GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ACTIVITIES (GRA) PROGRAM

Summary - Annual GRA Portfolio Status Report as of June 30, 2017

Background and Purpose of the GRA Grants

The Global and Regional Activities (GRA) program was created in 2010 to support research, capacity building, knowledge development and sharing at the global, regional, and country levels. The GRA program and grants are complementary to country level support and grant financing from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). In 2013, the GPE Board of Directors approved a total of **15 grants[1] in the amount of US$31 million** (ref. BOD/2013/02-02 and BOD/2013/07-01) to address thematic and knowledge gap areas, identified through a consultative process with GPE's partners. The **thematic areas** of focus for grant activities are

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

The GPE Secretariat monitors implementation progress of the GRA grants through review of **twice yearly narrative and financial progress reports**, submitted by grant recipients. These are based on a Result Agreement for each grant, and are prepared in accordance with guidance set out in the GRA Program Operational Manual. The Secretariat also conducts a limited number of **monitoring missions**, typically participating in regional or international events.

This annual status report captures overall implementation progress, expenditure, and key results as of **June 30, 2017**.

Section 1   provides cumulative data on knowledge products produced across the portfolio
Section 2   sets out details of grant closures and revision requests
Section 3   presents achievements and results for all grants across the three thematic areas
Section 4   outlines the dissemination of GRA knowledge products
Section 5   highlights good practices and lessons learned from across the portfolio
Section 6   provides an overview of key information for the entire portfolio

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

Executive Summary

As implementation of activities under the GRA program is coming to an end, the GPE Secretariat's GRA Team and Grant Agents have been taking stock of the immense amount of knowledge produced and exchanged through these 15 projects. Numerous good practices and lessons learned have been emerging across the portfolio, which will be valuable to disseminate widely across the partnership and to consider in the design of future knowledge and good practice mechanisms.

As section 1 of this report outlines, a plethora of products have been developed in the categories of guidelines and methodological tools and other reference documents and papers, as well as outputs from regional level seminars and workshops and country level seminars and workshops. Grant Agents have shared information and results of the various projects through their websites, newsletters, social media, videos and blogs. Moreover, the GRA Team supported GRA dissemination through the GPE channels, both formal (GPE website, blog and webinar series) and informal (through the Secretariat's technical teams).

As section 2 outlines, in FY16 six grants closed and a further three in FY17. Thus, as of June 30, 2017, six grants remained active. The last grant to close will be GRA 9 PEARL in June 2019, which will mark the effective end of the GRA program. Section 2 also presents an outline of grant revisions in FY17. As many grant restructuring requests arose in FY16, the guidance prepared by the GRA Team ensured and the policies put in place on the operationalization of the GRA portfolio ensured that sufficient was given to Grant Agents. Accordingly, during this reporting period, there were four requests for revisions (all for no-cost extensions and all approved, whereas it FY16 there were eight requests for revisions (five no-cost extensions and three budget re-allocation).

The grants, their activities and results reported thus far, across the three thematic areas, are detailed in section 3 of this report, followed by a list of the many channels of knowledge dissemination in section 4. Then, section 5 outlines numerous good practices and lessons learned, some shared by Grant Agents others identified by the GPE Secretariat GRA team. These include:

- the necessity for **cross-sectoral engagement and coordination** as vital to successful planning, implementation, integration and the achievement of sustained impacts over the long term
- **knowledge exchange workshops** as having significant value for cross-country sharing, dialogue, problem solving and technical knowledge and capacity building
- the **strengthening government systems** through use of existing structures to strengthen systems and infuse new approaches and building technical planning, implementation and monitoring capacity of key staff
- **improving data quality** through mobile phones and improved education management information systems
- the **effective dissemination of knowledge products** through country- and global-level channels
- **planning for continuation of grant activities** through co-funding or additional GPE support
- ensuring the **design of future mechanisms is** informed by lessons learned
- **an approach to value for money** that considers how to maximize the benefits and impact of financing

The GPE Secretariat is planning for a firm to develop and implement a summative evaluation of the GRA program, in order to understand the effectiveness, as well as the efficiency of the GRA portfolio, in the light of its broader strategic plan GPE2020 and as mandated by the Global Partnership's M&E Strategy. A Terms of Reference was developed, by the Results and Performance Team with input from the GRA Team, and a Request for Interest was developed. However, it was decided that the summative evaluation will be postponed until a later date, as there remain several active grants and three final evaluations underway.[2]

Section 1: Cumulative outputs across the portfolio to date

GRA grant agents, and their implementing partners, continue to generate high quality outputs including technical guides, manuals and methodological tools; deliver successful seminars and practical workshops at regional and country levels and develop robust reference documents and analytical working papers. Further details are provided in section 3.

The table below provides an estimate of the number of items produced to date, including items described in the December 2016 and June 2017 grant progress reports.

Outputs/ Products	Cumulative to June 2015*	Cumulative to June 2016*	Cumulative to June 2017
Guidelines and methodological tools	31	83	99
Regional level seminars and workshops	26	42	50
Country level seminars and workshops	76	141	155
Other reference documents and papers	47	168	209

* revised updated figures, based on new methodology including detailed review of progress reports

Section 2: Grant Closures and Revision Requests

During this reporting period (July 2016-June 2017), 3 grants closed:

Grant #	Grant title	Close Date
2	Learning outcomes in early grades in reading: Integrations of curriculum, teaching, learning materials, and assessment	January 2017
8	Education Financing: School Grants	December 2016
13	Assessment Systems and Learning Outcomes	December 2016

During this reporting period, 4 requests for revision proposals were submitted, processed and approved:

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[2] GRA grants 2, 7, and 10 have all reported that final evaluations are planned.

Grant #	Duration (years) after NCE	Type of revision	Date approved
14	3	No-cost extension of 9 months	December 18, 2016
12	4	No-cost extension of 11 months	December 22, 2016
10	3	No-cost extension of 4 months	April 20, 2017
9	5	No-cost extension of 2 years	April 28, 2017

Section 3: Results across the three thematic areas

This section describes results for six active grants as well as the three that closed between July 2016 to June 2017. For the information on the six grants that closed prior to June 2016, please see the *2016 GRA Annual Portfolio Status Report[3]* for more information.

Section 3.1: Learning outcomes and education quality

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

Highlights of progress and achievements for projects in this category:

GRA 2 – Learning Outcomes in Early Grade Reading *(Closed January 2017)*
This $2.9 million project, managed by UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE), was launched in November 2013 and closed in January 2017. Through technical workshops and technical assistance, the development of partnerships and networks, research and dissemination, and pilot interventions to address specific issues, this project produced and shared knowledge on curriculum, teaching, learning materials and assessment to improve reading skills in early grades. Over and above the review of literature, methods and best practices at regional and international levels, the project focused on field level analyses and capacity building activities in three countries[4]: Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal.

Project activities included:
- Development of National Action Plans to improve early reading and national curriculum reforms in Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal
- Production and validation of new curricular documents on reading and writing (and training modules and teacher training packs for the preparation of their usage) in the three countries

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[3] http://www.globalpartnership.org/content/annual-portfolio-report-global-and-regional-activities-gra-program-fy2016
[4] A fourth country (South Sudan) had been originally selected, however, due to civil unrest activities were cancelled.

- o In Burkina Faso, a pedagogical guide, a toolkit for teachers and a teacher training module
- o in Niger two teacher training modules on teaching to read and write in grades 1 to 4, and a practitioner's guide
- o in Senegal, national orientations on teaching and learning to read and write in French and a training module on the same issue
- Teachers' pre-service and in-service training on the use of new curriculum materials and piloting

The UNESCO IBE Team has reported that the project has raised important research on the use of the first language of the children to accelerate the learning of the second language of instruction (in these countries this was French) even in monolingual models and of curriculum alignment and, therefore, promoted a systemic approach to change. The team reported that the project has contributed to building national capacities that did not exist and made available curriculum documents and tools. As a result, national policy makers, curriculum specialists and teacher trainers share a new vision on reading and writing in the early grades. Moreover, there has been an increased the knowledge base within the ministries and teacher training capacity has increased.

As a result of the project, many country-specific curriculum documents were produced to provide guidance for policy-makers, practitioners, trainers, and supervisors. In Burkina Faso, a ministry-appointed team of national experts developed three complementary documents: a new guide to teach to read for teachers and a toolkit to be used by them in the classroom as well as a training resource-pack aimed at teacher trainers. A guide existed before but was quite incomplete, with inadequate materials and direction for teachers. All documents were designed to promote an updated vision of content and methods and to support the improvement of curricula alignment. In Niger, the focus was on the design and production of two teacher training modules covering grades 1-4 as well as a corresponding practitioner's guide enabling the successful translation of new training content into educational practices, and a leaflet on the importance of reading aiming the educational community at large. Comparable tools did not exist before. All documents have contributed to the implementation of the new national curriculum also launched in September 2015 with capacity-building sessions provided to school principals, supervisors, teacher trainers, and teachers. In Senegal, a document was prepared to state the national vision and orientations on teaching to read and write in French as a second language that didn't exist before; a supporting document on the didactics of reading and writing in French for teacher trainers and a training resource-pack. All texts focus on the first three years of primary school.

The final report '*Teaching and learning to read in a multilingual context: Ways forward for three sub-Saharan African countries (Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal)*' was published in January 2017. It identifies the elements required for successful early literacy acquisition, provides state-of-the-art knowledge on effective reading curricula and related curriculum issues, and outlines evidence-based recommendations. Through webinars, blogs, and conference presentations, the results of the project have been widely disseminated. An external evaluation has been planned and the results will be shared in the 2018 GRA Annual Summary Report.

GRA 9 – Pacific Early Age Readiness and Learning (PEARL)
The PEARL Program is an $8.5m regional program managed by the World Bank, to support Pacific Island Countries and Papua New Guinea, to improve evidence-based policy and programming decisions around two complementary components i) school readiness for early years and ii) early grade reading in primary schools.

Pilot interventions have continued in Tonga as scheduled on both components and regional technical assistance has continued for Samoa, Kiribati and Tuvalu. The pilot of interventions for early grade reading has started in Kiribati and Tuvalu. Regional knowledge sharing activities have benefitted all Pacific Island countries including Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The Solomon Islands requested and received technical assistance and financial assistance from the program.

Project knowledge products prepared, finalized and disseminated by government have included:
- School readiness report for Samoa
- School readiness snapshot paper for Tuvalu
- EGRA baseline report for Kiribati
- EGRA baseline report for Tuvalu
- EGRA midline March 2017 report for Tonga

This reporting period has seen the successful completion of the 3rd PEARL knowledge exchange workshop held in Vanuatu in July 2017, continuing to build capacity of government staff and key partners to implement early grade reading and school readiness interventions, with a focus in this workshop on how to design and use an M&E system to produce data needed to improve implementation and manage risks, to obtain better results.

A midline evaluation on the impact of the Community Play Based Activities and Come Lets Read and Write programs on reading outcomes of Class 1 and 2 students showed that attendance at CPBA has a positive impact on reading scores on Grade 1 students and CLRW is having a significant impact on Grade 2 students after just one year of implementation. Monitoring and evaluation data demonstrates conclusively that trained PEARL teachers have significantly different teaching practices than regular teachers, in nearly all of the 10 dimensions measured (including phonemic awareness, phonics, writing, tracing and copying letters). The data also confirms a high level of consistency among PEARL trained teachers across 7 of the 10 dimension.

GRA 10 – 'Improving Teacher Support and Participation in Local Education Groups'
This $1.98 million project, implemented by UNESCO and Education International (EI), was launched in October 2014 and will close in September 2017. Across ten countries (Benin, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Haiti, Liberia, Mali, Nepal, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda), activities were undertaken to support and enhance the capacity of teachers and their organizations to participate effectively in social dialogue with national governments regarding policies to enhance the effectiveness of teaching.

Project activities included:
- Two surveys: a UNESCO survey designed to seek teachers' input on the design and implementation of continuous professional development for teachers' effective participation in social dialogue, as well as an EI survey on teacher effectiveness and student achievement.
- Three series of national-level capacity building workshops were conducted in the ten beneficiary countries. The first and second series of workshops, held by EI, focused on the capacity of teachers' organizations and ministry staff to analyze issues on teacher management and human resources, and to exchange experiences and best practices. The third series, held by UNESCO, focused on the development of country background reports to describe the local context around teacher organizations and to analyze the survey data collected.

- In April 2017, two regional events were held, in France and Senegal, which gathered all ten beneficiary countries to provide a dialogue forum that included stakeholders from governments, teacher associations and teacher training institutions. The aim was to share national experience, facilitate an exchange on good practices and lessons learned, and identify priority issues and areas for improvement.

In the period June to December 2016, teachers' union in three countries took further concrete steps to enhance their capacity to analyze human resource management issues in the education sector and propose policy proposals. With the technical assistance of EI, the teachers' unions in the Gambia, Mali and Uganda began processes to consult their members with a view to obtaining their views of issues related to terms of employment and working conditions. In the Gambia, the Gambia Teacher's Union, GTU, aimed to identify the barriers to attractiveness of the teaching profession, including examining the issues affecting career advancement. In Mali, the Syndicat National de d'Education et de la Culture, SNEC, embarked on a capacity building process to enhance its members' skills to collect and analyze data on the use of financial resources and budgetary allocations to education. Their goal is to equip members to follow up on the use of resources at local and central government level, thus contributing to government's efforts to ensure the good use of the national education budget. As EI reports, in a country where in some regions the national government is often perceived as absent, is a major contribution by the union to strengthening the education system. In Uganda, the Uganda National Teachers' Union, UNATU, began nation-wide study as no systematic information existed on the extent of human resource management issues across the education sector despite the importance of human resources in teacher effectiveness. The Uganda government introduced a number of policy measures that have widespread implications on teacher effectiveness and student performance such as the demand for all head teachers to upgrade to graduate level and no study has been done on the effects of this shift. According to Education International: "In our view, [several countries' follow-up] initiatives demonstrate that the discussions held during the workshops did trigger concrete actions by teachers' unions to further understand issues related to human resources management by engaging in processes that aim to not only get to know the views of their members on the issues, but also to build their capacity at the local and central level to engage in social dialogue."

From January to March 2017, activities were undertaken to support the third thematic area of this project: enhancing the capacity of teachers and their organizations to more effectively participate in social dialogue and education policy processes with governments. Eight national-level capacity development workshops were organized by UNESCO in the following countries: Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, DRC, Haiti, Liberia, Mali, Senegal and Uganda. From these workshops, country background reports were produced to describe the local context around teacher organizations and to analyze the survey data collected.

In addition, two regional events were held which gathered all ten beneficiary countries. These events provided the space for a dialogue forum that included stakeholders from government, teacher associations and teacher training institutions. On April 20-21, UNESCO hosted an event in Paris for participants from the beneficiary countries to share their national experiences, their local contexts and challenges, and how they can be addressed by social dialogue. In addition, the draft, final project output was launched for discussion, the *Guiding Framework for Teacher Capacity Development in Social Dialogue and Education Policy Processes*, which has been designed as a training and support tool targeting teachers, teacher unions, and government institutions to guide countries in preparing national frameworks for teacher professional development. On April 26-27, Education International hosted an event in Dakar, Senegal for participants from the first two rounds of capacity building workshops to come together in a forum to promote an exchange on good practices and lessons learned, identify priority issues and areas

for improvement, and jointly decide on next steps education stakeholders can take to put in place human resources management policies that will lead to improved quality of education. The participants were ministry of education officials in charge of human resources and pedagogical supervision, teachers, school principal and education sector trade unions.

As of April 2017, all country-level project activities had been completed. In the final reporting period for this project, an external evaluation will take place and UNESCO will publish a final project report. In addition, the UNESCO team will finalize the *Guiding Framework for Teacher Capacity Development in Social Dialogue and Education Policy Processes*.

GRA 13 – 'Assessment Systems and Learning Outcomes' *(Closed December 2016)*
Under this $944,061 grant, UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education through the Network on Education Quality Monitoring in the Asia Pacific (NEQMAP), implemented activities to support national capacities to improve learning through information sharing and South-South cooperation among countries in the Asia-Pacific region and enhanced knowledge and policies for improving learning to have strengthened and credible national systems to monitor student learning. Beneficiary countries included all countries of the region, with a focus on GPE developing country partners (Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kyrgyz Republic, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste and Vietnam).

Project activities have included:
- Five regional capacity development workshops
- Provision and mobilization of technical support to selected countries through national activities (including 3 national-level workshops)
- Knowledge exchange and sharing through: the development of the NEQMAP knowledge portal[5], a webinar with OECD on student performance gaps and how to address them, and to interactively engage with each other, and a biannual newsletter with articles from member institutions as well as the Secretariat

During this reporting period, the fifth in a series of regional capacity development workshops on the topic of 'Reporting and Dissemination of Large-Scale Learning Assessments' was held on September 13-16 in Bangkok with 45 participants from 14 countries/jurisdictions and partner organizations. In addition, a sub-regional workshop on Assessment Literacy and Test and Item Development and Design was organized, in collaboration with UNESCO Almaty and Pearson, on 5-7 December 2016 in Almaty, Kazakhstan for delegates from Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). The NEQMAP Secretariat continued to provide and mobilize technical support to selected countries to strengthen their systems of learning assessment. A national workshop on "Test and Item Development and Design" was organized on 27-30 September 2016 in Vientiane, upon the request of the Lao Ministry of Education and Sports.

The NEQMAP Secretariat reports that "after four years in existence as a network and greatly enabled by the regular workshops and meetings supported by the project, there is a true feeling among NEQMAP members that they are part of a network, thus making for very active collaboration and mutual support." The Secretariat has received positive feedback from participants of all the regional, sub-regional and national capacity development workshops which were organized by the project, including how the capacity building workshops and technical assistance has led to policy dialogue or impact. The team

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[5] http://nespap.unescobkk.org/neqmap

reports that, from their participation in all NEQMPA workshop, delegates from the Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment (BCSEA) made crucial institutional linkages, learning and exchange of ideas as well as enhanced technical capacity in assessment. Specifically, BCSEA has been trying to apply the knowledge acquired through these workshops in conducting a comparability study between grade 10 student performance on the examination and their actual reading writing abilities in Dzongha (the local language). In addition, they are using the skills gained to improve analysis and interpretation of data for the grade 10 and 12 exams.

NEQMAP is now seen as a model by other regions. The NEQMAP Secretariat presented at two international conferences on lessons learned after three years of existence as a network and consider what aspects of the work and lessons could be applied to other regions. UNESCO Bangkok/NEQMAP and the GPE Secretariat have been discussing continued support of this work under the new Assessment for Learning Initiative.

Section 3.2: Education financing and systems building

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

Selected results from the three projects in this category:

GRA 8 – Improving equity through school grants *(Closed December 2016)*
Under this grant of US$ 996,829, co-funded by UNICEF and GPE and managed by UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP), the main objective of the research was to examine the impact of grants provided to schools from the ministry of education, including on access, equity and quality. The goal was to improve design and implementation of school grants policies for greater equity and improved quality at school-level, by examining: the criteria and mechanisms of grant distribution; the use of grants by school level stakeholders in different contexts; the monitoring and control of the use of grants; and the impact of the grants.

This program operated in 195 schools across Africa, Latin American and the Caribbean, and East Asia and the Pacific, however, GPE funding and support has focused on 81 beneficiary schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Honduras, Madagascar and Togo.

Project activities have included:
- Analysis of school grant policy by examining: the criteria and mechanisms of grant distribution; the use of grants by school level stakeholders in different contexts; the monitoring and control of the use of grants; and the impact of the grants
- Finalization of contracts and execution of national plans of dissemination with national research teams in Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Madagascar and Togo to distribute research results on the national level through press conference.
- A policy seminar on "Improving school financing: The use and utility of school grants" was held in Paris on October 10-12, 2016, proceeded by a preparatory workshop for the four francophone countries to help researchers prepare presentations.
- A comparative report has been drafted

- Technical guidelines have been drafted, which offer recommendations for creating a social grant policy, along with videos to accompany the chapters of technical guidelines as a learning tool
- Extensive communications around the project findings, through blogs, videos, and newsletters and social media

The IIEP Team has reported numerous results in the beneficiary countries, particularly that school grants have enabled a greater number of children, especially those from poor families, to enroll in school, although parents must always make a financial contribution. In addition, improved school environments have been reported through the availability of teaching and learning materials which have increased the motivation of teachers and students. Other improvements were reported in the areas of the participation and monitoring procedures, and administrative efficiency in budget transactions. However, grant amounts were insufficient to greatly improve schools in precarious conditions. In addition, the grant amount was reduced by bank fees, intermediary fees, and taxes on school supplies. All of these realities, adversely affect the impact of school grants to improve schools. Overall, the IIEP Team reports that a great achievement of the project was to bring together researchers and representatives from national ministries for policy dialogue. Additionally, the comparative nature of the research and the larger number of countries that participated in the seminar creates a powerful leverage to reach policy makers.

From the field work, a range of knowledge products has been developed, including:
- Finalization of contracts and execution of national plans of dissemination with national research teams in Haiti, Madagascar, DRC and Togo to distribute research results on the national level through press conference.
- A comparative report of the four countries.
- Technical guidelines which offer recommendations for creating a social grant policy, along with videos to accompany the chapters of technical guidelines as a learning tool.

On October 10-12, 2016, IIEP held a policy seminar on "Improving school financing: The use and utility of school grants" in Paris, proceeded by a preparatory workshop for the four francophone countries on Oct 5-7 to help researchers prepare presentations. This event brought together about forty participants, including high level decision-makers from the Ministries of Education and Finance from 10 countries, the representatives of international organizations and development partners. The policy seminar was divided into two formats: presentations and working groups. The first part of the seminar was devoted to a discussion of research results in the four francophone countries, while the second part was focused on group work and identifying strategies to improve school grant policies, including its definition of objectives and implementation procedures. For the countries involved in the research, the policy seminar helped them to develop recommendations to improve the design and implementation of school grants policy. The representatives of the national research team from the ministries of Education and Finance shared the information learned with its policy-makers and provided their support to the researchers to organize a national workshop to disseminate the results of the national study. Other representatives from the African countries were equally interested to share research results with their ministry and decision-makers. The technical and financial partners expressed their interest to assist countries to design policy and build advocacy with decision-makers as well as to support the national dissemination plans of the research results.

There has been a broad communications plan around findings, through blogs, videos, and newsletters and social media:

- A social media campaign was prepared to disseminate information about school grants during the preparatory workshop and then policy seminar, including the creation of a Twitter hashtag (#SubventionsEcoles) which received 106,403 views, including 21 Twitter users contributing posts using this hashtag. Twitter was also used to share IIEP's infographic posters presenting key issues such as the impact of school grants on school's budgets. In addition, a LinkedIn post of a general infographic poster comparing school grants in the four francophone countries generated 1,279 views.
- IIEP created a press kit on school grants to distribute to local and international media, including infographic posters from the four countries.
- In addition, IIEP blogs were posted as well as the newsletter
- Video screening of the film on school grants in Madagascar with national teams, participants and partners at the policy seminar on 10 October 2016 and was replayed for IIPE staff later that month. The film has been edited in French and in English and is available on IIPE's YouTube page[6], as well as recorded interviews[7] with national researchers in Paris on their field research

GRA 14 – Data Must Speak (DMS)

Data Must Speak (DMS) is a two-phase initiative with the goal of increasing equity in resource distribution and in access to education, and improving learning outcomes. In August 2014, UNICEF commenced implementation on phase 1 which GPE supported with a $878,069 grant. It is scheduled to close in December 2017. The ongoing Phase 2, co-funded by Hewlett Foundation and UNICEF will extend to June 2020. Phase 1 of the project includes supporting community driven school based management, monitoring, and assessment of school performance by working with local government and community partners in Madagascar, Nepal, the Philippines[8], Togo and Zambia, to generate report cards for local primary and secondary schools. In-country partners clean and strengthen existing education management information system data with additional indicators on, for instance, data quality, equity, teacher and student attendance, receipt of educational materials, completion rates, and disaggregation of exam results by gender and grade.

Project activities have included:

- School Profile cards developed for each beneficiary country
- Guidance materials developed to support relevant actors in the long-term production and use of profile cards (and similar tools)
- Technical assistance provided for preparing school/districts typologies capturing context, resources and performance
- Training for: education central/regional/district officers, inspectorates and quality assurance agencies; and school committees and communities
- Evaluation and knowledge generation plan developed to evaluate and generate knowledge on community engagement in school based management and its association with school performance within the implementation of the DMS initiative
- A webinar conducted jointly with GPE and with government representatives from Madagascar and Togo

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[6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WALp_w2udQA
[7] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC6AhcbZM5g; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4xZ6y-eP8s;
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VbM0RacA8CI&t=78s
[8] The Philippines replaced Lao PDR.

During this reporting period, the UNICEF team continued to provide technical assistance to the beneficiary countries, both through missions (Madagascar, The Philippines, Togo, Zambia), and through remote support to all the beneficiary countries. Notably, the government of Nepal has approved the equity index (whose development and use is one of the "stretch" indicator of the variable funding part of the GPE Program Implementation Grant) developed through the project for use in the annual work planning / budgeting process for 2017-17 and allocation of extra resources to the bottom performing districts. The DMS Team reports that the dissemination of the tools that have been developed (school profile cards, simplified profile cards, training modules, etc.) across countries has been highly appreciated, even beyond the list of countries participating in the initiative. These tools are often a "source of inspiration" and are used to improve and adapt existing school profile cards.

In addition, an Evaluation and Knowledge Generation plan was developed, which outlines the approaches that will be employed to evaluate and generate knowledge on community engagement in school based management and its association with school performance within the implementation of the DMS initiative. A webinar was conducted jointly with GPE and with government representatives from Madagascar and Togo. Lastly, the DMS project team worked with an illustrator to develop a communication/visualization tool to better communicate the objectives and approaches of the DMS initiative, in particular for a non-technical audience.

Section 3.3: Out-of-school children (OOSC), access and equity

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

GRA 11 – Addressing Out of School Children Data and Policy Gaps
This GPE grant for US$ 1,583,027 is managed by the World Bank, and seeks to address knowledge and capacity gaps across a range of thematic areas. The focus during this reporting period has been on country estimates and global work on 1) the economic impacts of child marriage; 2) the benefits of girls' education investments; and 3) the contribution of education to human capital and the changing wealth of nations.

During this reporting period:
- A global report on the economic impacts of child marriage was launched in June 2017
- Country reports on the economic impacts of child marriage for Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda have been completed.
- Estimations have been conducted for 15 countries on the economic and social benefits of investing in girls' education.
- Two volumes have been written on the changing wealth of nations, and on human capital and the wealth of nations, for nearly 140 countries.

- Estimations of the economic impact of various types of disabilities for more than a dozen countries, using census data, has been completed and an event held to disseminate the findings.

GRA 12 – Disability, Health and Education in support of Learning for All

This grant for US$ 3,000,000, managed by the World Bank, is strengthening collaboration between ministries of health and education, and aims to improve the capacity for joint planning and implementation of integrated school health and nutrition programs. Four GPE countries participated, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Ghana and Senegal, with vision screening and deworming used as entry points

During this reporting period, the implementing partners have completed a pilot program aiming to demonstrate how schools can be used as an effective platform to deliver health interventions. The practical implementation of school based vision screening and deworming has been fully implemented, with the target of 10,000 children screened and provision of eyeglasses being met or exceeded in all four focus countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Senegal and Cambodia). A total of 476 teachers were training in 158 schools, exceeding the target of 100 teachers per country. 52,425 children received deworming medication, 57,434 children received vision screening, exceeding the target of 40,000 for each. 1017 children received glasses for refractive error, representing a prevalence of 1.7%.

Key knowledge products finalized include:
- Operational manual for Inclusive School Health and Nutrition;
- Guidelines for School-based Deworming Programs;
- Guidelines for School-based Eye Health Programs (vision screening and provision of spectacles);
- Teacher Handbook on Inclusive School Health and Nutrition.
- Report on survey of child eye health in 43 GPE countries
- Report on barriers to the uptake of spectacles in school children with refractive error.

The program has raised awareness, capacity and the operational and technical resources to include school health and nutrition in education sector plans. In Ghana, activities aligned with existing GES priorities and expanded the evidence base for teacher-led integrated health screening in schools. Representatives from Ministry of Health and Education at the national, regional and district levels decided to conduct hearing as well as vision screening, and to integrate project technical guidance into existing national guidance on health screening. Cambodia has completed the full pilot implementation and allocated resources for continued implementation. In December 2016, a no cost extension request was submitted and approved, extending the project to 30 June, 2018.

GRA 16 – School Related Gender Based Violence (SRGBV)
Under this grant for US$800,000, UNICEF and UNGEI are working to promote a systematic approach to addressing SRGBV as part of education sector plans in four countries, based on evidence in terms of 'what works' in particular country contexts.

During this implementation period:
- four country scoping studies were validated through a consultative process
- a synthesis report has identified key lessons and findings across the four national studies.
- A regional knowledge exchange workshop for the End Gender Violence in Schools Initiative took place in Nairobi in May. The focus of the workshop was on planning and monitoring, developing a Theory of Change and multi-year implementation plans.

In Cote d'Ivoire, SRGBV has been integrated into the Education Sector Plan (2016-2025); SRGBV indicators have been included in the EMIS; teacher training modules and guides have been revised to improve capacity for detection and referral of SRGBV; advocacy briefs on SRGBV have been disseminated and radio programs on SRGBV prevention and response broadcast.

In Ethiopia, SRGBV data collection in the EMIS has been included for 2016/17 academic year, helping to support improved monitoring of SRGBV incidence and the effective ness of response mechanisms from pre-primary to tertiary levels. A workshop on the national SRGBV database was held and a national SRGBV prevention and response theory of change and four-year road map developed. School management and administration guidelines have been revised to include SRGBV.

In Togo, a decision was taken to integrate the SRGBV training module into pre-service training curricula. Training on the SRGBV module for all 140 primary teacher training center trainers was completed as well as training of 579 teachers on SRGBV.

In Zambia, following participation in the GRESP training in May 2017, the planning unit successfully proposed the inclusion of SRGBV in both the Education Law and in the draft Education Sector Strategic Plan. The initiative is complementing other GPE supported work, notably the GPE/UNGEI Gender Responsive Education Sector Planning guidance and regional workshops.

Section 4: Dissemination of GRA knowledge products

With the advanced implementation progress of many grants in the portfolio, increasing numbers of knowledge products have been developed and results have been disseminated by Grant Agents through publications, social media, blogs, webinars, videos, newsletters as well as through knowledge exchange forums, such as regional and national-level workshops (as outlined in section 3).

The *2016 GRA Annual Summary Report* outlines the establishment of mechanisms for the GPE Secretariat teams and GPE partners to become more aware of the grants and the numerous practical knowledge products that have been developed, thus linking GRA outputs to GPE technical assistance in education sector planning. This has included GPE Secretariat technical review of GRA outputs through the three thematic cross-teams (Planning, Systems and Financing; Equity, Gender Equality and Inclusion; and Teaching and Learning).

During this reporting period, the GPE Secretariat has continued to support knowledge exchange through participation in key GRA events, as well as promotion of results through the GPE webinar and blog series. Dissemination activities include:

1. GRA knowledge products

During this reporting period, the following knowledge products[9] were finalized and publicly disseminated and promoted through the partnership:
- *Teaching and Learning to Read in a Multilingual Context: Ways Forward for Three Sub-Saharan African Countries (Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal)* – GRA 2

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[9] Indicator 33 of the GPE Results Framework captures the GRA grant portfolio contribution to knowledge exchange and good practice by monitoring the "number of policy, technical, and/or other knowledge products developed and disseminated with funding or support from GPE'".

- *A Rigorous Review of Global Research Evidence on Policy and Practice on School-related Gender-based Violence* – GRA 15
- *Transferencias financieras a escuelas y el derecho a la educación. El caso del Programa Hondureño de Educación Comunitaria* – GRA 8
- 4 Policy Briefs on school grants '*Les syntheses de l'iipe: Améliorer le financement de l'éducation : utilisation et utilité des subventions aux écoles.*': Haiti , RDC , Madagascar, Togo. – GRA 8
- *Economic Impacts of Child Marriage: Global Synthesis Report* – GRA 11
- *Economic impacts of Child Marriage: Work, Earnings and Household Welfare Brief* – GRA 11

2. GPE Secretariat staff participation in GRA events

Over the reporting period the GRA team has encouraged and supported the involvement of GPE staff, including Country Leads and technical specialists from SPP thematic teams, in selected GRA activities, to build greater awareness and understanding, increase the potential use of GRA knowledge products in country level dialogue, and in the development of GPE media and communications products. This has included engagement in grant monitoring through participation in regional training events; technical review and inputs into tools and methodologies developed; grant knowledge product dissemination events; and representation of GPE at key international events. Select events are listed below:

- Participation in the IIEP seminar 'Improving Education Financing: Use and utility of school grants' (GRA 8) in France in October 2016, to learn about the results of school grants on equity, access, and learning across all four countries; and to participate in discussions about the implications of these results for education policy and programming.
- Participation in the GRA 9 regional workshop on designing interventions on school readiness and reading improvements in Tonga in October 2016.
- Participation in the GRA 10 project closing events (which were facilitated as knowledge exchange forums), in Senegal and France in April 2017.
- Participation in the fifth in the NEQMAP capacity-building workshop 'Reporting and Dissemination of Large-Scale Learning Assessments' (GRA 13) in Thailand in September 2016.
- Participation in the UNICEF regional workshop on the 'End Gender Violence in Schools Initiative' (GRA 16) in Kenya in May 2017.

3. GRA grants in GPE webinar series

Several grants were featured in the GPE webinars series:
1. *National Education Accounts (NEA).* Under GRA 8, UNESCO-UIS, the IIEP and the IIEP/Pôle de Dakar have been implementing a collaborative project aimed at improving national reporting systems on education finance flows in eight countries since 2013. The webinar provided an overview of the NEA methodology developed and implemented by the two UNESCO institutes, shared lessons from the NEA building process in each country and its benefits - use of NEA generated data for informing policy making processes, reporting and accountability. Recordings are available here: English
2. *Data Must Speak (DMS): A way to strengthen system management and social accountability. The* webinar discussed the initiative, its key principles, and objectives, as well as its implementation in Madagascar and Togo and how it links with education sector plans. Recordings are available here: English French

3. *Developing and supporting effective education systems: Example of the Data Must Speak initiative.* This webinar elaborated on the DMS initiative, its key principles, and objectives, as well as its implementation in partner countries and how it links with the education sector plan. The session shared country experiences from Nepal, the Philippines and Zambia and addressed questions around quality and availability of relevant data, use of feedback tools, link with School Improvement Plan development, and enhancement of community involvement in school management. Recordings are available here: [English](#) [French](#)

4. GRA grants in GPE blog series

Several grants were featured in the GPE blog series:
- http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/child-marriage-and-education-impacts-costs-and-benefits
- http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/3-questions-about-what-gpe-does-keep-girls-school
- http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/findings-research-school-grants-four-countries
- http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/helping-countries-improve-their-data-out-school-children
- http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/reading-way-out-poverty
- http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/gender-based-violence-unacceptable-schools
- http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/investing-early-years-learning-it-can-be-done
- http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/getting-full-picture-education-finance
- http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/how-national-education-accounts-are-spurring-change
- http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/ensuring-learning-data-matters

Section 4: Good Practices and Lessons Learned from Across the Portfolio

Grant Agents reported numerous good practices and lesson learned emerging from the projects:

- Cross-sectoral engagement and coordination
  Deliberate efforts to nurture and support cross-sectoral engagement and coordination are highlighted by grant agents as vital to successful planning, implementation, integration and the achievement of sustained impacts over the long term. This has included working with Ministries of Health, Gender, Social Protection and Finance as well as working with the private sector and non-state actors to support effective delivery of programs.

- Knowledge exchange workshops
  Feedback from grant agents, implementing partners and beneficiaries demonstrates the significant value add from well planned and delivered regional workshops for cross-country sharing, dialogue, problem solving and technical knowledge and capacity building.

- Strengthening government systems
  Good practices identified by grant agents and implementing partners include using existing structures, to strengthen systems and infuse new approaches, and building technical planning, implementation and monitoring capacity of key staff. This has included the secondment of key officials between ministries.

- Improving data quality

Use of mobile devices to record monitoring information and data collection (e.g. in early grade reading assessments), can improve data quality, reducing errors in recording, transmitting and analysis of data, provided users are adequately trained and supported.

Moreover, data quality is improved by the reinforcement or creation of links of databases, including education management information systems and exams, allowing analyses to go beyond the project scope to strengthen system efficiency.

- Effective dissemination of knowledge products
  The GRA Team maintains a full list of knowledge products and has collaborated on numerous blogs and webinars to promote publications and research findings. The GPE Secretariat can promote and disseminate knowledge products widely at global, regional and country-levels, through formal and informal channels and social media (see section 4 for more information).

  However, in order to do this effectively, grant agents need to share final products and their communication and dissemination strategies in a timely manner with the GRA Team. It has been found that the finalization of knowledge products can take much longer than originally anticipated, due to time needed for external peer review and production (editing, translation, design, etc). In some cases, knowledge products are finalized long after the project closes making it difficult to capitalize on the results in a timely manner. Future knowledge and good practice exchange mechanisms should consider these aspects of knowledge product development and dissemination in their original project plan and timeline in order to avoid extended delays in sharing final project outputs.

- Planning for continuation of grant activities
  The issue of the continuation of project activities has been raised within the Secretariat, by grant agents and implementation partners. In one case, the project activities will continue through co-funding by another organization: the Hewlett Foundation and UNICEF will fund phase 2 of GRA 14 activities. Discussions around other potential future funding and support for GRA activities are ongoing. Notably as the GPE Secretariat continues to develop its knowledge and innovation exchange (KIX), consideration of GRA activities has been considered and opportunities have arisen. Of three knowledge and good practice exchange (KGPE) pilots approved by the Board of Directors in 2017, one pilot will build upon the model of the NEQMAP partnership established to implement GRA 13 in the Asia-Pacific region. The model was so successful in supporting improved learning assessment systems, that funding has been secured to pilot the model in another world region, such as Sub-Saharan Africa.

- Design of future mechanisms
  Future knowledge and good practice exchange mechanisms should strongly encourage grant agents to take into account implementation delays that can reasonably be anticipated, when setting implementation periods. These could include, for example: initial transfer, receipt and release of funds; start up phases; ensuring trust fund end dates are in line with GPE grant agreement end dates; communications and reporting across multiple countries; risk of natural disasters; risks associated with the political economy and context; and transfer of key counterparts.

  In addition, any future mechanism should require the development of comprehensive communications and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategies. The communications should include: key products to be produced and their target audience, timeline of these products and dissemination strategy, and an approach to tracking the use of material to assess their impact. The M&E strategy should include the following: internal project monitoring, biannual progress and

financial reporting to GPE Secretariat, and an external evaluation. These M&E tasks should be included in a pragmatic timeline, taking into account administrative processes and deadlines.

- Value for money
  The Secretariat takes an approach to value for money that considers how to maximize the benefits and impact of financing, taking into account economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity. Value for money lessons learned across the GRA portfolio are thus applicable to future knowledge and good practices and cover two aspects: (i) availability and use of guidelines, methods and tools to build and strengthen education sector planning capacity, plan development and effective implementation (GPE strategic objective 1); and (ii) mobilize and allocate more and better financing for education by reducing transaction costs and making future funding mechanisms more demand-driven with less intermediaries to reach beneficiaries (GPE strategic objective 4).

Section 6: Overview of the GRA Grants (June 30, 2017)

GRA Project	Partner Organizations (Grant Agent and Implementing partners)	Geographic Focus	Documents	Start date	End date	Approved grant (USD)	Expenditure to June 30, 2017 (USD)
FOCUS AREA 1: LEARNING OUTCOMES							
GRA 1 - Development of methodologies to link reading assessments across regions and draw lessons regarding best early assessment practices	UIS Partner: Hewlett Foundation	53 GPE partner countries	Results Agreement	Sep-13	Dec-15 (CLOSED)	462,246	439,492
GRA 2 - Learning outcomes in early grades in reading: Integrations of curriculum, teaching, learning materials, and assessment	UNESCO IBE Partner: University of Geneva	Niger, Senegal, Burkina Faso, + 1 other pending	Results Agreement	Nov-13	Jan-17 (CLOSED)	2,998,996	2,311,177
GRA 3 - Effectiveness of teaching and learning in bilingual context (ELAN)	AFD Partner: OIF	Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo	Results Agreement	Jan-13	Dec-15 (CLOSED)	1,408,200	1,213,094
GRA 4 - Teaching and learning effectiveness for learning outcomes (OPERA)	AFD Partner: Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie	Burkina Faso and the IFADEM African partner countries	Results Agreement	Jul-13	Sep-16 (CLOSED)	996,855	942,971
GRA 9 - Pacific Early Grade Readiness and Learning Program (PEARL)	World Bank	Tonga and Papua New Guinea, beneficiaries: all Pacific island countries	Results Agreement	Jul-14	June-19	8,505,075	4,974,133
GRA 10 - Delivering on strategic objective on teachers	UNESCO Partner: Education International	Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Benin, Mali, Senegal Uganda, Nepal, Haiti	Results Agreement	Oct-14	Sept-17	1,984,850	1,713,110
GRA 13 - Learning Outcomes – Asia Region/ Learner assessment for instructional progress	UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education	Regional: Asia Pacific region	Results Agreement	Jun-14	Dec-16 (CLOSED)	944,061	764,679
CANCELLED: Central Asia Learning Outcomes – Students' reasoning Skills	CICED	Regional East Europe, Central Asia					

GRA Project	Partner Organizations (Grant Agent and Implementing partners)	Geographic Focus	Documents	Start date	End date	Approved grant (USD)	Expenditure to June 30, 2017 (USD)
FOCUS AREA 2: EDUCATION FINANCING AND SYSTEMS BUILDING							
GRA 5 - Education Financing: Development of methodologies to improve national reporting on financial flows	UIS	Guinea, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Nepal Uganda	Results Agreement	Sep-13	Jul-16 (CLOSED)	2,119,074	2,085,789
GRA 8 - Education Financing: School Grants	UNESCO IIEP	Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Honduras, Nicaragua	Results Agreement	Jul-13	Dec-16 (CLOSED)	996,829	968,386
GRA 14 - School Profiles: Systems Improvement	UNICEF Partners: IIEP, Pole de Dakar	Global; four countries have started: Laos, Madagascar, Togo, and Zambia	Results Agreement	Feb-14	Dec-17	878,069	675,407
FOCUS AREA 3: OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN, ACCESS AND EQUITY							
GRA 6 - Out-of-School Children: Closing the data gap	UIS Partners: UNICEF, World Bank, UNESCO	Global: Africa, Arab states, Asia, Latin America	Results Agreement	Sep-13	Jul-16 (CLOSED)	1,099,527	1,039,036
GRA 7 - Significant reduction in Out-of-school children	UNICEF Partners: UIS, national governments	Global: post-conflict and transitional countries	Results Agreement	Aug-13	Dec-15 (CLOSED)	3,284,900	3,249,774
GRA 11 - Addressing the out-of-school children data and policy gaps	World Bank Partners: UNESCO, UNICEF, UIS, national governments	Global with a strong emphasis on GPE countries	Results Agreement	Mar-14	Aug-17	1,583,027	1,384,850
GRA 12 - Disability/health and education in support of learning for all	World Bank	Global: 15 GPE countries Focus Ghana, Ethiopia, Senegal, Cambodia	Results Agreement	Aug-14	Jun-18	3,000,000	2,295,053
GRA 16 - Addressing school-related gender-based violence	UNICEF Partner: UNGEI	Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia Zambia	Results Agreement	Mar-14	Dec-17	800,000	789,943

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