



GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP
for EDUCATION



Building stronger education systems

Stories of change

Cover photo: A boy and a girl share a textbook in teacher Binta Ouedraogo Ilboudo's third grade classroom.

Burkina Faso.

GPE/Kelley Lynch

Building stronger education systems

Stories of change

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) supports close to 70 developing countries to ensure that every child receives a quality education.

The featured stories show the progress that developing country partners are making in getting more children, especially girls, in school and learning. The results are not only evidence of their commitment to improve education, but also of the sustained and targeted support provided by GPE.

The Global Partnership for Education has pioneered a systems-strengthening approach, including within the most fragile and poorest countries. GPE leverages additional domestic expenditure, improves equity, and ensures accountability. In addition, it sharpens the focus on measurement and learning outcomes.

The collective impact is amplified by harnessing the skills and experience of partners behind government leadership. By applying smart financing to overcome system challenges and to support the basic education needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized, GPE is helping to create better opportunities for millions of children, their communities and their countries.

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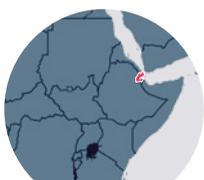
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Afghanistan

Community schools boost girls' education

The Global Partnership for Education is supporting the Government of Afghanistan to make education more accessible for children in remote and insecure areas, an important contribution to strengthen the country's fragile education system.



According to government estimates, 20 percent of Afghanistan's 2.5 million school-aged children and youth are out of school. Most of these children are girls, children in remote and insecure areas, and children from vulnerable groups, which are the focus of GPE's support for Afghanistan. With robust education policies and strategies, and the capacity to implement them, the government and its development partners can build on the gains achieved by GPE's support to deliver lasting results in education that can help break the inter-generational cycle of poverty and contribute to peace and security.

GPE's focus on disadvantaged children

Afghanistan became a GPE partner in 2011. From the outset, GPE's support focused on disadvantaged children in remote rural areas in 13 provinces, especially those affected by security and political instability, including Helmand and Uruzgan. These areas have the country's lowest education and economic indicators, and high gender inequality.

Since 2011, GPE has worked closely with the government and other partners to bring them together for joint education planning. The results of this effort show that GPE's well-established processes to support the government in planning and delivering education services are effective. But significant challenges remain for working in one of the world's harshest terrains for development.

The next phase of GPE's support will be integrated with the World Bank administered Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund to make donor support more coordinated in helping to advance the government's economic development priorities.

KEY FACTS

GPE partner:
Since 2011

Challenges addressed:
Inequity in education, education in fragile contexts, gender inequality among students and teachers

Key interventions:
Community-based education, training of female teachers

Total grants:
US\$156 million
(2012-2024)

Grant agent:
World Bank

Coordinating agency:
UNICEF



Close to **40,000 students**, almost evenly split between **boys and girls**, benefitted from community-based education in the target districts.

Achievements and challenges

GPE is working closely with the government to strengthen the education sector in the long term, and ensure ongoing coordination with partners, a strategy that has enabled GPE to scale up its interventions and avoid duplicate efforts. Since 2013, GPE has supported the government's four priorities that reflect the major difficulties faced by Afghanistan's education sector. These are:

- **Mobilizing local communities to overcome cultural, societal and political barriers to education**, particularly for girls, to tackle low enrollments in primary education. 41 percent of the GPE program's budget was spent on interventions in this area, reflecting how community mobilization for education can deliver substantial gains.
- **Tackling traditional obstacles to enrollment** through alternative approaches, such as community-based education, accelerated learning programs, and mosque-based education.
- **Increasing the number of qualified female teachers** in areas with high gender disparities to increase the enrollment of girls.
- **Helping expand the capacity of the Ministry of Education** in planning and policy formulation, and to streamline its administrative systems for education.

Innovative approaches that work

The results of GPE's support show the effectiveness of alternative approaches to education where formal systems are not adequate. Close to 40,000 students, almost evenly split between boys and girls, received an education outside a formal school environment through community-based education in the target districts. This is the only way in these areas to successfully provide education to more children, particularly girls, and accelerate learning.

Some 200 qualified and trained female teachers now work in these districts, a highly encouraging result since some of these districts are among the most volatile in the country. In Afghanistan, the correlation is strong between the number of female teachers and the number of girls in school.

The low capacity of the Ministry of Education's affects the implementation of school improvement plans and other education programs. GPE's efforts to strengthen that capacity continue to be a focus for the partnership's work in Afghanistan.

But overall Afghanistan is making progress in providing a quality education for all children—and significantly so in gender equality, where the rate of girls enrolling in primary school increased from 44 percent in 2002 to 87 percent in 2015.



The rate of **girls enrolling** in primary school increased from **44 percent** in 2002 to **87 percent** in 2015.

Benin

Removing barriers to help the most disadvantaged girls enroll and stay in school

The Global Partnership for Education is working with Benin to address one of the country's biggest education challenges: delivering quality education to children in deprived and remote areas with a strong focus on girls.



KEY FACTS

GPE partner:
Since 2007

Challenges addressed:
Poor access and retention in deprived/remote areas, especially for girls, low quality of teaching

Key interventions:
School feeding, school kits for girls, school construction, teacher training

Total grants:
US\$137 million
(2008-2023)

Grant agent:
World Bank

Coordinating agency:
UNICEF

While overall primary school enrollment is high in Benin, there are stark differences between regions. In rural areas, children of poor families often have to help with agricultural activities (e.g. working in fields or with cattle) instead of going to school. In Alibori, one of the country's poorest provinces and about a 10-hour drive from Cotonou, Benin's largest city, only 35 percent of children were in primary school in 2015.

GPE has focused its support in Benin on the most vulnerable children in the poorest districts to help raise enrollment, especially for girls, as part of the country's overall strategy to improve its education system.

GPE has contributed three grants totaling US\$137 million to a joint/common fund along with other partners, such as Denmark, France, Germany and the Netherlands, in support of the government's budget. GPE's approach and model have been instrumental in bringing all partners together to respond to Benin's priorities for its education sector. This combined support is giving Benin the resources it needs to make a difference for the children most in need, ensuring that the external support is closely aligned with the government's education sector plan (ESP).

Improving access and retention

To address inequalities in access and retention, GPE focused on three key interventions with the Benin government: kits for girls, school feeding and school infrastructure.

➤ Help for the most disadvantaged girls

With the support of the US\$42.3 million GPE grant between 2014 and 2018, the government distributed school kits to more than 323,000 girls in grades 1 and 2 in underserved areas. The kits contained a school uniform and essential supplies. The provision of kits was advertised on community radio stations to raise awareness of parents and communities on the importance of sending girls to school.

Having these supplies also ensured that girls were not turned away from school for lack of a uniform or learning materials in cases where families could not afford these, thereby removing an important barrier to accessing schooling.

➤ Children learn better on a full stomach

Ensuring that at least lunch is offered at school can make a vital difference to poor families struggling to put food on the table every day. Free school lunches in deprived districts were a key area of GPE's support. Community-run school canteens were set up (with mothers as cooks), serving free daily lunches to more than 318,000 children in primary schools over three years (2015-2018). Local nongovernmental organizations monitored the program, performing daily quality checks

“GPE is the ‘melting pot’ of dialogue between all the technical and financial partners in the education sector. It is around this that all donors meet.”

—Yacinthe Gbaye, Senior Economist, World Bank Benin



GPE/Chantal Rigaud

Community-run school canteens have served **free daily lunches to more than 318,000 children** in primary schools over the three years of the program.

at schools in the targeted provinces. This set-up was praised by many in Benin: it meant that children received nutritious school lunches, prepared with products purchased locally. Districts participating in the program saw an increase in enrollment rates, particularly for girls.

► Ensuring there's a place to learn

Another area of GPE's support was improving the structural quality of schools in deprived areas. These schools are often small and built with materials that do not withstand the elements well. Under the GPE program, 530 new classrooms were built and equipped in primary and secondary schools, as well as more than 100 toilet blocks, separated for boys and girls.

The new classrooms are larger with higher ceilings, wider windows to let in light (important in schools not connected to the electricity grid) and better ventilation. These features, and the fact that the new classrooms will help to reduce overcrowding for future larger cohorts of students, improve children's learning experience.

Training teachers to improve the quality of learning

Complementing the various interventions that together helped to strengthen Benin's education system over several years was a focus on teacher training to improve learning results. With GPE's support, more than 67,000 teachers received training between 2008 and 2018.

Primary school teachers received training and ongoing support to improve their pedagogical skills and increase their time of instruction. Teachers at the lower secondary level received pre-service training on pedagogical skills and content knowledge.

Building on achievements

The government is committed to continuing support for these interventions: the 2018–2030 ESP includes support for teacher training, school canteens and school kits in 42 deprived districts (out of a total of 77) to reach children most in need, in particular girls.

The new sector plan was supported by a GPE grant and developed collaboratively by the government and the local education group. The plan expands the definition of basic education to include preschool and lower secondary for a total of 12 years of schooling, as recommended in SDG 4. It also includes non-formal education such as apprenticeship to help young people gain skills easily transferable to the job market.

The model developed under GPE support to identify "deprived districts" has been mainstreamed by the government to target more interventions to those children most in need.

"GPE helped support the implementation of the [education] sector plan. GPE has contributed significantly to improving access, not only through the construction of classrooms, but also at the level of retention with the establishment of school canteens and school kits in disadvantaged municipalities."

—Ghislain Kouton, Project Coordinator, French Development Agency (AFD) Benin

Burkina Faso

Reaching students in insecure areas

Education in Burkina Faso is making important advances under difficult conditions. The increase in primary school enrollment—from 60 percent in the early 2000s to 88 percent today—is particularly significant. Yet, the country faces many pressing education challenges. Making progress on two in particular—curriculum reform to improve learning outcomes and delivering education to remote and unsafe areas—could deliver big socioeconomic gains.



Burkina Faso was one of the first countries to join GPE in 2002. Since then, it has received more than US\$214 million in grants from GPE. The current grant, channeled through a pooled fund to better align donor funding, will help support the implementation of the country's 2017-2030 education sector plan.

Reforming the curriculum for improved learning

With a high population growth rate, demand for education is pushing the capacity of schools to the breaking point. Despite the increase in primary school enrollment rates, completion rates remain low, though improving. And despite a marked drop in poverty, from more than 80 percent in 2000 to 44 percent in 2016, the country has one of the lowest rankings on the UNDP's human development index, placing 183 out of 189 countries in 2018.

The curriculum reform launched by the Ministry of Education and Literacy is central to the government's plan to improve the quality of education and ensure more children complete basic education. With 70 percent of the population under 20 years of age, developing human capital by ensuring that all children are in school and learning will be vital for the country's economic development.

The new curriculum is more streamlined and focuses on learning rather than simply "transmitting" knowledge. In a pilot, the curriculum was tested in six of Burkina Faso's 13 districts in rural, urban, and peri-urban areas to see how it performed in these different settings.

A hurdle being encountered is that the textbooks used to teach the new curriculum are out of date. With GPE's help students received new textbooks that are consistent with the new curriculum. The objective is to increase the ratio of essential textbooks per student, and new funding from the partnership is being used to put more textbooks into the hands of children.

Making learning relevant to the local job market

Making education more relevant to students is an important aspect of the new curriculum. Twenty percent of class time is now dedicated for local knowledge. As well as cultural and housekeeping topics, children are introduced to local professions to help prepare them early for the job market.

GPE is contributing to this by supporting more community participation and give parents the ability to provide local solutions to identified needs.

KEY FACTS

GPE partner:
Since 2002

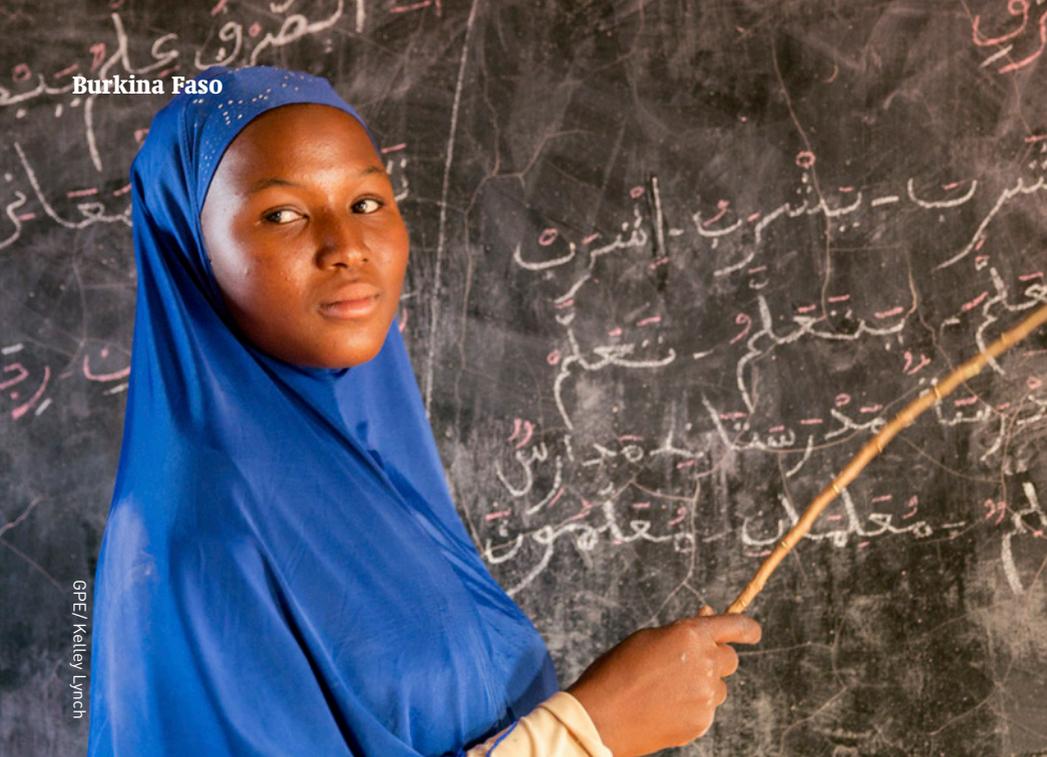
Challenges addressed:
Insecurity in northern provinces, poor learning results, weak linkage between curriculum and job market needs

Key interventions:
Curriculum reform, support to disadvantaged provinces

Total grants:
US\$214 million
(2009-2022)

Grant agent:
Agence française de développement (AFD)

Coordinating agency:
UNICEF



Franco-Arabic schools, if they prove to be successful and can be scaled up, could be a game changer for getting more children into school in the Sahel region. Here, **just 8 percent of students enroll in lower secondary school, compared with 25 percent nationally.**

The new curriculum also covers social issues like early marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), which had previously not been discussed in the classroom. With an estimated 76 percent of girls aged 15–17 having experienced FGM, this is a critical topic to address. The new curriculum also tackles environmental issues and social behavior.

Ensuring education isn't derailed by insecurity

While the new curriculum is a nationwide education initiative, improving education in areas where enrollment and completion rates are particularly low is a special concern of GPE's Burkina Faso program.

A focus of the GPE program is making education gains in eight provinces, four of which are in the volatile Sahel region, which has been made unstable by Islamist extremism. The Sahel region and particularly the provinces of Soum and Oudalan are GPE program priorities. The provinces are insecure, schools have been attacked and teachers threatened and killed. The extremists want the language of instruction in schools to be Arabic instead of French, the country's official language.

The government is trying to mainstream Franco-Arabic schools in the Sahel region—and the GPE program is

supporting this effort. Franco-Arabic schools are popular with many Muslim parents who believe the addition of religious education adds value to what their children learn in the French curriculum.

Ibrahima Kabore, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, believes that Franco-Arabic schools, if they prove to be successful and can be scaled up, could be a game changer for getting more children into school in the Sahel region. Here, just 8 percent of students enroll in lower secondary school, compared with 25 percent nationally.

The future for children in Burkina Faso remains challenging and GPE's support is helping the government to address critical issues. It is a powerful example of GPE's mission: to improve learning outcomes and equity through strengthening education systems.

"The new curriculum is very important because with previous programs there were gaps. The students we trained were not able to integrate into the job market."

—Emilienne Sawadogo, a school inspector, commends the way that the new curriculum prepares children for the workplace.

Djibouti

Addressing the education needs of refugees

An influx of refugees from neighboring countries has created additional challenges for Djibouti's education system. With the support of the Global Partnership for Education, the Government of Djibouti will work to ensure that refugee students are included in its national education system.



KEY FACTS

GPE partner:

Since 2006

Challenges addressed:

Low school enrollment,
low quality of education

Key interventions:

Making education more
inclusive for refugee
students, promoting
preschool learning,
upgrading teaching
practices and
learning materials

Total grants:

US\$26.5 million

Grant agent: World Bank**Coordinating agency:**

UNICEF

Djibouti is a lower middle-income country with a population of nearly one million. Despite considerable economic growth over the past 15 years, 30 percent of the population still lives in poverty. More than half is under the age of 24, providing the country with an opportunity to capitalize on investments in human capital and promote social and economic growth.

Djibouti also houses thousands of refugees – mainly from Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen. In early 2019, there were over 29,000 refugees and asylum seekers in the country. Almost 40 percent of the refugees are of school-going age – without access to quality education, their future is at risk.

Addressing the education needs of refugees

The Government of Djibouti, with support from GPE partners, is expanding its support for refugees by incorporating their education needs into the national education program. This is in line with the 2017 Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education, which commits the seven East African signatories to integrating refugees (and returnees) into national education systems by 2020. Recently, refugee-related data have been included in the Djibouti education ministry's annual statistics as well as in the 2017-2020 education action plan, which is a major step towards including refugees in education sector planning.

GPE is supporting the government to make public schools more inclusive for refugee children and to help the education ministry take on the operation of schools in refugee settlements formerly run by NGOs or The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The goal is to include the latter schools in the national education system so that the children's learning results and certifications are properly recognized. GPE has also helped bring partners together in the local education group (LEG), a platform for ongoing dialogue and collaboration between the government and its education partners. UNHCR recently joined the LEG, which has strengthened efforts to attend to refugee education.

In 2017, GPE supported the country with an education sector plan development grant (ESPDG) to develop a strategy to increase school enrollment for refugee children in the 2017-2020 action plan.

Djibouti's education challenges

The relatively large number of refugees is putting pressure on an education system that already faces serious challenges in providing education for all children. According to the education ministry, in 2018 the enrollment rate stood at 14 percent for pre-primary, 93 percent for primary and 66 percent for lower secondary school. Furthermore, more than 40 percent of 6 to 16-year-old refugees are not enrolled in school.

The quality of education also remains a major concern. The 2018 Early Grade Mathematics Assessment test results showed that, on average, grade two students were able to solve only 1 out of 6 mathematics problems, and almost 60 percent had scores of zero. Additionally, 27 percent of students repeat grade 5 and nearly 30 percent repeat grade 9, putting further strain on the already stretched education budget.

GPE leverages more donor support for Djibouti

Making full use of its innovative approach to financing, GPE was able recently to attract additional donor co-financing for strengthening Djibouti's education system. In 2019, GPE brought together US\$10 million of its own funds, including US\$5 million from the GPE Multiplier, as well as financing from the World Bank's

International Development Association (IDA) and the Qatar-based Educate a Child to provide Djibouti with a new program of support worth almost US\$30 million.

The program will support preschool learning; help enroll and retain more children, especially girls, in primary and lower secondary schools; and improve the quality of education by upgrading teaching practices and learning materials. The World Bank is GPE's grant agent in Djibouti while UNICEF is the coordinating agency for the education sector, supported by GPE to be active in particular in education analysis and sector plan design.

Through the program, teachers will also receive specialized pedagogical training to improve the quality of instruction as well as ensure they are provided with the tools necessary to help refugee children who have experienced trauma or chronic stress.

Past achievements

The new program follows earlier GPE support for Djibouti, which has assisted the government to rehabilitate and build classrooms in the most disadvantaged areas of the country; develop a student assessment policy; and demonstrate results of stepping up investment in teacher training: 82 percent of teachers are now demonstrating improved classroom practice.



Eritrea

Overcoming education challenges for the most disadvantaged children

The Global Partnership for Education has been supporting Eritrea in expanding access to quality education in the country's four most vulnerable regions. As a result, around 19,000 children—of whom 42 percent are girls—from nomadic and disadvantaged communities are now attending school.



Located in the northeast of Africa, Eritrea is a multilingual and multicultural country with approximately 65 percent of the population living in rural areas. Eritrea's complex geographical terrain coupled with the population's nomadic lifestyle and austere economic conditions pose a challenge for the delivery of quality education.

For the Government of Eritrea, education is the foundation for all national development efforts and plays a vital role in economic growth and poverty reduction. Despite the government's efforts to enroll more children in school over the last decades, 37 percent of children between 5-13 years old were still out of school in 2016. The majority of these children are from the most marginalized groups: girls, children living in remote or nomadic areas and children with disabilities.

Several challenges hindered their education, including long distances to school aggravated by severe temperatures or strong dusty winds. Schools in rural areas faced difficulties in securing teachers, especially female teachers, and lacked adequate learning materials for their students.

Building a strong foundation for education

When Eritrea joined GPE in 2013, the country received a grant to support the development of the education sector plan for 2013-2017. The funding also helped build capacity within the education ministry to improve data collection and analysis—essential elements to develop a strong and measurable plan.

GPE's approach brought together education partners in the local education group, which included development partners, civil society organizations and the private sector. This collaborative forum spearheaded an inclusive and transparent dialogue on Eritrea's education policies and strategies.

Once the plan was ready to be implemented, GPE along with UNICEF, the coordinating agency, supported the government's strategies focused on increasing access for out-of-school children, improving the quality of education and strengthening the capacity of the education system.

GPE funding is benefitting children, youth and adults from communities located in the four most disadvantaged regions of the country—Anseba, Gash Barka, Northern Red Sea and Southern Red Sea. By improving the management and monitoring capacity of the education ministry, GPE is helping strengthen the entire education sector, because education officials now have the right systems to inform policy decisions and can use the data to measure, monitor, and ultimately improve learning outcomes for all children.

KEY FACTS

GPE partner:
Since 2013

Challenges addressed:
Low access to quality education, lack of learning materials, lack of infrastructure

Key interventions:
Classroom construction, provision of learning materials, mother tongue education, data systems, adult education

Total grants:
US\$26 million
(2014-2018)

Grant agent: UNICEF

Coordinating agency:
UNICEF

Overcoming education challenges

To enroll more children in school, the GPE program focuses on three pillars: classroom construction, teaching and learning materials, and adult education.

In early 2019, the construction of early childhood and primary and special needs education classrooms in the targeted regions began. To mitigate delays in school construction work, communities have provided temporary learning spaces while ensuring that underutilized classrooms are made available. The new classrooms are equipped with chalkboards, teacher desks, cupboards and benches. As a result of this initiative, around 19,000 children—of whom 42 percent are girls—are now in school. GPE has also been supporting adult education for those who have missed schooling opportunities.

Improving the quality of education

Once children are enrolled in school, the next step is to ensure they learn. To achieve this goal, the GPE program focuses on equipping teachers with the skills and resources they need for effective teaching, as well as strengthening mother tongue education.

Teachers from minority groups have been trained for elementary school, middle school and early and special needs education and then deployed to the target regions. Teachers have attended professional development activities and preschool teachers and directors have received training on the new early childhood education curriculum supported by the GPE program.

With GPE support, over 3.4 million textbooks and teachers' guides for core subject areas such as math, science, English and nine Eritrean languages (considered the mother tongue) for early grades have been printed and distributed in an effort to maintain the 1:1 student-textbook ratio.

Evidence suggests that learning outcomes improve when students learn in the language with which they grow up. GPE supported the Eritrean government in ensuring all children in elementary school learn in their mother tongue. This included providing training cassettes in Eritrean languages as well as in-person training for teachers who will teach in their ethnic language.



Better data to improve learning

Data are key for policymakers to make evidence-based decisions, to know where children with the biggest needs are and where teachers or materials are missing. Thanks to GPE, officials in the Ministry of Education received training in school record management as well as in data collection, analysis, and reporting. This training was also delivered to school directors and supervisors in an effort to improve school-based data collection. GPE and partners are engaged with Eritrea to resolve other data issues in the country, which often are beyond the remit of the education sector.

Eritrea's education plan for 2018-2022 guides the country's strategic priorities for the next five years. This plan has been informed by a comprehensive sector analysis funded by a new GPE education sector plan development grant. Eritrea is also eligible for a GPE implementation grant to help fund key elements of the plan.

GPE's continuous support over the past years has helped Eritrea make solid progress on enrolling more children in school and ensuring that learning is taking place. In just four years, between 2013 and 2017, the number of children who completed primary school increased from 40 percent to 45 percent. For girls, it increased from 37 percent to 43 percent.

Additionally, the net enrollment rate for primary school increased from 76.8 percent in 2011/2012 to 82.1 percent in 2015/2016. However, this national average ratio hides severe regional disparities.



Ethiopia

A long-term commitment to education spurs results

When Ethiopia joined the Global Partnership for Education in 2004, less than 50 percent of the country's children were enrolled in primary school, and those in school were not getting a quality education. GPE has been working closely with the Ethiopian government and development partners to strengthen the education system and improve children's learning. Today, 85 percent of Ethiopia's children are enrolled in primary school.



KEY FACTS

GPE partner:
Since 2004

Challenges addressed:
High number of out-of-school children, lack of textbooks, lack of trained teachers

Key interventions:
School grants, curriculum development, teacher training, textbooks

Total grants:
US\$368 million
(2008-2019)

Grant agent: World Bank

Coordinating agencies:
USAID and Norwegian Embassy

Located in the horn of Africa, Ethiopia is a large and diverse country with many ethnic groups and languages. Despite being a low-income country, it has made substantial progress on social and human development over the past decade.

GPE has supported the government's efforts to develop education plans that are evidenced-based and respond to the needs and challenges of the country's education sector.

GPE's support has been vital in helping Ethiopia build a stronger education system by improving sector planning, promoting inclusive dialogue on education, and helping the country to set up systems to collect reliable and accurate data to inform education policy and priorities.

A strong foundation for Ethiopia's education system

Ethiopia has been a pioneer in implementing five consecutive education plans during the last 24 years, which has contributed to the sustainability of education programs. Based on comprehensive education sector analyses, GPE supported the development of education plans through extensive consultations between ministries, stakeholders in education, and development partners. This inclusive approach promoted coordinated sector dialogue, which in turn strengthened the relevance of these plans.

Ethiopia's current education plan (2015–2020), articulates the goals, strategic priorities, and overall outcomes for the education sector and is accompanied by a multi-year action plan and a results framework. A front-runner in long-term education planning, Ethiopia's efforts have paid off.

Achievements in education

Between 2004 and 2015 the primary school net enrollment rate increased from 49 percent to nearly 85 percent. In the same period, the primary school completion rate rose from 37 percent to 54 percent, and the gender parity index for primary completion increased from 71 to 96 girls for every 100 boys.

Recent projections from UNESCO show that Ethiopia is making the fastest progress in improving primary school completion rates in sub-Saharan Africa.

These gains are the direct result of the government's commitment to improving education and effective sector planning coupled with the strong support from GPE and other development partners. In the last five years, the share of government spending on education has remained consistently high at 25 percent of the overall budget, and Ethiopia is committed to maintaining this level of investment in education.

Partners participating in the local education group, have been highly engaged in the preparation and implementation of education plans and their supporting programs. Civil society organizations and teachers' unions are also represented on the LEG, which has added an important voice to the country's education planning and in the implementation of education programs.

A multi-donor fund

In 2008 a multi-donor fund, the General Education Quality Improvement Program (*GEQIP*), was set up to better align donor resources with the country's education priorities. Considered among the most aligned funding programs in Africa, *GEQIP* has encouraged donors to channel their aid to the priorities identified in Ethiopia's education sector plan. The approach has avoided fragmented bilateral donor activities and the wasteful duplication of resources.

Since 2008, GPE grants totaling US\$368 million have supported education reforms through *GEQIP* to improve the quality of teaching and learning in Ethiopia's 40,000 schools.

GPE's support to Ethiopia focuses on interventions that are essential to improving the learning environment—training teachers, providing effective learning materials, and developing relevant curricula.

The quality of teaching was improved by strengthening pre-service teacher education; in-service teacher training, including career development; and monitoring teacher performance.

As a result of these interventions, nearly 300,000 teachers received in-service training, and over 100,000 teachers completed pre-service training during 2013–2018—this was much higher than *GEQIP*'s initial target.

GPE and partners are also contributing to achieve the target of one textbook per student. Over 170 million textbooks, teacher guides and supplementary materials have been distributed to schools. To promote equity among different population groups, textbooks are available in seven local languages, and in braille.

These textbooks are aligned to the new school curriculum, which aims to narrow learning gaps, and respond to

learning needs. Designed to be responsive to international economic developments, democracy, and gender equality, the new curriculum has been implemented simultaneously across all grades.

School grants improve the learning environment

Nearly all schools in rural and urban areas have received school grants to improve learning outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning. These grants help schools implement the priorities outlined in their school improvement plan; including upgrading infrastructure, procuring learning materials, promoting teacher professional development, and making schools more accessible for children with disabilities.

Disadvantaged students and schools which have the lowest education indicators get the largest grants. Local communities are highly involved in the planning and monitoring of these grants. With the support of GPE and partners, the government has invested in systems to ensure the timely collection of reliable education data that are essential for improving monitoring and accountability.

Student learning is monitored through national learning assessments and exams, and school performance through a school inspection system that includes annual school self-assessments and external inspections every three years.

Ethiopia's commitment to education is paying off

Ethiopia's sustained efforts and GPE's support are paying off, and children's learning is improving. According to a national learning assessment, student proficiency in all subjects increased by 57 percent between 2011 and 2015 (grades 4 and 8).

In addition, progress has been made in establishing a strong performance monitoring system, implementing a more relevant curriculum and achieving gender equality.

Ethiopia still faces challenges in providing equitable quality education for all children, but the government's commitment is ensuring that the strong improving trend will continue.

Guyana

A long-term investment in early childhood education

The Government of Guyana, with support from the Global Partnership for Education, is making great progress in improving early childhood education and reducing learning disparities between coastal and remote regions.



Guyana's remote regions have faced several disadvantages in early childhood education. Schools didn't have learning materials, and teachers were using donated materials or just making their own. Not surprisingly, these materials were not aligned to the curriculum. The problem was made worse by a lack of trained teachers. More than half of early childhood teachers in remote regions were untrained; and the instructional methods of those that were, did not follow best practices.

In a first move to remedy this situation, the Ministry of Education, in 2013, assessed 700 children entering grade 1 in remote regions. About 60 percent couldn't read and only 10 percent understood what they were reading. In addition, 40 percent showed very little or no ability to identify numbers from 1 to 10.

A commitment to improve early childhood education

Given the overwhelming evidence of the benefits of investing in early childhood education, the government decided to prioritize education spending on this area to improve literacy and numeracy for children in remote regions from preschool to grade 1. GPE supported this effort with a US\$1.7 million grant for 2015–2018. Integrated interventions were an important facet of the program that focused on upgrading teaching skills, increasing learning materials, and training primary caregivers. GPE's support to Guyana is wider than grant funding. The partnership helped the government formulate a robust and evidence-based education sector plan for 2014 to 2018, and to take a more comprehensive approach to early childhood education by moving away from the fragmented interventions used in the past.

As a result, according to the Ministry of Education, 88 percent of children in early grades living in remote regions have acquired basic reading and math skills compared with 37 percent in 2016.

KEY FACTS

GPE partner:
Since 2002

Challenges addressed:
Learning disparities between coastal and remote regions, lack of trained teachers and learning materials

Key interventions:
Teacher training, distribution of learning materials, training programs for primary caregivers

Total grants:
US\$35 million (2004-2018)

Grant agent:
World Bank

Coordinating agency:
World Bank





More than 520 teachers from the remote regions attended a training program that covered pedagogy, phonemics, and the use of resource toolkits.

Strengthening the teaching force

To improve teacher effectiveness, more than 520 teachers from the remote regions —most of whom had weak or no academic background—attended a compulsory training program that covered pedagogy, phonemics, and the use of resource toolkits. This aspect of the program used experienced teachers whose role was not just instructional but included mentoring and monitoring.

Monitoring and evaluation was a key element of the training program's success. Trainers visited the teachers up to twice a semester to observe them taking classes and to help them put in practice what they learned in the program.

Providing learning materials

To strengthen the training program, GPE funded the distribution of 750 early childhood education resource kits and teacher user manuals to schools. These kits contained learning equipment including, stackable cubes, numeracy flash cards, mega blocks, and alphabet and numbers foam puzzles.

Promoting more experience and inquiry-based learning for children, the materials help students learn independently and in small groups through play. The user manuals help teachers develop learning materials from locally available resources that are culturally specific to the learning environment.

Training programs for primary caregivers

Few parents in Guyana are exposed to methods to support their children's learning, and they are often unaware of the interventions that can help their children succeed in school. Yet, parents and caregivers play an essential role in reinforcing lessons from school at home.

In recognition of this, the Ministry of Education, with support from GPE, made primary caregiver training a component of the program for early childhood education. Training sessions for primary caregivers at school and during parent-teacher association meetings, in learning centers, and in-home visits contributed to the success of the program.

A sustainable investment in learning and equity

Ensuring sustainability after the GPE-supported program ended in 2018 is a priority for the Ministry of Education. To achieve this, teachers and trainers will continue to build their skills under the ministry's continuous professional development program. And the replenishment of the learning materials toolkits is already budgeted in the government's next education budget.

The partnership has also helped the government of Guyana to make long-term investments to ensure that children have equal learning opportunities to prepare them for the job market.

A young girl with dark hair pulled back, wearing a green school uniform with a white collar, is smiling warmly at the camera. She is holding a black bag and several books. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with stone walls.

Kenya

Putting education at the center of development

Since 2005, the Global Partnership for Education has supported Kenya's impressive progress toward getting all children into school and learning. That progress, in turn, has advanced the country's overall economic and social development.



KEY FACTS

GPE partner:

Since 2005

Challenges addressed:

Education access for children from remote regions and disadvantaged groups, low early grade performance, barriers to girls going to school

Key interventions:

Technologies to improve planning and accountability, expanded teacher recruitment and training, school grants to encourage girls' education

Total grants:

US\$210 million (2005-2019)

Grant agent:

World Bank

Coordinating agency:

UNICEF

Between 2005 and 2008, GPE supported Kenya's efforts to plan and implement measures that increased primary school enrollment from 72 percent in 2003, when Kenya made primary education free, to 88 percent in 2012. Over that period, the gap between girls and boys reached near parity.

Education at the center of Kenya's development strategy

Under Vision 2030, Kenya's strategy for 2008–2030, education is key to transform the country into an industrialized, middle-income economy. Since 2008, spending on education has been around the GPE-advised target of at least 20 percent of the national budget. In 2014, Kenya reached lower middle-income status.

Despite remarkable progress in education and economic development, children from Kenya's remote regions and disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to go to or complete primary school than others. Kenya's capacity to maintain and improve the quality of education has also not kept up with the growing numbers of children going to school, contributing to low student performance in early grade mathematics and reading. GPE's ongoing support to Kenya's long-term education planning process also engages international donors and domestic stakeholders. As a result, Kenya's education sector plan is broadly owned, and interventions are more successful.

The following are some of Kenya's education priorities supported by GPE that are making a difference:

- Innovative technologies that improve planning and accountability**
 GPE is supporting Kenya's efforts to adopt new technologies to strengthen the collection of data for its education planning and decision making. The teacher performance appraisal development (TPAD) tool helps education officials to upload the appraisals of every teacher in the country. Teachers do the same with their self-appraisals. The Ministry of Education can analyze this information, identify performance gaps and take appropriate action.

The national education management information system (NEMIS) is another technology tool that is improving planning and accountability by providing valuable data for the government to analyze student's learning successes and challenges. NEMIS assigns every school and every student in the country a unique identifying number so that the ministry can track students and their performance as they move through the education system. The government is also using NEMIS

GPE funding to procure and distribute **7.6 million math textbooks** enabled the government to ensure that all Kenyan children in grades 1, 2 and 3 have a math textbook.



“Thanks to the TPAD, the next generation of Kenyans will be very different from those who came before. If you ask me, it is the best thing that ever happened to Kenya.”

—Caroline Mwakisha, Teacher Service Commission,
County Director for Mombasa County.

to provide health insurance for students in secondary school, and this is making an important contribution to advancing Kenya’s human development.

➤ **High-quality textbooks for more children**

The Ministry of Education used the GPE funding to procure and distribute 7.6 million math textbooks as part of a government initiative to strengthen numeracy in early grades. The new textbooks were procured at one-fifth the cost of old textbooks because of an improved centralized procurement system developed under the GPE program. This enabled the government to ensure that all Kenyan children in grades 1, 2 and 3 have a math textbook. Before, three or more children typically shared one textbook.

➤ **More qualified math teachers**

GPE support has helped to train 117,000 teachers and provide them with early grade math teaching guides. To ensure these guides are used correctly, curriculum

support officers observed nearly 20,000 classroom lessons and helped teachers to follow consistent, high-quality lesson plans. The data collected from these observations will be used to inform improvements in teacher training and textbooks. Both interventions are vital for improving learning outcomes.

➤ **Grants to schools for planning, teaching and girls**

GPE funding supports small grants to 4,000 low-performing public primary schools and gives them autonomy to use these grants to help meet needs that are specific to their communities. In many cases, these grants have gone to reducing barriers keeping girls out of school; for example, by waiving school fees, building toilets for girls, hiring female teachers, and programs to counter sexual harassment and violence against girls.

Overall Kenya is making progress in providing a quality education for all children—and significantly so in gender equality. The enrollment in primary school reached 91 percent in 2016, with full gender parity.

Pakistan

(Balochistan)

Using technology to bring education to the most remote areas

The Global Partnership for Education's support to getting more children into school and learning in the most remote areas of Pakistan's Balochistan province is paying off. 53,000 previously out-of-school children —72 percent of them girls—have been enrolled in GPE-supported schools in these areas, thanks to efforts that also promote the use of innovative technologies.



Balochistan’s education indicators have been the worst among Pakistan’s four provinces in recent years because of economic, security, and political problems. Access to education in this large province was a particular challenge because many of its communities are sparsely populated. Almost half of the province’s 22,000 communities did not have a school nearby—and one million children were out of school. While access to education was a key challenge, an equal concern was the lack of a supportive learning environment for students enrolled in school. 78 percent of schools lacked suitable buildings, trained teachers and adequate learning materials.

These challenges impeded the quality of education. According to a reading assessment conducted in 2013, only 38 percent of children tested in grade 5 could read a sentence in English, and only 32 percent in grade 3 could read a sentence in Urdu, the local language.

Balochistan intensifying efforts to tackle its education challenges

Since 2012, GPE has been helping the provincial government tackle its two most urgent problems in education: getting more children into school, especially girls, and getting them to learn and complete school. To help achieve this, GPE worked with the provincial government to develop an education plan for 2013–2018 that prioritized interventions on both fronts.

The plan also assessed the state of education in Balochistan and helped align partners behind the provincial government’s education strategy, mobilizing financial resources from donors and securing political will from the authorities to achieve the education goals.

GPE funded strategic elements of the plan through an implementation grant, which is the largest external contribution to the education sector in Balochistan, at nearly 49 percent of total external funding.

KEY FACTS

GPE partner:
Since 2012

Challenges tackled:
Low access to education in remote areas, low school completion rates

Key interventions:
School infrastructure, teacher training, innovation, real time school monitoring system

Total grants:
US\$34 million
(2014-2019)

Grant agent:
World Bank

Coordinating agency:
UNICEF



World Bank



School monitoring using technology

With GPE's support, a real time school monitoring system was set up to enable education authorities to track data on various indicators in the province's 14,000 schools to improve education in the province and allocate funding to where the needs are.

Replacing paper-based monitoring with an Android application, the system collects data for indicators that include teacher attendance, enrollment, and physical infrastructure such as the functionality of toilets, drinking water facilities and electricity. The system provides timely and accurate information at the school level which helps education officials make informed decisions based on real time data.

The school monitoring system is closely linked with the country's education management information system and is an effective instrument to improve governance in the education system.

Improving school infrastructure

The focus of GPE's support was to promote a community-school model to help ensure long-term sustainability and hence increase students' enrollment and their transition to secondary school. The community-school model consists of two-room schools managed by the community and hiring teachers locally. With GPE's support, some 2,000 community members living close to the schools were trained in school construction and monitoring teacher attendance. Since 2015, some 700 schools with new or renovated buildings were completed, and more than 100 girls' schools from primary to secondary education were upgraded.

To cut building costs, large-scale surveys were done to gather geospatial data and identify abandoned buildings that could be used as schools. This was an innovative and efficient way of identifying these buildings.

More qualified teachers recruited

To improve the quality of learning, GPE also supported the recruitment and training of qualified teachers. A strong focus was on hiring female teachers to help increase the enrollment of girls. Since 2015, 1,200 teachers have been recruited after passing the national testing service exam. These teachers also attended a comprehensive teacher training program before being assigned to a school.

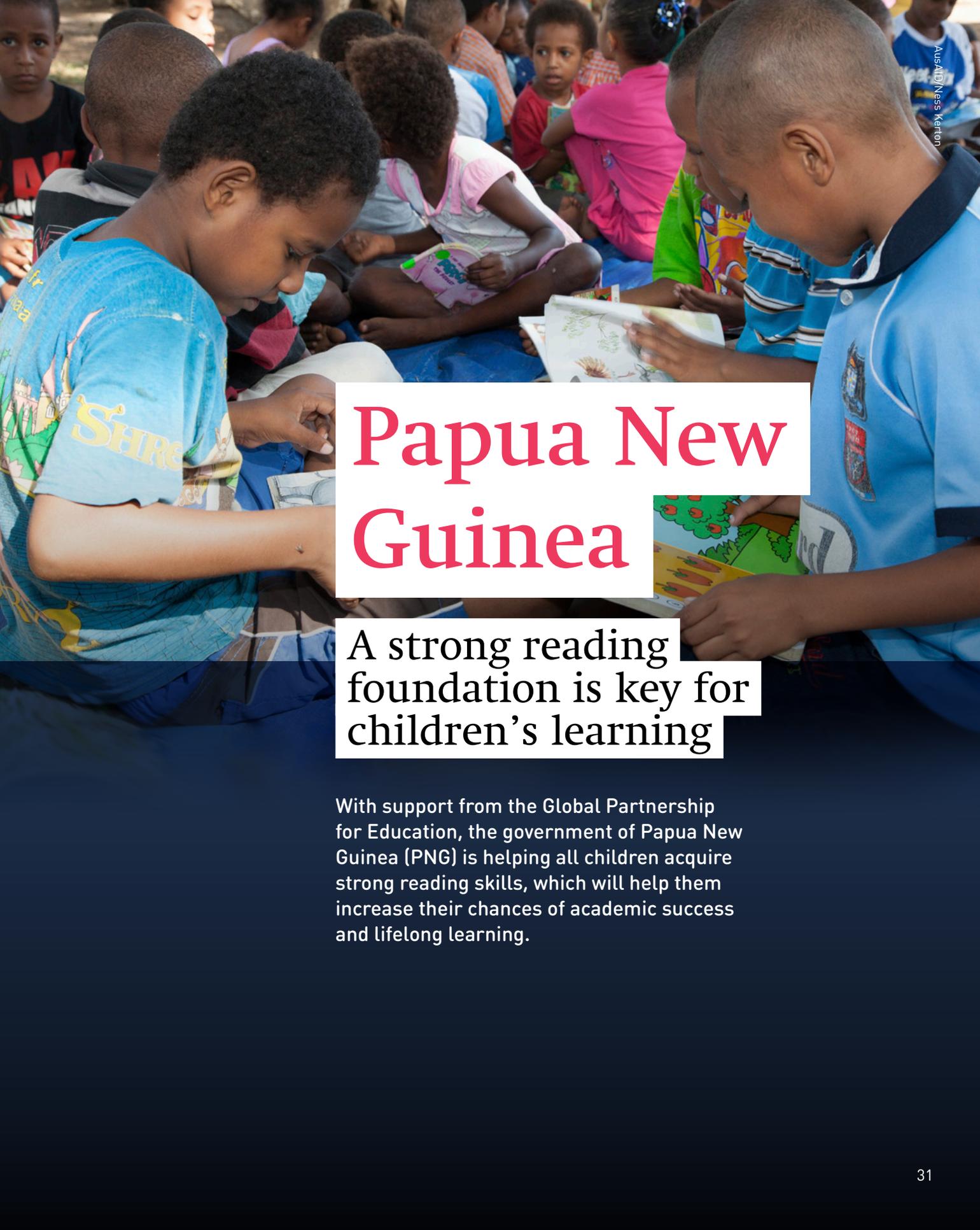
Given the limited educational resources, a WhatsApp group for teachers was created, an innovative measure and low-cost use of technology to promote knowledge-sharing and peer learning between teachers.

Thanks to these interventions **53,000 previously out-of-school children**, of whom **72 percent are girls**, are enrolled in GPE-supported schools. With an 89 percent retention rate of children, these schools will help students **transition to higher levels of education**.

New education plan for 2019–2023

In early 2019, Balochistan received a new GPE grant to develop an education plan for 2019–2023 to sustain ongoing initiatives and revise strategies to tackle persistent education sector gaps.

While Balochistan has made good progress, it still has a long way to go before all of the province's children get a quality education. Moving ahead, the provincial government is preparing a new education plan that, with the support of GPE and its partners, will continue to strengthen the province's education system over the coming years.



Papua New Guinea

A strong reading foundation is key for children's learning

With support from the Global Partnership for Education, the government of Papua New Guinea (PNG) is helping all children acquire strong reading skills, which will help them increase their chances of academic success and lifelong learning.



KEY FACTS

GPE partner:
Since 2010

Challenges addressed:
Low levels of literacy,
inadequate data
collection, shortage
of books

Key interventions:
Classroom libraries,
teacher training,
new monitoring and
evaluation system

Total grants:
US\$26.6 million
(2011-2022)

Grant agent:
Save the Children

Coordinating agency:
UNICEF

Papua New Guinea is a diverse country with some 840 languages spoken among its 7 million people, which poses an array of challenges for the education system.

About one third of PNG's population is illiterate and mostly live in rural areas. What's more, according to the 2010 Early Grade Reading Assessment, only 3 out of 10 students were able to read a few sentences after three years of attending school.

To address this challenge, GPE played a key role in bringing education partners together to improve sector planning, identify key challenges, analyze the situation based on data and ensure external education funding for PNG focused on the priorities outlined in the country's education plan. By funding the plan's strategic elements, GPE helped ensure that investments in PNG's education sector delivered results.

Improving reading skills was identified as one of the key areas that needed to be addressed in the plan covering the years 2010-2019. The plan identifies the lack of reading materials and trained teachers as being among the main challenges diminishing the quality of education in PNG.

That's why GPE and the World Bank worked with the government to launch READ PNG in 2011, a program to promote better teaching and learning of reading skills in elementary and primary education. Through the program, children have more opportunities to practice reading, teachers get the tools and knowledge to support them, and regularly test children's performance.

Classroom libraries help develop reading skills

To quickly increase the availability of literacy materials and give children continual exposure to books, more than 21,700 classroom libraries have been established in elementary and primary schools* in all 22 PNG provinces with support from READ PNG. These libraries, which are managed by classroom teachers, provide a child-friendly environment where students can easily borrow books to stimulate reading beyond the classroom.

Because so many languages are spoken in PNG, books in local languages were delivered to some 15,000 classrooms in elementary schools nationwide. These books improve learning for children who do not speak the main languages and often come from the most disadvantaged groups, the main focus of GPE's support. All schools received books that were adapted to local languages and non-language-specific reading materials.

In addition, learning kits with small chalkboards, flashcards, beads, pattern blocks, and linking cubes and a set of wall charts were delivered to 22,200 elementary classrooms, giving more than 820,000 students access to these kits.

* Elementary schools in PNG have a three-year program consisting of a preparatory year and grades 1 and 2. The local language is the language of instruction in elementary schools. Primary schools in PNG have a six-year program consisting of grades 3-8. Here, English is the language of instruction.

Supporting teachers to improve literacy

Although easy access to books is important for encouraging children to read, teachers are essential for helping students develop strong literacy skills. Therefore, GPE supported the training of 25,000 primary school teachers on how to use the classroom libraries and create their own learning materials. This helped tackle one of the most important shortfalls in the country's education system: the lack of reading materials in a diverse language environment.

In addition to the learning materials kits, teachers received guides on how to use the classroom libraries and samples of activities and games to encourage children to read. The teaching and learning kits developed under Read PNG were distributed to additional provinces with funding from other bilateral donors, which helped scale up the program.

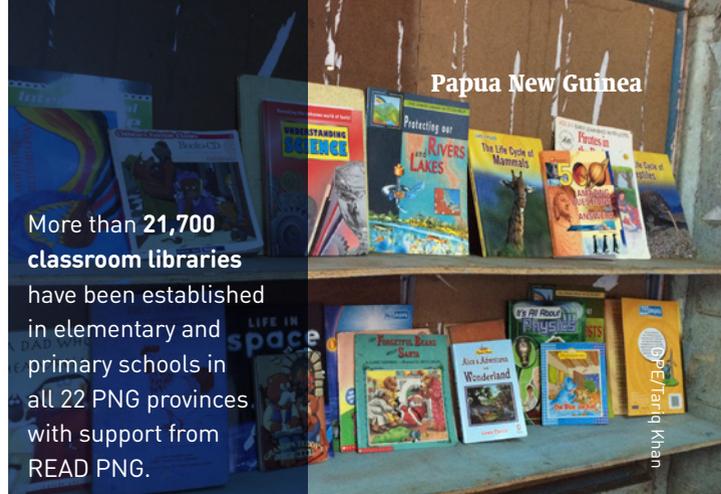
According to a survey, more than 80 percent of teachers participated in the classroom library training program and most of them applied the new teaching strategies in their classrooms. This is an encouraging sign that shows that many teachers have found ways of using the classroom library books for instructional activities, and that the training has made a difference in teachers' classroom practices.

Measuring results

To ensure that teachers and education officials have the right tools to measure children's learning, GPE helped the government to launch an early grade reading assessment (EGRA). An international recognized system, EGRA is an effective tool to measure students' progress toward learning to read.

Initially conducted in four provinces, this system proved invaluable in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning of reading and spurring remedial action. The results of the early grade reading assessment led to a reading booster program which provided teachers with new resources and training to improve the way they teach reading.

Promising results were shown within just a year of implementing the reading booster program. In the province



of Madang, the average number of grade 3 students who were unable to identify a single sound in a word dropped from 22 percent to 4 percent. In the Western Highlands, this dropped from 35 percent to 4 percent.

The EGRA findings also helped develop a new standard-based curriculum which is currently being rolled out. For the first time in PNG, education data was used in the development of a new curriculum, a major step in strengthening the country's education system.

A commitment to improve education

The government continues to show strong commitment to improving children's education which is reflected in an increased education spending from 20 percent in 2010 to almost 24 percent in 2017.

Since then, GPE also helped reactivate the local education group, a collaborative forum which is essential for joint planning, improved coordination, and information exchange between education partners such as donors, local CSOs, and international organizations.

In early 2019, PNG received a new GPE grant of US\$7.4 million. The funding builds on the progress made and focuses on improving early grade learning outcomes in math and science, with a special emphasis on low-performing provinces. The grant also helps strengthening teacher training, especially for female teachers, and providing textbooks for students. The grant amount includes US\$3.5 million from the GPE Multiplier**, which has mobilized US\$10.6 million in additional co-financing from the Government of Japan. Save the Children is the grant agent.

** The GPE Multiplier is an innovative finance instrument that provides an incentive and the financial resources to catalyze more and better investment in education.

Sudan

Building the foundation for a strong education system

Sudan's education sector has suffered grievously from the country's armed conflicts. But a strong education system can promote peace and help prevent future conflicts. The Government of Sudan, supported by the Global Partnership for Education, has taken decisive steps to ensure that more children get a quality education.



Sudan has been beset by conflict for most of its independent history. Under the terms of a peace agreement in 2005, its southern states seceded, forming the Republic of South Sudan in 2011. Widening inequality and poor infrastructure remain major obstacles to Sudan's socioeconomic development.

Sudan's education challenges

More than 3 million children are not in school in Sudan – one of the highest numbers in the world; and those in school, often do not complete it. Historically, the quality of education was poor, due to a weak system which struggled with a severe shortage of trained teachers, textbooks, learning materials, school buildings and equipment.

GPE support to education in Sudan

Since 2012, GPE has supported the government's efforts to ensure that more children get a quality education. GPE was instrumental in helping Sudan conduct a comprehensive analysis of the country's education system, which was the foundation for the development of the education plan for 2018–2022. This plan, which helps the government prioritize interventions, was developed by working closely with the federal education ministry, state education ministries, and local and international development partners like the World Bank and UNICEF.

GPE also played a key role in coordinating a strong dialogue between education partners by initiating joint sector reviews to monitor progress towards the goals outlined in the education plan. This mechanism has fostered mutual accountability and strong collaboration among all partners and the government.

KEY FACTS

GPE partner:
Since 2012

Challenges addressed:
Low quality of education, shortage of textbooks, poor school infrastructure, inadequate data collection

Key interventions:
Community development approach and school grants

Total grants:
US\$77 million (2013-2019)

Grant agent:
World Bank

Coordinating agency:
UNICEF



GPE/Kelley Lynch

Between 2014-2017, the percentage of **non-readers** attending GPE-supported schools **fell from 47 percent to 42 percent** and the oral reading fluency of students **improved from 12 words per minute to 15.5.**

Strong education systems begin with reliable and timely data

To strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education to collect and analyze data for education planning and management, GPE helped build three data systems in Sudan:

- ➊ **Teacher database.** Completed in 2016, this has data on qualifications, years of experience, career grades, and teaching assignments. The database was essential for conducting the education sector analysis and for developing the 2018–2022 education plan, supported by a GPE sector plan development grant.
- ➋ **National learning assessment.** In 2015, GPE supported the Ministry of Education’s first national assessment of early grade learning. The results were used for a school grants program, an initiative also supported by GPE. An assessment of grades 3 and 6 followed in early 2018 and provides important data for future programs.
- ➌ **Rapid education management information system (EMIS).** GPE support enabled this system which provides the most reliable information on basic and secondary education in Sudan to get underway. Data is now regularly collected and data management is improving.

Supporting the most vulnerable children

To make education affordable to the most vulnerable communities, GPE supported a school grants program in 2013, the first of its kind in Sudan. The program makes small grants quickly available to schools to buy uniforms and for other running costs. To date, 5,300 schools in 74 communities have received grants.

To ensure that gains in the education system are sustainable, the government with support from GPE, empowers communities to become involved in the education process by encouraging them to identify their education needs and participate in deciding how resources for education are best mobilized.



In addition, GPE helped built more than 1,600 classrooms, primarily in rural areas with weak learning outcomes, in an effort to improve the learning environment by reducing the number of students per classroom.

More textbooks to improve learning outcomes

To tackle the shortage of textbooks, which was particularly acute in conflict-ridden areas and internally displaced people camps, GPE funded the production and distribution of 22 million textbooks. All students in grades 1–8 now have access to textbooks in mathematics, science, Arabic and English.

GPE interventions lead to results

GPE interventions in Sudan are achieving impressive results. Since 2013, education planning has improved, and joint sector reviews have been established to monitor progress and strengthen the dialogue among all partners. The joint sector reviews are the first to be done in Sudan and will require continuous refinement over the coming years.

The preliminary results of the national learning assessment show that schools supported by GPE achieved better learning outcomes than those that did not. This was quite an achievement because the GPE-supported schools were in areas with the weakest education outcomes. In the short period between 2014 and 2017, the percentage of non-readers attending GPE-supported schools fell from 47 percent to 42 percent and the oral reading fluency of students improved from 12 words per minute to 15.5.

GPE mission

To mobilize global and national efforts to contribute to the achievement of **EQUITABLE, QUALITY EDUCATION** and learning for all, through inclusive partnership, a focus on effective and efficient education systems and increased financing.

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September 2019