
<b>Programme Partners</b>	Ministry of Education, Education Working Group, Ministry of National Development and UNICEF
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## **List of abbreviations**

CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CEE	Complementary Elementary Education
DML	Desired Mastery Level
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESP	Education Sector Plan
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
MLA	Monitoring of Learning Achievement
MML	Minimum Mastery Level
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoND	Ministry of National Development
MTE	Mother Tongue Education
RWP	Rolling Work Plan
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SNE	Special Needs Education
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar

## **1. Introduction**

This report is a continuation of the previous Global Partnership for Education (GPE) donor report submitted in February 2015. It will focus on the summary of GPE implemented activities from January 2015 to December 2015.

The GPE program is contributing to the overall objectives of basic education as stated in the Government of State Eritrea (GOSE) Education Sector Plan (ESP 2013-2017), especially in terms of increasing access and enrolment and also to ensure retention and completion at primary school. It also contributes to improving the quality of education to enable the attainment of the desired learning outcomes and system-strengthening of the education sector.

The ESP 2013-2017 prioritizes three components: increase equitable access to basic education (pre-primary, elementary and middle school), secondary, technical and vocational education; improve the quality of basic, secondary, technical and vocational (develop vocational, technical and technological skills) education; and strengthen institutional capacity to deliver better quality education services.

The 2010 National Education Policy underlines the Ministry of Education's commitment to reach the unreached and the goal of creating a literate society that can provide good quality education to all children and at all levels. It calls for the provision of free and compulsory basic education; the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at the elementary level; and the expansion of secondary and tertiary education opportunities, as the most essential components of the education system. It also provides alternative options for those who may not benefit from these formal provisions. These include Complementary Elementary Education (CEE) for children who fail to enrol into elementary school at the right age, nomadic education for pastoral communities, and adult literacy, which targets adults who have not had educational opportunities.

In 2013, the Government of Eritrea received a grant of USD 25.3 million to implement the "Enhancing Equitable Access to Quality Basic Education for Social Justice" programme through the Ministry of Education. UNICEF was designated as the Coordinating Agency and Supervising Entity of the grant.

## **2. Background**

One of the major challenges that Eritrea faces is large numbers of out-of-school children; according to the 2011/12 EMIS, over 222,291 children of school age (53% of them female) were out of school. Of those children, 111,889 children were in the age range of 7 to 11, and 110,402 children were aged 12 to 14. The out-of-school children are mainly concentrated in four (4) disadvantaged Zobas of Anseba, Gash Barka, Northern Red Sea and Southern Red Sea. In addition, it was also noted that within the four Zobas, there were high adult illiteracy rates and gender disparities; impacting negatively on efforts to deliver quality education through active community involvement.

To respond to these challenges, the GPE-funded programme aimed at working with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to increase equitable access to quality basic education for at least 44,720 children and 30,000 adults from the four most disadvantaged regions of Anseba, Gash Barka, Northern Red Sea and Southern Red Sea. The results also focus on improvement of the quality of education and strengthening the institutional capacity of the MoE and subnational education systems.

### **3. Resources used**

To achieve these results, resources totalling US\$ 26,750,000 were sourced from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) for realising these results; where US\$ 25.3 million was allocated for direct programme implementation by MoE, and US\$ 740,720 was for UNICEF operational costs to support the dual role of Supervising Entity and Coordinating Agency. UNICEF contributed an additional US \$ 650,000 to supplement the operational and administrative costs, as well as to the technical and in-kind resources.

### **4. Results achieved**

The overall goal is for the GPE funded programme is to contribute to achieving equitable access, improving the quality of education and further developing the capacity of the MoE; which would in turn translate into improved retention and completion rates, higher learning outcomes and the mastery of core subjects among children in disadvantaged communities, as well as increased adult literacy in the four target regions/zobas: Anseba, Gash Barka, Northern Red Sea and Southern Red Sea. The programme results were grouped into three key outcomes:

**4.1 Access:** The following results were the focus in this component:

- Constructing 300 low-cost semi-permanent classrooms which will serve at least 15,000 pupils for nomadic schools. 25,000 of the targeted beneficiaries will be enrolled in the underutilized schools through community mobilization. Construction of one boarding school for 400 students, 40 ECE centres for 2,000 young learners and an additional 2000 through community mobilization to be served in the underutilized ECE, 8 SNE classrooms for 240 learners and 6 new classrooms in Keren School for the Deaf to cater for 80 children.,
- Providing teaching and learning materials and resources to students and teachers in newly established classrooms in elementary schools, middle schools, ECE, CEE centres and SNE classrooms.
- Training teachers and facilitators by identifying and selecting trainee teachers from the disadvantaged communities and deploy them to the targeted areas.
- Addressing literacy of 30,000 illiterate adults in 45 CEE centres in the spirit of community ownership.

**4.1.1 Increased enrolment:** As a result, disadvantaged rural communities in the four Zobas recorded improved enrolment with an additional 45,400 students in elementary school and in middle school (with an additional, 500 out of school children). The ECD and CEE centres, as well as the Special Needs Education classrooms, strengthened effective teaching and learning to ensure successful completion of the enrolled students. It is important to note that due to concerted community mobilisation efforts, 15,895 out-of-school children (5,904 of them females) have so far enrolled as a direct result of GPE support. Of these, 5,180 (1,495 of them females) enrolled in the existing underutilized classrooms. The remaining 10,715 (4,409 of them girls) enrolled in

temporary learning spaces that were specifically created by community members at some of the GPE targeted sites. The enrolment rates for adult learners is even more impressive and the programme is on track to achieve its targets. So far, 20,881 adults (of whom 18,261 are females) are registered and are participating in adult education and complementary elementary education (CEE).

#### **4.1.2. Pre-service teacher training for new teachers from disadvantaged groups**

Progress was made in the training and deployment of 384 new teachers (138 female) out of whom 274 are for elementary level, 80 for Early Childhood Education and 30 for Special Needs Education. About 559 adult educators (290 female) and 120 Complementary Elementary Education facilitators were also trained and deployed.

A total of 274 elementary teachers received pre-service training in summer for two months and they continue their education through distance-learning in teaching Methodology, Pedagogy, Mathematics, English, Science as well as mother-tongue instruction. These 274 teachers will be certified and will graduate during the summer of 2016. They are working in existing GPE selected sites and 10,715 children are benefiting from services by these trained teachers.

**4.2 Quality:** The results in this component focussed on national aspects of the programme aiming at the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in basic education with particular attention to:

- Reviewing the existing curriculum and development and provision of teachers' guides and student text books (Citizenship Education text books, Physical Education resource books, ICT text books and the re-printing of text books for Grades 1, 2 and 6)
- Developing tools for the delivery of quality teaching and care in ECCE centres.
- Promoting and strengthening of mother tongue education.
- Conducting in-service Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities for teachers to foster effective teaching in schools in the four target Zobas.
- Introducing, strengthening and consolidating school support systems in the targeted schools and CEE centres through the provision of multi-media materials and equipment, science kits, libraries, laboratories, learning corners and e-learning course products

**4.2.1 Mother-tongue education:** There were ongoing efforts to train teachers, conduct refresher courses, and to develop instructional materials for Mother Tongue Education (MTE) to ensure effective application of mother tongue as a medium of instruction, especially through nomadic education; 278 (41 female) mother-tongue teachers; an additional 130 mother tongue teachers strengthened their knowledge and skills in orthography of Nara and Kunama languages. The mother tongue is used to enhance literacy and numeracy and give children the opportunity to speak and participate in their language freely, thus giving them self-confidence. It also enriches the teaching and learning environment.

The development of teaching textbooks and teacher guides for Grade 7 was completed and language committees were established. Twenty listening cassettes, each with songs, poems and rhymes for the nine ethnic languages were prepared and disseminated.

**4.2.2 Continuous Professional Development:** Professional development activities were supported where 93 female teachers (out of 166 who enrolled) completed a two-year training to upgrade to diploma level in the last two summer programmes. This initiative was introduced to reduce the gap in the Ministry between elementary school female teachers (37.5%) and middle school female teachers (17.2%).

In addition, 486 uncertified teachers (of whom 188 are female) were trained and 230 teachers graduated and were certified in the second summer programme. Another 256 teachers will graduate in the 2016 summer program after one-year of distance education and they will continue to receive tutorial support while teaching.

Refresher training for 260 teachers (83 female) in multi-grade teaching was held in Gash-Barka and Northern Red Sea Zobas in order to deliver the curriculum in contexts of low enrolment due to sparse populations. In some schools such as ‘Rbda Laylay’ in Gash Barka, class sizes are less than 15, (such as Grade 4 with 12 students and Grade 5 with 4 students). Multi-grade teaching is thus adopted as a strategy to balance between teacher deployment and minimum student numbers. The programme is therefore enhancing the chances that every child can have access to a trained teacher.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that lack of health services is one of the factors that leads to increased students' absenteeism and dropouts. Hence, the strengthening of the school-based health support system contributes towards enhancing retention. To this effect, 580 school health focal persons were trained and equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to implement school health services in their schools. They were trained in first aid, child-friendly services, growth-monitoring and referral. In addition, 26 ICT master trainers, 52 school directors and 56 teachers were trained in summer 2015 in ICT. This initiative complemented the support to equip schools with IT equipment from other donors mainly the African Development Bank.

As a result, quality of teaching and learning has improved in elementary, middle, ECD and adult literacy centres through strengthening the enabling environment focussing both students and teachers. This result was achieved through curriculum adjustment, promotion of mother-tongue education, modification of teachers' guides and students textbooks, teachers' refresher trainings, and other professional development activities for teachers.

#### **4.2.3 Curriculum review and development of instructional materials:**

Development and printing of new textbooks for all subjects and grades except Physical Education for Grades 3-5, and ICT for Grade 8 was successfully done which the Ministry of Education to maintain the national pupil-to-textbook ratio of 1:1 at elementary level.

Citizenship education is a subject that was introduced recently for Grades 4-8 to teach students about their society, cultural values and to enhance peace-building. It targets upper-elementary and lower-secondary levels; in this regard, 200,000 copies of the citizenship education textbooks and teachers' guides for Grades 4-8 were printed and disseminated to benefit 280,000 students.

The MoE organized a dissemination workshop for 1,146 elementary and middle-level teachers to familiarize them with the citizenship education materials. With regard to Physical Education, 2,300 copies of the physical education resource books for grades 3-5 were translated into eight languages and will benefit 140,000 students.

In addition, 75,000 textbooks and teachers guides for ICT (Grade 8) are currently in print and will be disseminated to benefit 11,000 students.

With funding from the GPE programme, the MOE is also in the process of re-printing 800,000 textbooks for four core subjects: Maths, Science, English and mother tongue. Three subjects (Maths, Science and mother tongue) will be printed in nine languages. 15,000 Teachers' Guides for Grades 1, 2 and 6 Maths, Science, English and mother tongue is ongoing. Re-printing for Grade 1 Mathematics, Tigrigna and Science will be completed and disseminated in March 2016, to benefit 150,000 students.

**4.2.4 Provision of different learning materials:** At least 15,549 children have so far benefited from the provision of different learning materials, particularly those learners attending Complementary Elementary Education (CEE) who benefitted from the procurement and distribution of 682 benches, 270 blackboards, 30 cupboards, 120 chairs, 30 tables and 30 shelves. The CEE centres also received different teaching aids. In addition, 30,000 students from nomadic schools and CEE centers in the four Zobas received learning and scholastic materials.

**4.2.5 Tools for quality ECCE delivery:** In order to enhance the delivery of quality education and care in Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres, the Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) was translated into eight local languages. A workshop was conducted for 815 participants including regional ECE supervisors and ECE teachers, to introduce to them about the five developmental domains and the concept of ELDS.

The GPE funding also contributed towards the printing of 1,100 early learning and development standards (ELDS) in 5 languages to benefit all the existing ECCE centers. Kindergarten (KG) Teachers' Guides 1 & 2 were reviewed and updated during the process of preparing ELDS documentation. A consultative workshop was conducted with Mother Tongue panel members, selected ECE teachers, Directors, Supervisors and language experts to refine all the reviewed and translated materials. At the Zoba level workshops were conducted for ECE directors, teachers and supervisors to get familiarized with ECE documents and learn how to make low cost/no cost play materials.

### **4.3. Institutional capacity**

In this component management and monitoring capacity of the central MoE was strengthened; and the capacity of education departments reinforced to deliver quality basic education in effective and efficient ways. The following results were achieved:

- Building the capacity of national and Zoba staff in educational research methodology to foster the updating of the institutional knowledge base through findings of targeted research and studies.
- Supportive capacity building were events organized for different level of education staff in order to strengthen in the areas of EMIS
- Monitoring, planning, management and financial management.

**4.3.1 Policy development:** Formulation and dissemination of the inclusive Education Policy was successfully done where 600 copies were made available and 100 higher level educators and other stakeholders were involved throughout the process. Further dissemination was also conducted through workshops in all six Zobas with a total of 300 participants which involved Zoba and sub-Zoba education officers, directors, supervisors, teachers as well as representatives from other stakeholders.

**4.3.2 Enhanced school support systems:** Capacity building efforts for the National Examination System to improve the analysis of data obtained from the national examinations and to enhance the provision of information regarding the achievements of students and schools is one of the key aspects of the GPE funded programme. A total of 300 MoE staff and teachers were trained to enhance assessments through the national examinations system. Analysis of four core subjects: Mathematics, English, Science and Social Studies, were undertaken and the reports were disseminated throughout the regions. Approximately 578 (92 of them female) school directors, supervisors, sub Zoba education heads, and Zoba EMIS officials were trained in Education Management Information Systems (EMIS). As a result, the trainees are providing on-the-job training to their supervisees on monitoring and follow-up of EMIS data collection.

During the year under review, engagement with MoE team was on a regular basis to enhance GPE implementation. The UNICEF GPE task team and MoE, MoND and UNICEF tripartite group meets every two months. The UNICEF Regional Director Leila Pakkala conducted two missions to advocate with GOSE to expedite GPE implementation. The Education Sector Working Group comprising of MoE partners, UNICEF, and other international and national organizations along with civil society representatives was mandated to provide oversight to the programme. However, meetings have been irregular.

**4.3.3 Training in research methods:** Funding from the GPE programme was instrumental in the training of 40 (2 of them female) MoE research staff from national headquarters and regional offices in basic methods of educational research. As a follow-up action, each Zoba has selected a study area or research area which it will provide to the MoE and UNICEF. The MoE will consequently identify six priority study areas based on the contextualised necessity of the region. Some of the trainees are participating in the ongoing national study on out-of-school children.

**4.3.4. Education sector review:** In May 2015 a delegation of eight senior officials from the Ministry of National Development, the Ministry of Education and UNICEF Eritrea embarked on a three-week mission to Zambia to participate in the Zambia Annual Education Sector Review. The purpose of the mission was to enhance the capacity of the Eritrean delegation in conducting education sector reviews in which all stakeholders (national, community, civil society, international organisations, children, as well as other sectors) are involved, and to enable the team to plan and conduct the first ever Education Sector Review in Eritrea when they return.

The objective was also to strengthen participation of the Education Working Group (EWG) in the implementation of the Education Sector Development Plan (2013-2017). The delegation submitted their report in January 2016 in which they recommended the establishment of a Joint Annual Review Task Team of the EWG to develop a timeline for conducting the Eritrea Education Sector Review in 2016

## **5. Challenges and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Challenges faced:**

**5.1.1 Resource absorption:** The MoE inability to absorb the resources disbursed to for the implementation of activities was the greatest challenge faced during the year. The MOE requested funds totaling US\$ 3.7million to embark on classroom construction. However, those funds were returned to UNICEF after a period of more than six months. Following a series of meetings and assurances that the necessary capacity had been mobilised, and that other constraints had been addressed, the MOE requested the release of funds for classroom construction. At the time of reporting, three months after the funds were disbursed to the MOE, no movement has been reported with regard to classroom construction. Moreover, the costs of construction materials continue to rise, which will result in the available funds providing less classrooms than were envisaged at the time of planning.

**5.1.2. Delays in the Construction and rehabilitation of school infrastructure:** Whereas progress on software interventions has been remarkable, the failure to construct the required number of classrooms has seriously undermined the considerable efforts by mobilised families and communities in target areas to enrol out-of-school children into schools. The enrolment of 45,000 out-of-school children, which is the main result for this intervention, who had been mobilized to benefit from new classrooms cannot enroll due limited alternative options other than open air classes. Progress has been constrained by the inability of the MoE to synchronise the planned hardware activities with ongoing software activities.

Construction and supply-related activities, not much progress was made during the reporting period; this activity is seriously constrained. After lengthy consultations among various Ministries (Education, National Development, Public Works, Finance) the revised classroom designs were eventually approved. The revisions led to an increase in the average cost of classroom construction. With the available resources, the programme will experience a reduction in the number of classrooms to be built, from 500 to 300. However, the Ministry of Education has indicated informally that the shortfall will be mitigated by the Government of Eritrea.

UNICEF has tried all possible options to ensure that the construction can go ahead as planned. However, all these efforts have thus far been unsuccessful.

**5.1.3. Limited access to the field:** UNICEF staff need permits to monitor ongoing programme activities. It was not always easy to secure permits from the government authorities to enable programme staff to travel to programme sites. Even activities implemented within the capital city were difficult to access (because of restrictions imposed by the MOE on UNICEF staff members seeking to engage with technical counterparts).

**5.1.4. Delays in the procurement:** programme supplies by the Ministry of Education were a major challenge. UNICEF repeatedly offered the Ministry its procurement services to mitigate challenges relating to procurement of programme supplies. These offers were routinely rebuffed.

**5.1.5. EMIS:** UNICEF provides technical and financial support to the MoE toward enhancing the Education Management Information System. However, the delay by MoE to publish EMIS makes it difficult to track results for the sector. This equally affects the monitoring of the GPE programme. In addition, the sector is affected by an insufficient number of teachers, coupled with inadequate capacity of those in service and high attrition of teachers from the sector (and the country) partly due to migration but also due to poor motivation. The combined impact of these challenges is that they have affected efforts to enrol disadvantaged children into schools and have undermined the core objective of the programme, which is to reduce the number of out-of-school children in Eritrea.

## 5.2 Recommendations

UNICEF recommends a mission of the GPE Focal Person for Eritrea to support UNICEF-Eritrea's advocacy efforts to identify options that would enable the programme to regain momentum. Particular areas to consider would be whether to shift resources away from construction activities to other activities which can be implemented in the remaining project period; whether to extend the lifespan of the current project; and how to initiate preparatory activities such as developing a new Education Sector Plan that would enable Eritrea to make a submission for the next round of funding as indicated in the new indicative Maximum Allocation to Eritrea.

### 6. Future work plan:

- 6.1. Advocate for the implementation of the Joint Sector Review as this is critical to Eritrea's development of the Education Sector Plan 2018-2022 and the preparation of the next funding application to GPE.
- 6.2. Strengthen the Education Working Group to play an active role in the education sector. The entry of new international organisations into the sector, such as Finn Church Aid, and the continued involvement of non-resident organisations such as the African Development Bank provides the possibility for a dynamic working group.
- 6.3. Continue to implement planned activities while exploring other options to enhance resource utilisation.

## 7. Financial implementation

Grant No	Planned budget in USD 2014-16	Released budget 2015 USD	Utilized budget USD	Balance USD
SC140237	800,000.00	740,720.00		
SC140006	15,462,429.40	9,032,061.80	11,042,602.46	4,296,997.02

## 8. Expression of thanks

UNICEF Eritrea is grateful to the Global Partnership for the funding to support the implementation of the "Enhancing Equitable Access to Quality Basic Education for Social Justice" programme. UNICEF is also grateful for the continued support of the GPE Secretariat which has been integral to seeking solutions to the challenges experienced by the programme.