

Early childhood education – a strong foundation for learning

GPE works with governments to improve the quality and availability of early education, especially for children most often left behind

GPE results

With GPE's support, developing country partners have achieved remarkable progress:

US\$270 million



INVESTED

to support early education
in more than 35 partner
developing countries

Twice as many



CHILDREN WERE ENROLLED

in pre-primary education in
GPE partner countries in
2016 compared to 2002.

Two thirds



OF GPE GRANTS

to partner countries in 2018
included support for early
childhood care and education

The challenge

- **Only 1 in 5 young children** in developing countries is enrolled in pre-primary education.
- The poorest children are **7 times less likely** than children from the wealthiest families to attend pre-primary school.
- **40% of countries** with data allocate less than 2% of their education budgets to early childhood education.
- **Less than 1% of aid to education** is invested in pre-primary education.

Quality early education improves learning and makes education systems more efficient

- ▶ In countries where more children attend pre-primary education, more children reach minimum competencies in reading and math by the end of primary school.
- ▶ Children who have attended pre-primary education are more likely to enter school on time, less likely to drop out or repeat grades, and more likely to complete primary and secondary school.
- ▶ Every US\$1 invested in early childhood care and education can lead to a return of as much as US\$17 for the most disadvantaged children.

GPE approach

GPE is committed to supporting developing countries to improve access, quality and learning outcomes in the early years.

- ▶ Support analysis, sector planning and exchange of good practice to ensure early childhood education is included in education plans.
- ▶ Funding quality ECCE programs such as improving management and planning; training pre-primary teachers and facilitators; building and rehabilitating ECCE classrooms; establishing early learning assessment systems; distributing learning materials; and supporting parent education and community-based early learning programs. ECCE components in GPE grants range from US\$1 million to more than US\$20 million.
- ▶ Through the Better Early Learning and Development at Scale (BELDS) initiative, GPE builds knowledge and fosters good practice exchange on how to strengthen ECCE within national education systems. In partnership with UNICEF, BELDS currently supports capacity building activities for ECCE planning in 4 pilot countries: Ghana, Kyrgyz Republic, Lesotho, and Sao Tome and Principe.
- ▶ GPE's Knowledge and Innovation Exchange will fund catalytic investments to harness successful knowledge and innovation in ECCE policy planning and implementation across the partnership.



Sierra Leone

GPE/Ludovica Pelligrini

Once known for its high educational standards, Sierra Leone has suffered great blows to its education system due to a brutal civil war and the Ebola crisis. In 2019, the government committed to ensuring all children receive free quality education to drive economic and social progress nationwide.

This includes pre-primary education, which is essential to building a strong foundation for learning.

GPE is currently working with the government to get more children in the country's most vulnerable communities early childhood education both through traditional pre-primary classrooms attached to primary schools as well as through community-based learning centers.

GPE funds will be used for more classrooms, teacher training, and establishing and equipping early childhood development community centers.

This support builds on the successes of a previous GPE grant, which supported the development of an ECCE curriculum as well as pre-primary classroom construction and teacher and caregiver training.



Guyana

GPE/Carolina Valenzuela

In 2013, 60% of children entering grade 1 in the remote hinterland regions of Guyana had not mastered the skills needed to learn how to read, and only 1 in 10 had any understanding of text at all.

To address the educational disadvantages faced by children in Guyana's marginalized regions, GPE helped the government improve early education and reduce disparities in learning outcomes.

GPE support aimed to build capacity of teachers, improve the quality and supply of teaching and learning materials and train primary caregivers on how to ensure children are learning at home as well as in school.

Regular monitoring data was collected on teacher performance in the classroom and children's learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy were evaluated on a yearly basis.

Thanks to these investments, children in hinterland areas improved their literacy skills by almost 140% and the government of Guyana has built a strong foundation for more equitable learning across the country.