



# FINANCING AND PARTNERSHIP

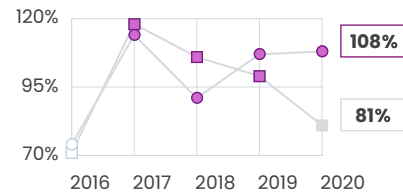
# RESULTS AT A GLANCE

## COUNTRY-LEVEL

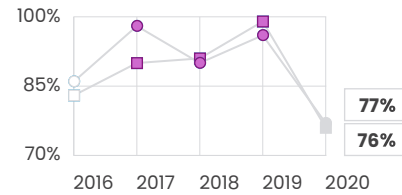
### OBJECTIVE 3

Effective and efficient GPE financing

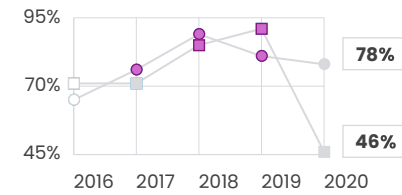
**#21**  
Implementation grants achieved **108%** of their target for textbook distribution.



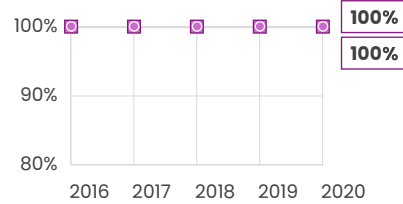
**#22**  
Implementation grants achieved **77%** of their target for teacher training.



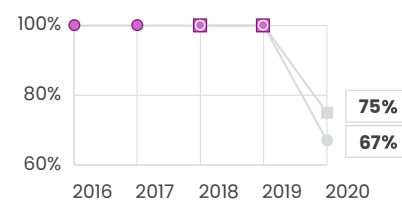
**#23**  
Implementation grants achieved **78%** of their target for classroom construction.



**#24a**  
**100%** of Implementation grant applications identified variable part targets.

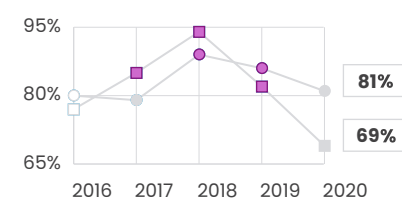


**#24b**  
**67%** of Implementation grants achieved variable part targets.



\*The 2016 and 2017 value for PCFCs was not applicable; see appendix A for details.

**#25**  
**81%** of Implementation grants were on track.

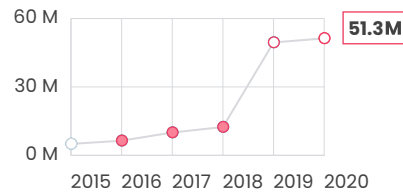


## COUNTRY-LEVEL

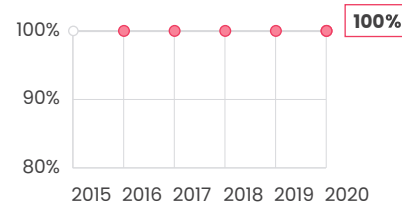
### OBJECTIVE 4

Mobilize more and better financing

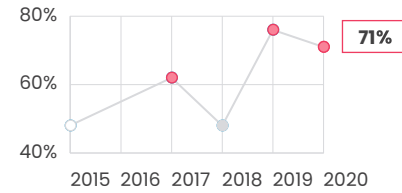
**#26**  
Non-traditional donors contributed **51.3 million** to GPE since 2015.



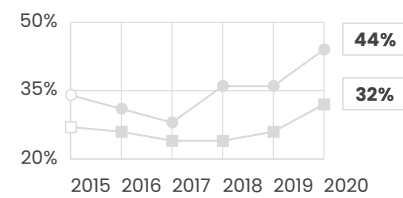
**#27**  
**100%** of donor pledges were fulfilled.



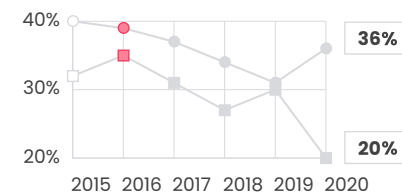
**#28**  
**71%** of GPE donors increased or maintained their official development assistance for education.



**#29**  
**44%** of implementation grants aligned with national systems.



**#30**  
**36%** of implementation grants were co-financed or sector pooled.



## GLOBAL-LEVEL

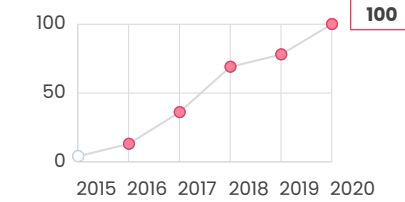
### OBJECTIVE 5

Build a stronger partnership

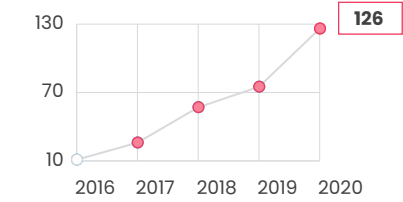
**#32**  
Proportion of partner countries and other partners reporting strengthened clarity of roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities in GPE country processes.

N/R

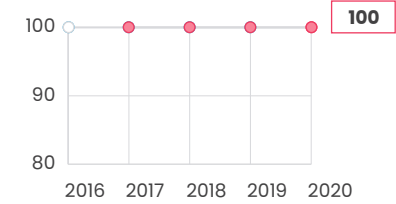
**#33**  
**100** technical products were produced since 2015.



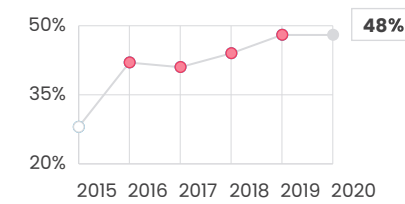
**#34**  
**126** advocacy events were undertaken since 2016.



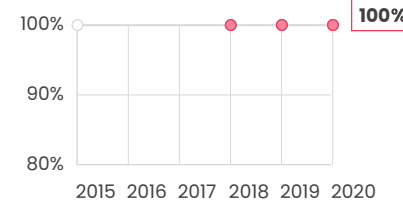
**#35**  
**100%** of significant audit issues were addressed.



**#36**  
**48%** of Secretariat staff time was spent on country-facing functions.



**#37**  
**100%** of results and evaluation reports were published.



\*There was no milestone for 2016 and 2017; see appendix A for details.

|         | Baseline | Milestone met | Milestone not met | No milestone | Not reported |
|---------|----------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Overall | ○        | ●             | ●                 | ○            | N/R          |
| PCFCs   | □        | ■             | ■                 | ○            | N/R          |

## KEY FINDINGS

- Over the course of GPE 2020, GPE approved 145 implementation grants (including COVID-19 accelerated funding grants) worth US\$2.6 billion, 64 percent of which was allocated to PCFCs. During the same period, grant agents utilized \$2.0 billion, 58 percent of which was in PCFCs.
- In calendar year 2020, GPE approved 104 implementation grants worth \$1.47 billion and disbursed \$818 million, reaching the highest level ever recorded in GPE's history. This includes 66 COVID-19 accelerated funding grants worth \$467 million.
- The proportion of grants on track with implementation did not change substantially from 80 percent in 2016 to 81 percent in 2020. Implementation delays were partly explained by external factors outside the control of the GPE grant, including COVID-19.
- GPE set annual performance targets for grants meeting their objectives of teacher training, provision of textbooks and classroom construction. Since 2016, GPE had met these targets, but the partnership missed teacher training and school construction targets for the first time in 2020, largely because of COVID-19.
- Alignment and harmonization of implementation grants continued to be a challenge throughout the GPE 2020 period. The proportion of grants that are aligned with country systems increased from 34 percent in 2015 to 44 percent in 2020, while the proportion of grants that used harmonized modality decreased from 40 percent in 2015 to 36 percent in 2020. The alignment indicator has never met annual milestones since 2016, and the harmonization indicator has not done so since 2017.
- Aid to education reached a record high of \$15.9 billion in 2019, though the growth is mainly attributed to an increase in aid to higher education.
- In 2020, donors contributed \$882 million to GPE, recording the highest annual contribution since GPE's inception in 2002.

The global-level objectives of GPE 2020 were to mobilize more and better resources for education and build a strong partnership. GPE uses its convening power and advocacy to raise the global commitment to education. The resources mobilized are then allocated to the countries with the greatest education need. At the country level, GPE strives to ensure its grant money is used effectively and efficiently. This chapter presents an overview of the GPE grant portfolio, its geographic and thematic allocation, and performance and effectiveness of its grants as measured by the GPE results framework. It also reports on the partnership's collective efforts in resource mobilization, advocacy and knowledge generation.

## 5.1. GRANT PORTFOLIO

### OVERVIEW OF GPE GRANTS

GPE offers a variety of grants to its partner countries to support improved learning and increased equity in education (figure 5.1 and appendix J). In 2020, in light of COVID-19, three new funding mechanisms were created to help partner countries ensure continued learning during the pandemic and build resilience of education systems to prepare for future emergencies (see the special COVID-19 chapter). The cumulative volume of funding, combining all types of active grant mechanisms, amounts to \$7.1 billion.

### EDUCATION SECTOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

The education sector program implementation grant is the largest grant type in the GPE grant portfolio.<sup>1</sup> From its inception in 2002 to December 2020, GPE has cumulatively allocated \$6.4 billion to 198 implementation grants in 66 countries. As of December 2020, there were 62 active implementation grants worth \$1.6 billion in 49 countries.

In 2020, both grant approval and disbursement reached the highest levels ever recorded in the partnership's history (see box 5.1 for the terminology used for GPE's financial reporting).

Including COVID-19 accelerated funding grants, GPE approved 104 grants worth \$1.47 billion in 2020 alone, which is more than the total dollar amount for grants approved in the first four years of GPE 2020 (2016–19, \$1.1 billion, figure 5.2). Two-thirds of the total approval amount in 2020 was for regular implementation grants, which was the highest amount since the partnership's inception, while the remaining third is for COVID-19 accelerated funding grants, which amount to \$467 million. The amount disbursed to grant agents reached a record high as well, totaling \$818 million including COVID-19 accelerated funding grants. However, utilization by the grant agents stagnated at \$364 million including COVID-19 accelerated funding grants and at \$241 million excluding COVID-19 accelerated funding grants. The amount utilized in 2020 partly reflects the amount approved during the preceding several years,<sup>2</sup> as well as the time taken from grant approval to start date, and slower grant implementation because of the COVID-19 pandemic (see box 5.2 for the pandemic's impact on implementation grants).

Throughout the GPE 2020 period, GPE prioritized countries with the greatest need (see appendixes K–N). Out of \$1.8 billion utilized by grant agents from 2016 to 2020, 58 percent was in partner countries affected by fragility and conflict (figure 5.3); the proportion utilized in PCFCs varied between 54 percent and 62 percent, depending on the year. Sub-Saharan Africa's share of all utilized implementation grant funding was more than three-quarters of the total, and increased

1. Although COVID accelerated funding is a type of education sector program implementation grant, it is not included in this section unless otherwise specified. Refer to the special COVID-19 chapter for details of COVID-19 accelerated funding grants.

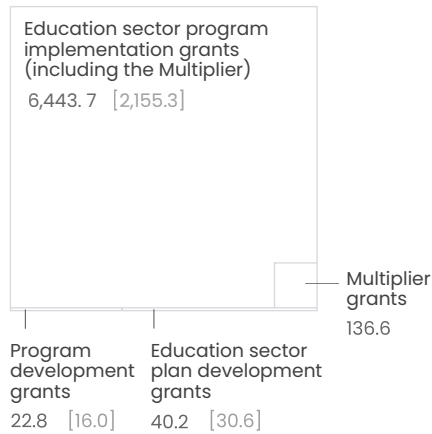
2. Grant agents typically utilize grant money over a three-to-five-year period after the approval, depending on grant duration.

**FIGURE 5.1.**

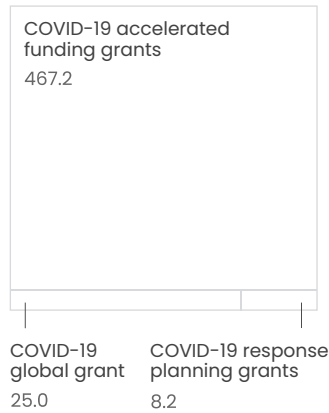
**GPE OFFERS A VARIETY OF GRANTS TO ADDRESS COMPLEX CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION IN PARTNER COUNTRIES.**

Cumulative allocation of different grant types since their inception (various years), as of December 2020

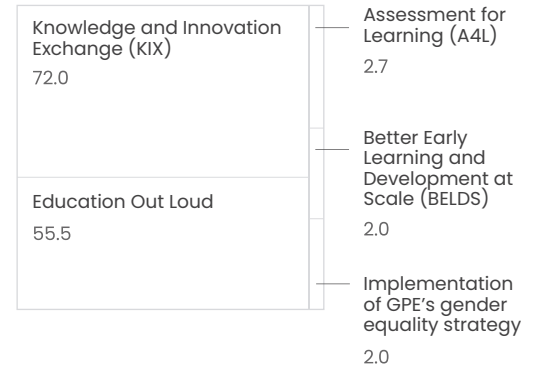
**Education sector plan planning and implementation support: US\$6.5 billion**



**COVID-19 response: US\$500.4 million**

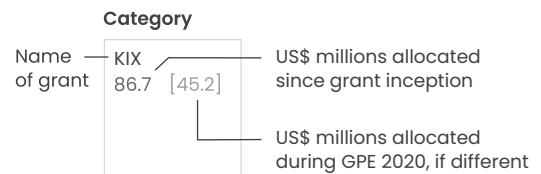


**Thematic support: US\$134.2 million**



Source: GPE Secretariat.

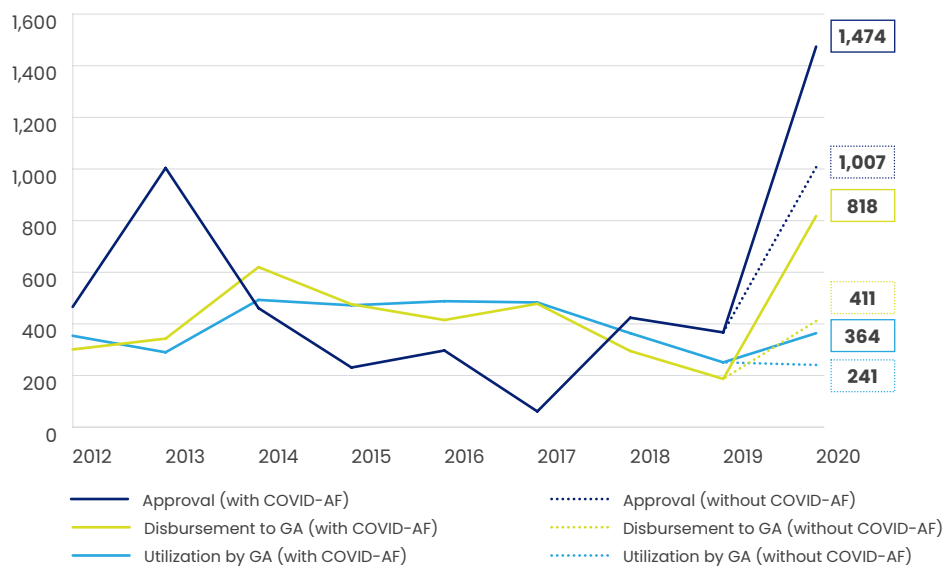
Note: This graphic shows grant mechanisms that were active at some point during 2020. The implementation of GPE's gender equality strategy includes investment in gender-responsive education sector planning. The amount allocated to COVID response planning grants, including the agency fee, is \$8.8 million, as shown in the special COVID-19 chapter.



**FIGURE 5.2.**

**APPROVAL AND DISBURSEMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS REACHED A RECORD HIGH IN 2020.**

Approval, disbursement and utilization of implementation grants (including COVID-19 accelerated funding) since 2012 (US\$, millions)



Source: GPE Secretariat.

Note: This figure shows approval, disbursement and utilization from 2012, as disbursement and utilization figures before and after 2012 are not directly comparable because of a change in disbursement mechanism in 2012. Approval in 2020 was \$1.6 billion, including all grants and Secretariat and Trustee budgets. All disbursements made from the trust fund, which includes all grants, agency fees, and Secretariat and Trustee budgets, amount to \$1 billion. GA = grant agent, COVID-AF = COVID-19 accelerated funding.

## BOX 5.1. GRANT DISBURSEMENT AND UTILIZATION

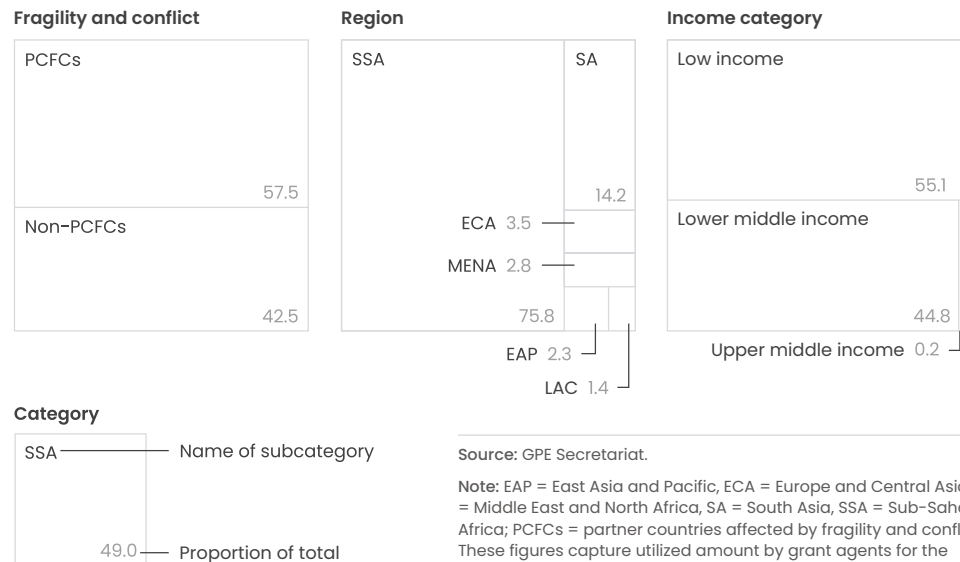
Once a grant application is approved, the grant funds are transferred from GPE’s trust fund to the grant agent in batches, as per the financial agreement between the GPE Secretariat and the grant agent. This transaction is called “disbursement” in GPE’s financial reporting. When the funds are then spent on the program, the grant money is then considered “utilized” in GPE’s financial reporting.

However, in previous results reports the term “disbursement” had been used to signify utilization by grant agents. In this report, disbursement to grant agents and utilization by grant agents are differentiated to capture the financial flow more precisely.

FIGURE 5.3.

### OVER THE GPE 2020 PERIOD, A LARGE SHARE OF GPE IMPLEMENTATION GRANT FUNDING WAS UTILIZED IN THE COUNTRIES WITH THE GREATEST NEED.

Implementation grant utilization by PCFC category, region and income category, 2016–20



Source: GPE Secretariat.

Note: EAP = East Asia and Pacific, ECA = Europe and Central Asia, MENA = Middle East and North Africa, SA = South Asia, SSA = Sub-Saharan Africa; PCFCs = partner countries affected by fragility and conflict. These figures capture utilized amount by grant agents for the implementation grants. They do not include utilization for COVID-19 accelerated funding grants (for that utilization, see the special COVID-19 chapter).

Rounding to the nearest tenth of a percent for each subcategory may result in totals slightly above or below 100.0.

from 65 percent in 2016 to 88 percent in 2020. Low-income countries utilized 55 percent of implementation grant funding.

#### Thematic allocation

During the GPE 2020 strategy period, GPE approved 79 implementation grants worth \$2.16 billion.<sup>3</sup> Of this amount, 36 percent, or \$775 million, was allocated to activities primarily

related to learning; 30 percent, or \$640 million, to activities related to equity; and 30 percent, or \$653 million, to system strengthening (figure 5.4).<sup>4</sup> Grants in PCFCs, where average completion rates are lower and out-of-school rates are higher than non-PCFCs,<sup>5</sup> allocated a higher proportion of their grant amount to equity than non-PCFCs (31 percent in PCFCs compared with 25 percent in non-PCFCs).

3. This does not include COVID accelerated financing grants.

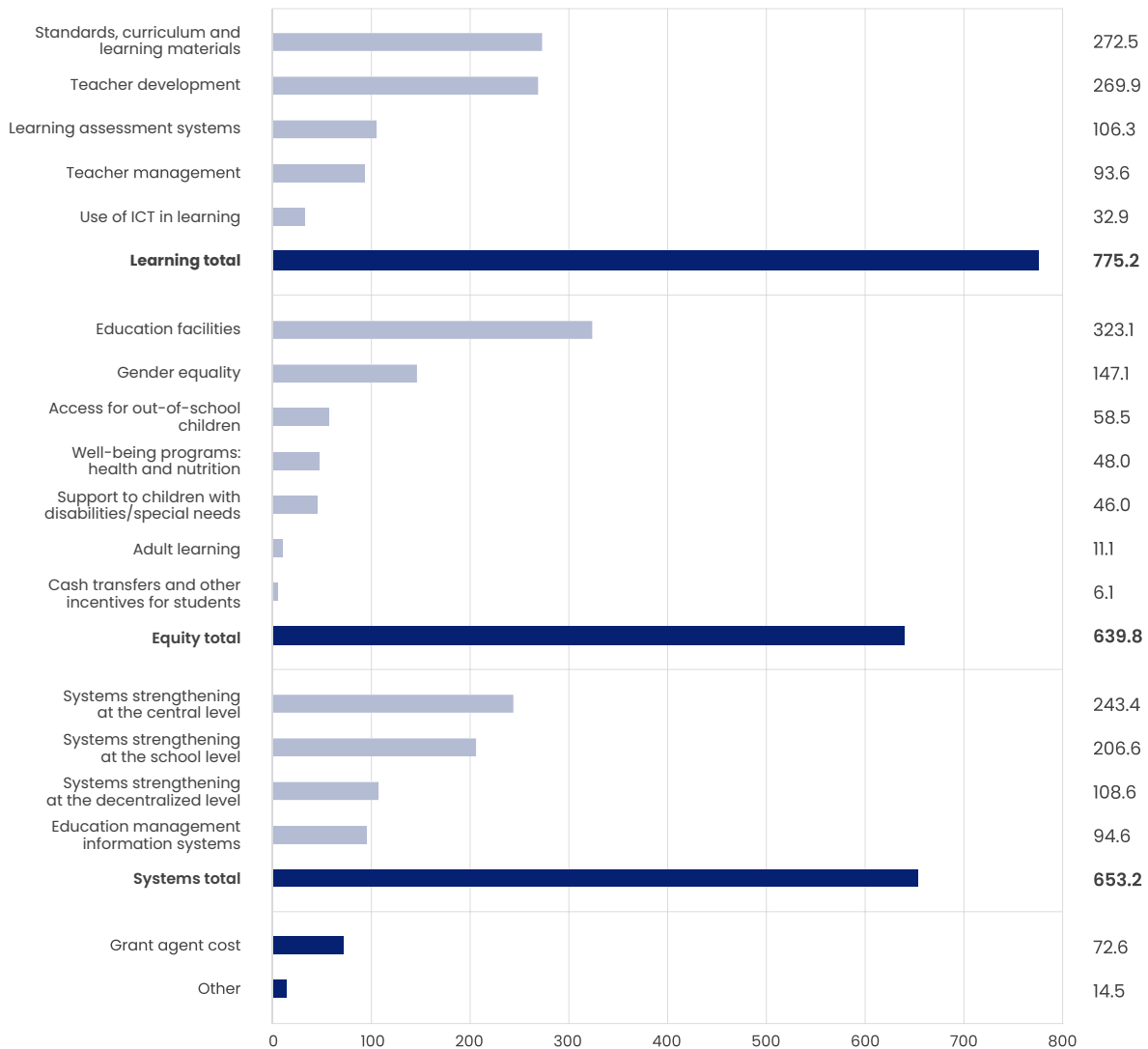
4. The remaining 4 percent is not allocated to a specific thematic area. This typically includes grant agent cost, contingency cost and project monitoring and evaluation.

5. According to GPE’s results framework Indicators 4 and 7.

**FIGURE 5.4.**

**LEARNING, EQUITY AND SYSTEMS RECEIVED SIMILAR AMOUNTS OF GPE IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS.**

Allocation per thematic activity of GPE implementation grants, 2016–20 (US\$, millions)



Source: GPE Secretariat.

Overall, thematic allocation across grants appears to reflect education challenges in each country (see [appendixes O and P](#) respectively for thematic activities and education levels supported for each country). For example, all grants to countries below the GPE threshold for the gender parity index<sup>6</sup> for completion rates for either primary or lower secondary

education supported gender equality. Most of the grants in countries with higher out-of-school rates have supported increased access to education for out-of-school children.<sup>7</sup>

During the GPE 2020 period, 59 percent of all implementation grant funding was spent on primary education, 11 percent

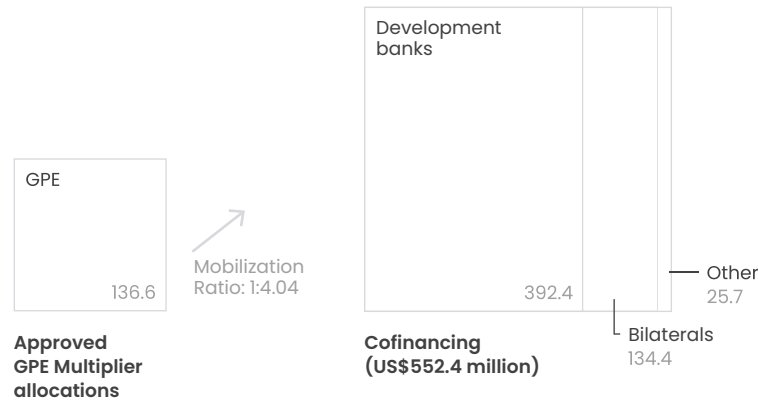
6. Below 0.877.

7. Out-of-school children in the 10 countries with highest out-of-school rate at primary level according to Indicator 7a (in descending order of out-of-school rates: South Sudan, Eritrea, Mali, Sudan, Djibouti, Niger, Chad, Senegal, Guinea and Liberia) have been supported by at least one GPE implementation grant during GPE 2020, except Mali. Grants in Mali support increased participation and completion of primary education, especially for girls.

**FIGURE 5.5.**

**MULTIPLIER GRANTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$137 MILLION MOBILIZED \$552 MILLION IN COFINANCING.**

Cumulative Multiplier allocations approved and reported cofinancing as of December 2020 (US\$, millions)



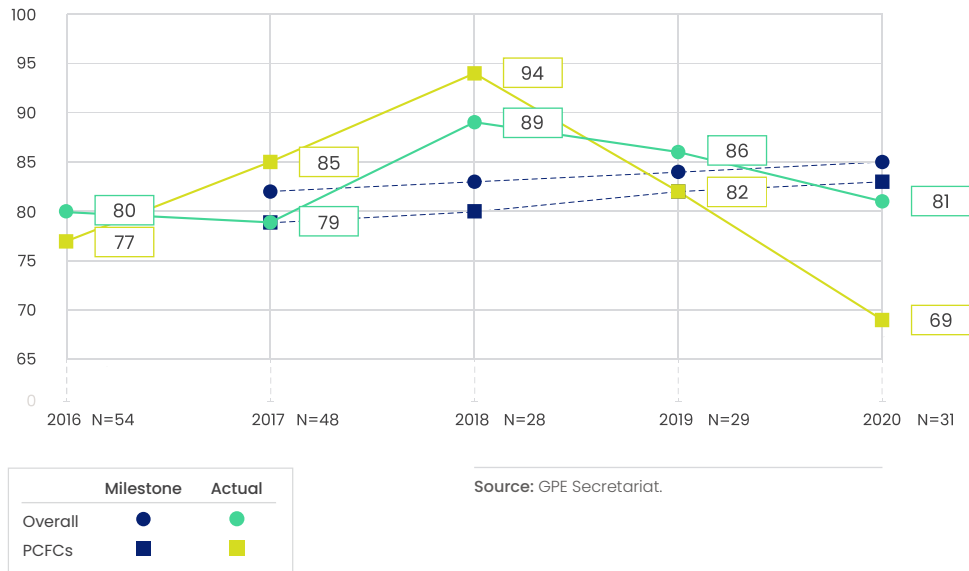
Source: GPE Secretariat.

Note: "Other" include UNICEF, UNESCO, United Nations World Food Programme, European Union and two foundations.

**FIGURE 5.6.**

**THE PROPORTION OF ON-TRACK GRANTS MISSED THE FINAL TARGET AFTER A DOWNWARD TREND SINCE 2018.**

Proportion of implementation grants rated as on track in implementation



Source: GPE Secretariat.

on secondary education and 7 percent on pre-primary education.<sup>8</sup> The proportion of funding supporting each level remained largely consistent throughout the GPE 2020 period.

The total amount spent on pre-primary, primary and secondary education accounted for 16 percent of all aid to those levels in partner countries receiving any implementation grants from

8. Twenty-two percent was not allocated to a specific level (e.g., supporting education policy and administrative management, education facilities and training, teacher training and education research), and the remaining 1 percent was allocated to other levels, such as adult education and life skills training.

GPE from 2016 through 2019 (the most recent year for which the data are available).<sup>9</sup>

### GPE Multiplier

Countries can access Multiplier funding by mobilizing at least \$3 in new and additional external financing for every \$1 from the Multiplier. As of December 2020, 28 countries/states had secured US\$ 279.2 million in Multiplier allocations, on the basis of mobilizing US\$1,219.2 million in cofinancing. Of these allocations, 17 had been developed into approved grant allocations totaling \$136.6 million and leveraging \$552.4 million in reported additional cofinancing from 20 development partners<sup>10</sup> (figure 5.5), more than two-thirds of which was from development banks and more than half (54%) of which was from the World Bank Group.<sup>11</sup> Preliminary findings from the review of the Multiplier grants conducted by the Secretariat in 2021<sup>12</sup> suggest that the Multiplier was associated with unlocking more funding or mobilizing funding more quickly in almost all countries covered by the review, though the causality cannot be definitively established. The review also found that Multiplier was associated with aligning the placement of cofinancing – where and how it is used – more closely to GPE goals, such as equity and efficiency.

## 5.2. PERFORMANCE OF IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

### STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS (Indicator 25)

The results framework monitors the overall status of implementation grants (Indicator 25) by calculating the proportion of grants that are on track with implementation. Grants that are expected to achieve all or most of their major outputs by the end of the project period are rated as on track.<sup>13</sup>

In fiscal year 2020, 81 percent of grants were on track with implementation (figure 5.6). The proportion of grants that were on track with implementation increased from fiscal

year 2016 to fiscal year 2018 but steadily decreased after that, missing the final target by 4 percentage points in fiscal year 2020. This downward trend is more salient among PCFCs. In fiscal year 2020, out of 31 grants that were active and reported progress at least once,<sup>14</sup> six were rated as off track,<sup>15</sup> a slight increase from four in the previous fiscal year.

Consistent with previous years, implementation delays in off-track grants were mainly explained by external factors such as political instability (Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo and Guinea-Bissau), teacher strikes (Guinea-Bissau and Lesotho) and conflict (Yemen). Other reasons for delays included complex project design (Democratic Republic of Congo), protracted operationalization of project implementation unit (Guinea-Bissau), lack of political and institutional ownership (Comoros) and procurement issues (Lesotho). In Chad, implementation was delayed by bottlenecks in the technical work preceding textbook procurement and the setting of criteria for sites for school construction, as well as by the late mobilization of technical assistance. For some countries, delays were compounded by COVID-19. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, COVID-19-related containment measures such as school closures and limitation on domestic travel further delayed project implementation.

Evidence from the countries<sup>16</sup> suggests that COVID-19 is affecting implementation of planned activities for almost all grants,<sup>17</sup> though it is not the only factor that triggered off-track ratings for grants' overall implementation status, at least as of the June 2020 cutoff for this indicator. School closures, adherence to social distancing norms and disruptions in supply chains all affected the implementation of activities (see box 5.2).

### TEXTBOOK, TEACHER TRAINING AND CLASSROOM CONSTRUCTION (Indicators 21–23)

GPE's results framework tracks the performance of implementation grants on textbook distribution, teacher training

9. Based on GPE calculations using data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Creditor Reporting System, downloaded March 2021, <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crsl>.

10. United Kingdom (FCDO), Germany (KfW), JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), Islamic Development Bank, World Bank, IDA refugee window, Global Partnership for Out-Based Aid, UNICEF, Asian Development Bank, USAID, Australia (DFAT), New Zealand (NZAID), AFD (Agence Française de Développement), MECP (Madrasa Early Childhood Foundation – Zanzibar), KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency), MZE (Milele Zanzibar Foundation), UNESCO, European Union, Canada and UN World Food Programme (WFP).

11. Including IDA refugee window and Global Partnership for Out-Based Aid, based at the World Bank.

12. Based on the desk review of 32 Multiplier grants and interviews for 10 out of these 32 grants.

13. The rating definition for each implementation status (on track, slightly behind, delayed) can be found in the methodology sheet for Indicator 25 (<https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/methodology-sheet-gpe-result-indicator-25>).

14. Out of 46 grants that were active during fiscal year 2020, 15 were new grants for which the first progress reports and grant agents' ratings were not yet due: Burundi, Cameroon, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea, Maldives, Mozambique, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, Somalia–Federal (additional financing), Somalia–Somaliland (accelerated funding), Sudan, Tanzania–Mainland, Tanzania–Zanzibar (implementation grant and Multiplier).

15. Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho and Yemen.

16. Implementation status reports and information provided by grant agents for this indicator and for other purposes.

17. GPE, *Grant Status Report 2020* (Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Education, 2021), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/grant-status-report-2020-novemberdecember-2020>. Though strictly speaking, evidence on the impact of COVID-19 is not yet available for two grants that started implementation just before the close of the fiscal year (Maldives implementation grant and Multiplier, and Mozambique accelerated funding grant).



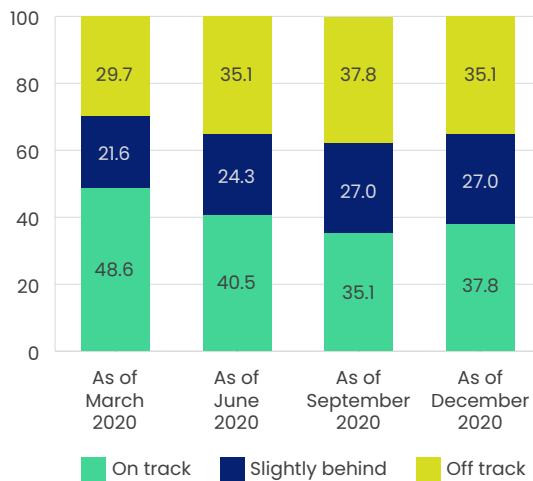
## BOX 5.2. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

According to an analysis conducted by the Secretariat and preliminary findings from a review of the effect of COVID-19 on GPE's implementation grants,<sup>a</sup> the pandemic appears to have contributed to delays in the implementation of activities and the utilization of grant funding.

Among various activities planned under the implementation grants, teacher training is most frequently cited as being affected, as a result of containment measures such as prohibition of mass gathering. Activities that were planned to be conducted at the school level—namely, lesson observation, school data collection, piloting newly developed teaching and learning materials and learning assessment—were typically postponed until after school reopenings. Access to project sites was limited in countries that imposed domestic travel restrictions. The capacity of ministries of education was stretched thin to respond to this crisis while negotiating a new remote work environment.

### MORE GRANTS WERE RATED AS OFF TRACK WITH UTILIZATION AFTER THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19.

Utilization status for active implementation grants by quarter, in 2020 (percent)



Source: GPE Secretariat.

**Note:** In this figure, all 37 grants that were active throughout 2020 are included. In contrast, the grants included in the analysis for the Grant Status Report 2020 were limited to those with at least one progress report submitted to the Secretariat, resulting in different proportions.

The proportion of grants off track with utilization increased during 2020 (see figure on left). When the global outbreak happened in March 2020, the proportion of off-track grants was 30 percent.<sup>b</sup> This increased to 35 percent in June and 38 percent in September, but then it slightly decreased to 35 percent in December 2020, as some grants that had been considered off track extended their closing date.

Some countries adapted grant implementation, for example, by changing the modality of teacher training from in-person to distance learning or reallocating the funds to respond to new needs stemming from the pandemic.<sup>c</sup> Other countries applied for grant revisions, such as an extension of the closing date or adjustment in the variable part target.<sup>d</sup> The number of grant revisions related to COVID-19 was limited right after the global outbreak, but it slightly increased as the effects of COVID-19 became more visible.<sup>e</sup>

a. Final report will be available later in 2021.

b. To rate implementation grants as on or off track with utilization, GPE compares the proportion utilized so far to the proportion of the grant period that has passed. If the amount of time elapsed exceeds the amount of funds utilized by more than 25 percent, the grant is rated off track with utilization.

c. As per a new provision of implementation grant policy that allows countries to reallocate resources (up to \$10 million or 25 percent of the total grant amount) to integrate a new activity to respond to COVID-19 without approval from the Secretariat or the Board Committee formerly known as the Grants and Performance Committee.

d. These revisions require approval from the Secretariat or the Board Committee formerly known as the Grants and Performance Committee.

e. A number of grants mention the COVID-19 pandemic as a reason for non-minor and major restructuring: two for the second quarter, four for the third quarter, five for the fourth quarter of 2020; five for the first quarter, five for the second quarter of 2021.

and classroom construction (Indicators 21, 22 and 23, respectively). The proportion of textbooks distributed out of the total planned by implementation grants increased from 74 percent in 2016 to 108 percent in 2020 (Indicator 21, [figure 5.7a](#)). Similarly, the proportion of classrooms constructed out of those planned increased, from 65 percent in 2016 to 78 percent in 2020, though it slightly missed the 2020 target by 2 percentage points (Indicator 23, [figure 5.7c](#)). On the other hand, the proportion of teachers trained out of those planned decreased from 86 percent in 2016 to 77 percent in 2020, missing the target by 13 percentage points (Indicator 22, [figure 5.7b](#)). In fiscal year 2020, the targets for PCFCs were missed for all three indicators for the first time since the baseline. In particular, the classroom construction target was missed by a large margin in PCFCs—only 46 percent of classrooms were constructed out of those planned in fiscal year 2020, far below the target of 80 percent.

Evidence shows that grant performance in all three areas was affected by COVID-19 to varying degrees.<sup>18</sup> Teacher training was particularly affected by the pandemic (see [box 5.2](#)). Indeed, a review of grant progress reports reveals that most of the teacher trainings that were counted toward this indicator were conducted before the pandemic. The underachievement of the school construction target was partly due to COVID-related factors, such as prohibition of movement within the country, restriction on construction work and disruption of the global supply chain. Other factors that affected school construction include delayed by diligence processes for procurement (The Gambia and Sierra Leone) and security reasons (Pakistan).

Despite the challenges faced in fiscal year 2020, GPE managed to distribute 155,715,890 textbooks, train 1,570,909 teachers and construct 16,837 classrooms during the GPE 2020 strategy period.<sup>19</sup>

## RESULTS-BASED FUNDING (Indicator 24)

Since 2015, GPE has been implementing a results-based funding model that disburses at least 30 percent of the total implementation grant funding on achievement of the targets set by countries. Indicator 24 of the GPE results framework monitors the proportion of implementation grant applications

that identified performance targets on equity, efficiency and learning outcomes (Indicator 24a) and the proportion of grants that achieved more than 75 percent of their performance targets in these areas (Indicator 24b).

An increasing number of implementation grants have adopted results-based funding, from three in fiscal year 2016 to 14 in fiscal year 2020. All identified targets for equity, efficiency and learning, meaning that Indicator 24a has remained at 100 percent from 2016 through 2020.<sup>20</sup> Since the adoption of the results-based funding model, GPE has approved 38 implementation grants with a results-based variable part, worth \$614 million in total.

Indicator 24b consistently reported a 100 percent value every year since 2016. However, in 2020, out of the six grants that had variable part results verified, two grants achieved less than 75 percent of their targets,<sup>21</sup> which resulted in nonattainment of the target for the first time in the strategy period. Indicator 24b missed the final target by 23 percentage points (67 percent achieved against the 90 percent target). Burkina Faso missed a learning indicator on the textbook to pupil ratio because of a delay in textbook procurement. Although the country managed to make important progress in the textbook procurement process, which resulted in a partial disbursement (50 percent) of the originally allocated \$1,690,000, the books had not been distributed by start of the school year.<sup>22</sup> Cambodia slightly missed its efficiency indicator on the repetition rate,<sup>23</sup> and the \$700,000 funding attached to this indicator was not disbursed. The remaining four grants successfully achieved their targets. For example, Zimbabwe achieved the targets for two equity indicators: The country successfully improved the transition rate from primary to lower secondary level for districts with the lowest transition rates and had the revised Education Act.<sup>24</sup>

As it takes some time for countries to verify variable part results, the effects of COVID-19 are not yet observable in the performance of this indicator. However, reports from countries indicate that the pandemic has started to affect not only the progress of activities programmed as variable part but also the verification of their results. For instance, Nepal experienced delays in data collection for the verification of variable part indicators, which resulted in the restructuring of the grant in May 2020.

18. GPE, *Grant Status Report 2020*.

19. During fiscal year 2020, GPE distributed 23,515,704 textbooks, trained 117,563 teachers and constructed 1,441 classrooms.

20. Note that certain countries are exempt from results-based funding, because of a highly fragile implementation context or a small grant below \$5 million. These are not included in the monitoring of this indicator.

21. These two grants had three variable part indicators each, out of which one was missed. Indicator 24b calculates the proportion of grants that are considered well performing or high performing. A grant that meets 75–99 percent of its targets is considered well performing; if a grant meets 100 percent of its targets, it is considered high performing. These two grants achieved 67 percent of their targets (two out of three), so they are not considered as performing well.

22. Burkina Faso aimed to distribute reading and numeracy textbooks for grades 1 and 2 that are aligned with new curriculum before the school year 2019/2020. The target for the textbook-pupil ratio was 1.5 to 2.

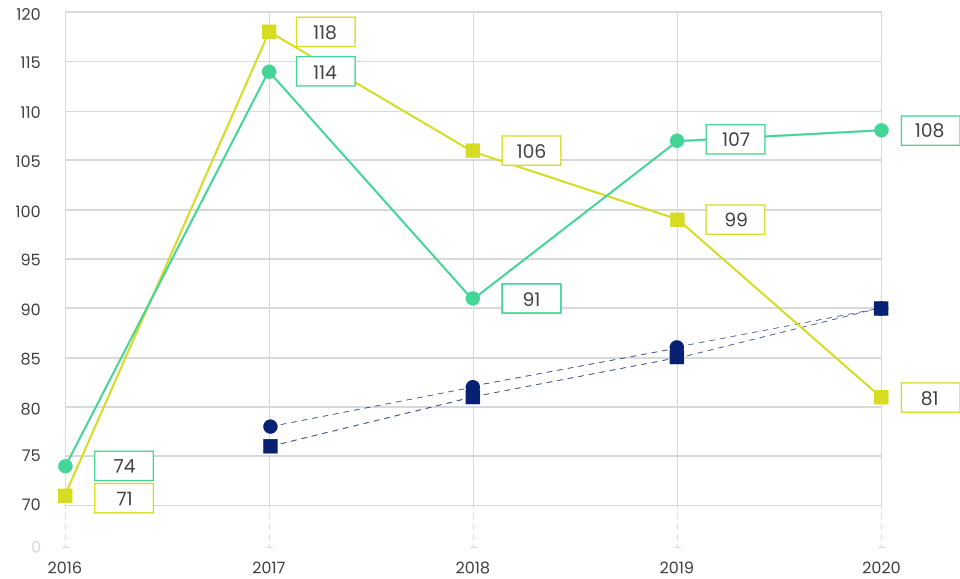
23. The repetition rate was 13.4 percent, slightly above the maximum threshold of 13.1 percent for disbursement.

24. Important changes include a ban on corporal punishment.

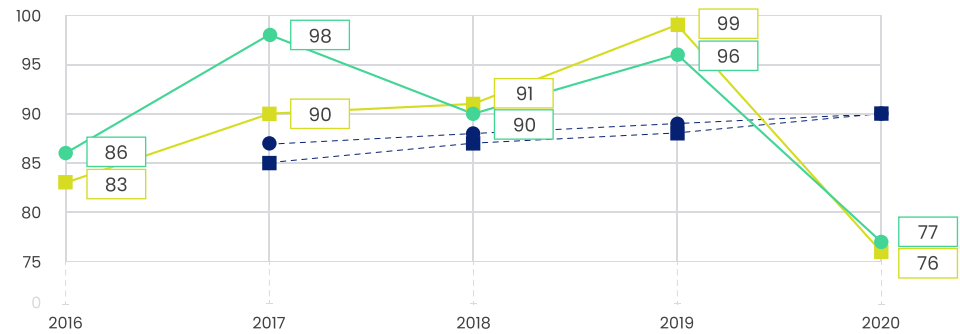
**FIGURE 5.7.**

**TEACHER TRAINING AND CLASSROOM CONSTRUCTION MISSED THE OVERALL TARGET FOR THE FIRST TIME IN FIVE YEARS, PARTLY BECAUSE OF COVID-19.**

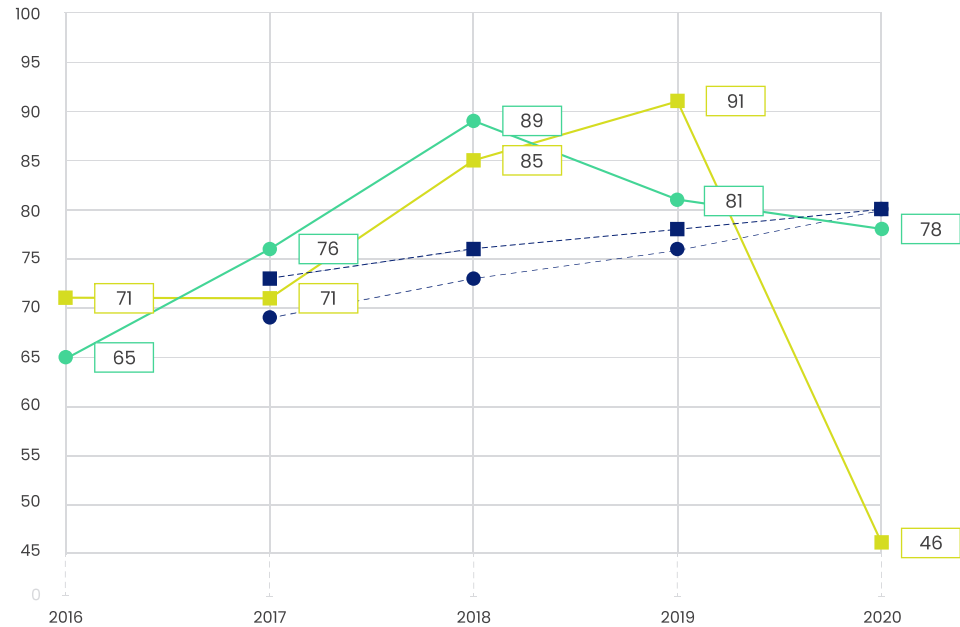
A: Proportion of textbooks purchased and distributed, out of the total planned by GPE grants



B: Proportion of teachers trained, out of the total planned by GPE grants



C: Proportion of classrooms built or rehabilitated through GPE grants, out of the total planned by GPE grants



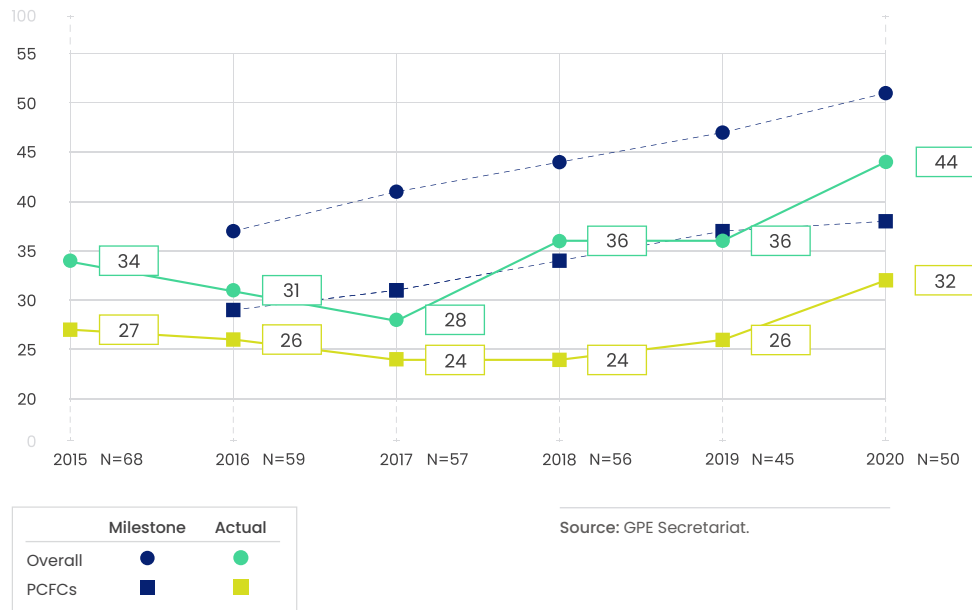
|         | Milestone | Actual |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| Overall | ●         | ●      |
| PCFCs   | ■         | ■      |

Source: GPE Secretariat.

**FIGURE 5.8.**

**DESPITE ROBUST IMPROVEMENT SINCE FISCAL YEAR 2017, MOST IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS REMAINED INSUFFICIENTLY ALIGNED.**

Proportion of implementation grants aligned to national systems



**5.3. AID EFFECTIVENESS**

GPE promotes alignment and harmonization of its implementation grants to maximize the partnership’s potential to strengthen country systems and to avoid aid fragmentation. The GPE results framework monitors the proportion of implementation grants that are aligned to the country system (Indicator 29) and use harmonized funding mechanisms (Indicator 30).

**ALIGNMENT (Indicator 29)**

GPE encourages the use of funding modalities that are aligned to national systems. Aligned funding modalities—coupled with appropriate measures to manage fiduciary risks and to strengthen systems—provide unique opportunities to enhance the capacity of education systems in partner countries. A grant is considered aligned when it meets at least seven out of 10 alignment criteria.<sup>25</sup>

The proportion of grants that are aligned improved from 34 percent (23 out of 68) in 2015 to 44 percent (22 out of 50) in 2020 (figure 5.8). The average number of alignment criteria met also improved from 5.04 in 2015 to 5.8 in 2020. In terms of volume of funding, more than half (54 percent) of the funding in fiscal year 2020 was aligned, up from 47 percent in 2015.<sup>26</sup> Despite a continued upward trend since fiscal year 2017, most implementation grants remained insufficiently aligned in fiscal year 2020, missing the final target for this indicator by 7 percentage points. Throughout the GPE 2020 period, out of 103 grants that were active at some point in 2016–20, almost two in three grants (65 percent, or 67 grants) were not aligned to the country system.<sup>27</sup>

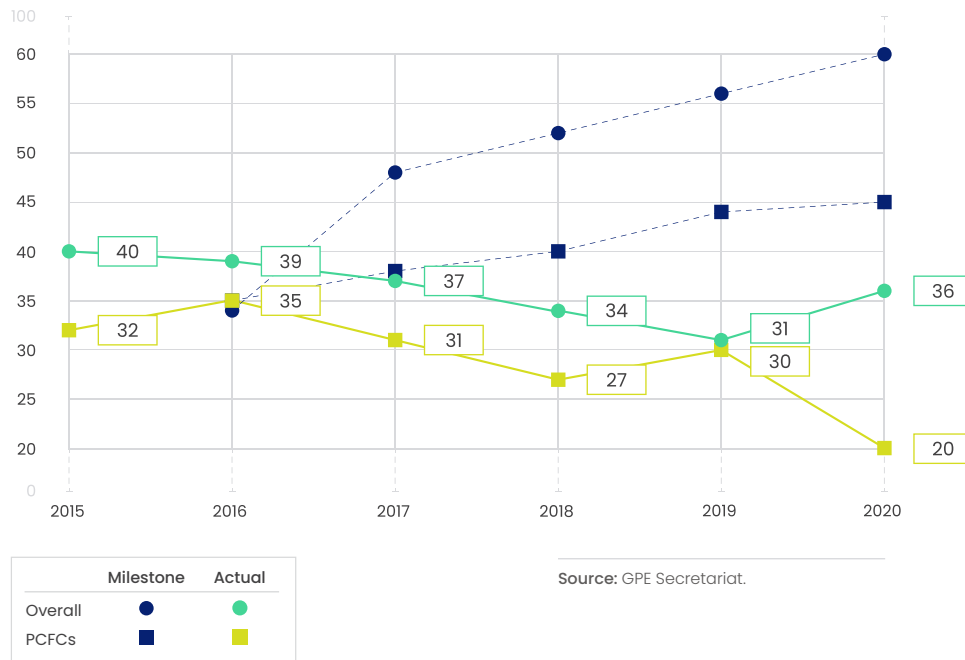
The improvement in grant alignment may partly be related to the implementation of the alignment road map since 2017 to promote the use of aligned modalities.<sup>28</sup> The Secretariat provided additional support to target countries with a potential to improve alignment when they were preparing a new grant, leveraging a small window of opportunity. Notably, during the GPE 2020 implementation period, 15 newly approved grants

25. For details, see methodology sheet for GPE Results Indicator 29: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/methodology-sheet-gpe-result-indicator-29>.  
 26. As the implementation grants vary greatly in size, looking at the volume of funding gives us another perspective that complements the current indicator, which looks at the number of grants.  
 27. In terms of volume of funding, 49 percent of funding for 103 grants that were active at some point during GPE 2020 was aligned; 51 percent of funding was not aligned.  
 28. The Secretariat developed a plan to facilitate alignment in 2017. More information on the alignment road map can be found in GPE, *Portfolio Review 2017* (Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Education, 2017), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/2017-gpe-portfolio-review>.

**FIGURE 5.9.**

**MOST GRANTS CONTINUED TO USE FRAGMENTED MODALITIES.**

Proportion of implementation grants using cofinanced or sector-pooled funding mechanisms



improved their alignment<sup>29</sup> compared with the previous grants in those countries. Out of these 15, six grants were newly categorized as aligned.<sup>30</sup>

**HARMONIZATION (Indicator 30)**

To avoid the high transaction costs associated with stand-alone projects, GPE encourages partner countries to use harmonized modalities for its implementation grants, through cofinanced projects and sector-pooled funding. The results framework monitors the proportion of grants that are either cofinanced or sector pooled (Indicator 30).

The proportion of implementation grants cofinanced or sector pooled decreased from 40 percent (27 out of 68) in fiscal year 2015 to 36 percent (17 out of 50) in fiscal year 2020, missing the final target by a large margin (figure 5.9). By volume of funding, the proportion of the total funding that was provided

through harmonized modalities stagnated at around 40 percent throughout GPE 2020 period.<sup>31</sup> In PCFCs, only 20 percent of grants were either cofinanced or sector pooled in 2020, down from 37 percent in 2015. Over the GPE 2020 period, out of 103 grants that were active at some point from 2016 to 2020, 15 percent (15 grants) were sector pooled, 23 percent (24 grants) were cofinanced and 62 percent (64 grants) were stand-alone.<sup>32</sup>

Despite an overall downward trend over the 2016–20 period, the proportion of implementation grants cofinanced or sector pooled increased by 5 percentage points between 2019 and 2020. Out of 16 grants that became active during fiscal year 2020, eight changed to a more harmonized grant modality.<sup>33</sup> Of these eight grants, five opted for sector-pooled funding.<sup>34</sup> As part of the alignment road map, the Secretariat provided targeted support in the grant development process for these five grants to encourage the use of sector-pooled funding that is aligned to country systems or supported

29. As assessed by the number of alignment criteria met.

30. Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Niger, Tanzania–Mainland and Tanzania–Zanzibar.

31. It was 42 percent in fiscal year 2015, 39 percent in 2016, 38 percent in 2017, 41 percent in 2018, 38 percent in 2019 and 43 percent in 2020.

32. In terms of volume of funding, 25 percent of total grant funding from 2016 to 2020 used a sector-pooled funding mechanism, 19 percent used a cofinanced modality and 56 percent used stand-alone projects.

33. Among the three funding modalities of GPE implementation grants, pooled funding is considered the most harmonized, followed by cofinanced, and stand-alone is considered the least harmonized. Tanzania–Mainland changed modality from stand-alone to sector pooled. Benin, Guinea, Niger and Senegal changed from cofinanced to sector pooled. Djibouti, Ghana and Uzbekistan changed from stand-alone to cofinanced.

34. Benin, Guinea, Niger, Senegal and Tanzania–Mainland.

operationalization of new sector-pooled fund. The remaining three grants<sup>35</sup> adopted a cofinanced modality for their Multiplier grant, which requires mobilization of other sources of external financing to access its allocation, while the previous grants for the same countries had been stand-alone projects.<sup>36</sup>

Aligning development aid with a country's public financial management system while managing fiduciary risks and ensuring accountability is inherently difficult. During the GPE 2020 period, the implementation of the alignment road map helped willing countries move toward more alignment to some extent. However, GPE's influence on the choice of funding modality was generally limited when compared to the many other factors that likely shape government and grant agent's decision around how to channel GPE resources.<sup>37</sup> Strengthened support from the Secretariat as well as increased incentives for countries and grant agents to use aligned modalities will be needed to further promote alignment and harmonization.

## 5.4. DONOR FINANCING

### OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO EDUCATION (Indicator 28)

The most recent data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) show that aid to education reached a record high of \$15.9 billion in 2019, increasing by 10 percent since the beginning of GPE 2020, that is, from \$14.4 billion in 2016.<sup>38</sup> Most of this increase is attributed to the increase in aid to higher education. Aid to basic education during this period decreased by \$254 million, or 4 percent, from \$6.399 billion to \$6.145 billion.<sup>39</sup>

Indicator 28 measures the proportion of GPE donors who increased or maintained the dollar amount of their total

education official development assistance (ODA) in comparison with its base year (2014). In 2019, 71 percent (15 out of 21) of GPE donors increased their ODA to education, an increase from 48 percent in 2015. The indicator exceeded its final target of 56 percent.

Among GPE donors, Germany, the largest bilateral donor for education, increased education aid by 73 percent from 2014 to 2019—the biggest increase among GPE donors in absolute terms (\$1.237 billion). In 2019, the country contributed \$2.9 billion to education, almost two-thirds of which, however, goes to higher education. Australia decreased education aid by 60 percent, from \$466 million in 2014 to \$187 million in 2019, the largest reduction among GPE donors. The United Kingdom made the second largest reduction in education aid in absolute terms, from \$1.187 billion in 2014 to \$1.041 billion in 2019.

### CONTRIBUTIONS TO GPE (Indicators 26 and 27)

In 2020, donors contributed \$881.7 million to GPE, recording the highest annual contribution since GPE's inception in 2002 (see [appendixes Q and R](#) for annual and cumulative contribution by donor). This is an increase of 64 percent, or \$345 million, from the average of annual total donor contribution from 2016 to 2019. The proportion of GPE donor pledges fulfilled (Indicator 27) remained at 100 percent for the sixth consecutive year.<sup>40</sup>

Donors collectively contributed \$3 billion to GPE during the GPE 2020 implementation period, an almost \$1 billion increase from the \$2.1 billion in contributions made during the previous five years (2011–15). More than half of the total donor contribution, or \$1.652 billion, is from the top four donors: the United Kingdom, European Commission, United States and Norway ([figure 5.10](#)).<sup>41</sup> The cumulative contributions from nontraditional donors during GPE 2020<sup>42</sup> (Indicator 26) amounted to \$51.3 million, up from \$5 million in 2015.

35. Djibouti, Ghana and Uzbekistan.

36. Multiplier contributed to improve the performance of this indicator to some extent. Eight Multiplier grants became active during fiscal year 2020. Of these eight, three (Djibouti, Ghana and Uzbekistan) changed modality from stand-alone to cofinanced and one changed from cofinanced to sector pooled (Senegal).

Three Multiplier grants (Maldives, Papua New Guinea and Tanzania-Zanzibar) are categorized as stand-alone because the cofinancier(s) channel their funds to a different bank account than GPE's; thus, they are categorized as stand-alone per the definition used for this indicator. The remaining one (Nepal) continues to use sector-pooled funding.

37. Universalia, *GPE Country-Level Evaluations—Final Synthesis Report, Final Report*, Vol. 1 (Montreal: Universalia, 2020), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/country-level-evaluations-final-synthesis-report-volume-1>.

38. Aid to education includes 20 percent of general budget support.

39. Aid to basic education includes 10 percent of general budget support and 50 percent of education level unspecified.

40. This indicator tracks actual payments made by the donors versus what they committed to pay as per the signed contribution agreements, in their own currencies.

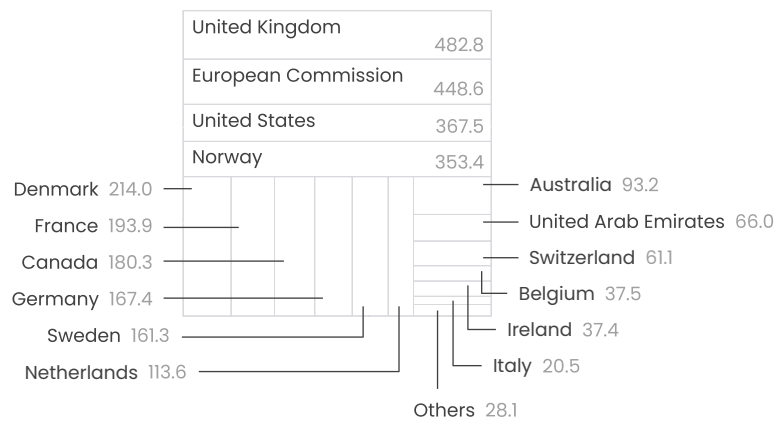
41. The top four donors during the 2011–15 period were the United Kingdom, Australia, Denmark and Norway. They accounted for 60 percent of total donor contributions to GPE.

42. Indicator 26 tracks the cumulative contribution from nontraditional donors from fiscal year 2015. Indicator 26 has milestones only up to 2018 as it reflects GPE's ambition to mobilize resources from nontraditional donors under the replenishment period 2015–18. The milestone for 2019 and target for 2020 were not set owing to unpredictability around new donors' contribution after the replenishment in 2018.

**FIGURE 5.10.**

**TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE TOP FOUR DONORS ACCOUNT FOR 55 PERCENT OF TOTAL DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO GPE.**

Total donor contributions during GPE 2020 (2016–20) (US\$, millions)



Source: GPE Secretariat.

**5.5. BUILDING A STRONGER PARTNERSHIP (Indicators 32–37)<sup>43</sup>**

Over the course of GPE 2020, the cumulative number of knowledge products developed and disseminated increased from four in 2015 to 100 in 2020 (Indicator 33), far exceeding the target of 64. Knowledge products developed during the strategy period cover thematic areas of interest for GPE (such as education financing, education sector analysis, gender equality, learning assessments, early childhood care and education, school health, equity, teachers and data) and take various formats (e.g., guidelines, reviews, toolkits, evaluations, or handbooks). The partnership also intensified its efforts to advocate for education over the GPE 2020 period. The cumulative number of events organized increased from 11 in 2016 to 126 in 2020 (Indicator 34). This is almost twice as many as the final target of 65. In fiscal year 2020, 51 events were organized,<sup>44</sup> which is the highest number of events organized for a year in the strategy period.

Faced with the unprecedented crisis presented by COVID-19, GPE stepped up its knowledge exchange and advocacy. After the outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020, 10 events discussed the impact of COVID-19 on education and how to ensure continuity in learning for all children during the crisis. The COVID-19 global grant, a \$25 million investment to support

continued learning through knowledge sharing at global and regional levels, brought together UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank to take stock of education responses to COVID-19. The Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) launched an observatory on COVID-19 responses in education systems in Africa. The Secretariat together with Sierra Leone’s Ministry of Education organized a virtual ministerial-level dialogue engaging 30 partner countries on learning from previous experiences with Ebola. All of these tapped into GPE’s strength as a partnership beyond grant making.

Fiduciary oversight has been strengthened over the course of GPE 2020. All issues identified through audit reviews were satisfactorily addressed in fiscal year 2020 and throughout the overall strategic period (Indicator 35).

The proportion of staff time spent on country-facing operations (Indicator 36) increased from 28 percent in fiscal year 2015 to 48 percent in fiscal year 2020, just missing the indicator’s final target of 50 percent. Compared with fiscal year 2019, time spent on country-facing operations, such as country advisory and quality assurance, increased in fiscal year 2020; however, time spent on development of the new strategic plan and public communications also increased.

43. Data collection for Indicator 32 was not carried out because improving clarity of roles and responsibilities across the partnership has been integrated into the Effective Partnership Rollout (EPR). The EPR principles have been formally adopted as GPE’s operating principles, and clarity of roles and responsibilities under the new operating model will be assessed through the operating model pilots currently under way.  
 44. Including virtual events.

In line with its monitoring and evaluation strategy,<sup>45</sup> GPE published all 27 planned evaluation reports in fiscal year 2020 (Indicator 37), consisting of 24 country-level evaluations, a results report, an evaluation on sector plan development and an independent summative evaluation of GPE 2020. Indicator 37 has consistently met milestones at 100 percent since 2018.

### **TOWARD MORE AND BETTER FINANCING AND PARTNERSHIP FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR**

In 2020, donors contributed \$881.7 million to GPE, the highest level ever recorded. The total donor contribution during GPE 2020 amounted to \$3 billion. In 2020, approval and disbursement of implementation grants also reached a record high. These resources are allocated to the poorest countries with the greatest education needs, responding to specific challenges identified in each country.

However, the indicators on implementation grants' performance showed a mixed performance. Of the six indicators monitoring the grants' performance, while two improved since the baseline and one remained at 100 percent throughout the GPE 2020 period, one remained at the same level as the baseline and two fell below the level of the baseline. Compared with 2016, more grants met their annual targets on textbook distribution and classroom construction in 2020. Throughout the GPE 2020 period, all grants identified their variable part targets on learning, equity and efficiency, except a few

that were exempt. On the other hand, the indicator on overall grant implementation status did not improve substantially during GPE 2020 and fell short of the 2020 target. This is due to the implementation delay in some grants, mainly caused by external factors outside the control of GPE grants, such as political instability, teacher strikes and COVID-19 in 2020. The indicator on teacher training and the indicator on variable part achievement met all milestones through 2019 but missed the final target. The underachievement of teacher training target was mostly because of the pandemic. The indicator on variable part attainment missed the target because two grants did not meet sufficient variable part targets.

Alignment and harmonization indicators remained well below the milestones throughout the GPE 2020 period,<sup>46</sup> and they missed the final targets in 2020. The implementation of the alignment road map and the introduction of the Multiplier grant facilitated progress in these areas to some extent, but generally GPE's influence on the choice of modality has been limited.<sup>47</sup> Continued support and better incentives will be needed to encourage the use of aligned and harmonized modality when countries develop a grant.

In light of COVID-19, GPE increased its advocacy and knowledge exchange efforts to help countries mitigate the impact of the pandemic and build resilience of education system. Redoubled efforts will be needed in view of the increased financial gap to achieve SDG 4 and the projected decrease in domestic finance and aid to education (see [appendix E](#)).

45. GPE, *Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy* (Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Education, 2017), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/gpe-monitoring-and-evaluation-strategy-july-2017>.

46. Except in 2016, when Indicator 30 met the milestone.

47. Universalis, *GPE Country-Level Evaluations—Final Synthesis Report, Final Report*, Vol. 1.

