



GPE in Action: Sahel Region

In the Sahel region in Africa, millions of children cannot go to school due to terrorism, natural disasters or because they live in remote areas. In much of the region, there is a severe lack of qualified teachers and government officials are working against the odds to provide basic education services.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) supports Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger and works with their governments and development partners to ensure that even the most vulnerable children get a quality education. Since 2003, GPE has allocated close to \$500 million to support children's education in these countries.

**"Now, more than ever,
we need education.**

**Those who are doing these things want to
suppress education, and if they are
successful, they win."**

Dr. Yombo Paul Diabouga Secretary General,
Ministry of National Education, Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso: Expanding education and making it relevant to the local economy

Burkina Faso is facing several challenges to ensure all its children have access to a quality education. GPE has supported a reform of the curriculum to improve learning outcomes and helps the government deliver education to remote and unsafe areas. GPE contributes to a pooled fund with other donors, which aligns with the government's priorities and ensures that the country's systems are used, ensuring sustainability.

The new curriculum focuses on learning rather than simply transmitting knowledge. 20 percent of class time is used for local knowledge, preparing children for the job market. The program also includes lessons on cultural and social topics like early marriage and female genital mutilation, key in raising awareness not just at school but throughout communities to the importance of girls' education.

To fight insecurity, GPE supports the government's expansion of French-Arabic schools in the regions most affected by Islamic terrorism. GPE is also working with the government on building more schools in remote areas to reach those who are out of school and teacher training which is key to improve children's learning.

"GPE funding represents a significant portion of all external funding that we receive for education in Burkina Faso. This funding has made it possible for us to invest a lot in education." - Dr. Yombo Paul Diabouga Secretary General, Ministry of National Education.

Chad: Giving refugee children an education

Chad is surrounded by conflicts in neighboring countries and still feeling the effects of famine and other crises that have left it one of the world's poorest countries and host to 400,000 refugees.

GPE, which allocates about half of its grant funding to support countries affected by fragility and conflict, is supporting Chad's efforts to strengthen its school system which was weak even before large numbers of refugees arrived. In the remote Lake Chad region, where the refugees are concentrated, 62 percent of Chad's children are out of school.

With GPE's support, Chad is not only addressing the immediate humanitarian needs of the refugees but also creating a stronger and more enduring education system for local and refugee children alike. In 2016 and 2017, GPE helped the government build 86 classrooms in the Lake Chad region, launched school meals and nutrition awareness programs, distributed 60,000 new textbooks, and started training programs to expand the number of qualified teachers there. In all, over 8,500 children have benefited from these interventions.

Niger: Teaching in local languages improves children's learning

Kadidia N'Diaye teaches second-grade in one of the 500 primary schools in Niger piloting a new school curriculum which promotes the use of local languages. Kadidia feels enthusiastic to apply it after having taught only in French—the official language—for nearly 20 years.

The new curriculum incorporates vernacular languages almost exclusively in the early grades and gradually introduces French over the students' six years of primary school.

The curriculum review is part of a wider effort supported by the Global Partnership for Education,

along with the French Development Agency and the Swiss Cooperation, focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The government of Niger recognizes with a new curriculum come new needs. With GPE's support, textbooks and teachers' guides for grade 2 and 3 in eight local languages were developed.

To improve teaching methods, GPE helped over 8,100 primary and secondary level community teachers, along with 6,100 teacher trainers and inspectors, receive in-service training to date. Additionally, 84% of grade 1-3 teachers attended training to improve teaching methods on early reading and classroom assessment.

Concurrently, a national student learning assessment system is being developed to better assess learning outcomes and therefore improve the efficiency of the education system.

GPE's support has been focused on the most pressing needs outlined in Niger's education plan. The close link with the plan's priorities coupled with the government's strong commitment to improve education will deliver sustainable impact. Tangible results have already been achieved: The primary completion rate increased from 51% in 2014 to 82% in 2018, and the number of trained teachers increased from 46% in 2013 to 66% in 2017.

Mali: Supporting children's schooling after crisis

The political and security crisis that erupted in Mali in 2012 had a devastating impact on the education of Mali's children. Schools closed in the northern part of the country, overloading already crowded schools in the south with an influx of displaced students. The disruption increased dropout rates, and negatively impacted the quality of education.

A GPE grant injected much-needed resources to the education sector at a time when donor funding had been frozen. The GPE program supported the government to re-open schools in the affected areas and laid the foundation to restore and strengthen the country's education system.

To ensure that more children could go to school and had an incentive to stay in school, GPE funding helped to rehabilitate and construct 1,200 classrooms and provided more than 27,000 meals for

students. Responding to the needs of traumatized children following violence and displacement, more than 2,000 teachers were trained in psychosocial support and nearly 40,000 displaced students benefited from remedial classes to ensure they made up for lost time.

Thanks to these interventions, 52,500 additional students were enrolled in the most affected areas. Additionally, the number of students per classroom in schools supported by GPE dropped from 48 in 2011/12 to 40 in 2016/17, a significant improvement. The GPE program was one of the first emergency education operations in the region and raised awareness for the critical needs of the education sector in Mali, which encouraged funding by other development partners.

Mauritania: Ensuring more girls get into school

Aichetou, a 14-year-old girl from Mauritania, is one of the lucky ones – she goes to secondary school. That's not a given in a country where only half of girls continue their education after primary school. For many girls in remote villages, attending

secondary school, usually located in town, becomes impossible. Thanks to support from the Global Partnership for Education, Aichetou goes to a new so-called proximity school closer to her home.

GPE has partnered with the government of Mauritania to develop a solid education sector plan that puts special focus on the most vulnerable children, including girls. GPE then supported the government in building secondary schools in remote areas with high drop-out rates among girls, nearly tripling – to more than 21,000 – their enrollment in two years (between 2014-2016).

Still, challenges remain. The new schools don't have enough textbooks and qualified teachers, so GPE is working with the government to improve the quality of teaching. Mauritania has raised selection criteria for its teacher training program and redesigned the curriculum. Trainees learn about assessment techniques and language instruction and get pedagogical materials.

Thanks to GPE, Aichetou may now be able to realize her dream to become a teacher.

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