



SECTOR PLANNING, MONITORING AND POLICY DIALOGUE

A teacher in front of his class.
Kenya, April 2017

Credit: GPE/Kelley Lynch

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

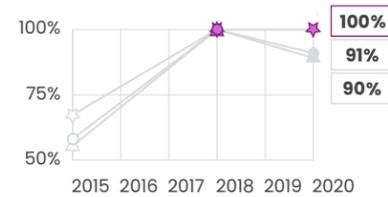
COUNTRY-LEVEL

OBJECTIVE 1

Strengthen education sector planning and policy implementation

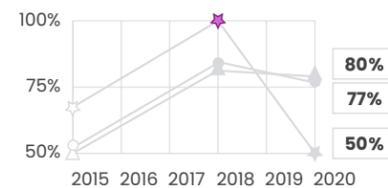
#16a

91% of education plans met quality standards.



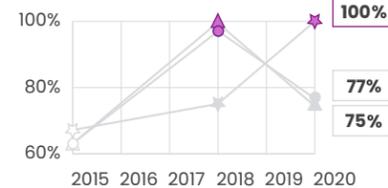
#16b

77% of education plans had teaching and learning strategies that met quality standards.



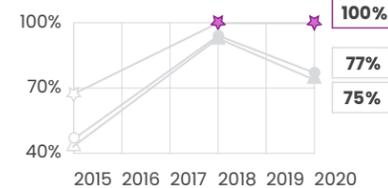
#16c

77% of education plans had equity strategies that met quality standards.



#16d

77% of education plans had strategies to improve efficiency that met quality standards.

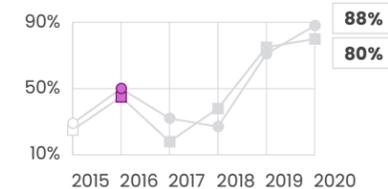


OBJECTIVE 2

Support mutual accountability through effective and inclusive sector policy dialogue and monitoring

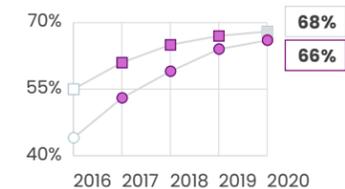
#18

88% of joint sector reviews met quality standards.



#19

Civil society and teachers were represented in 66% of local education groups.



	Baseline	Milestone met	Milestone not met
Overall	○	●	●
PCFCs	□	■	■
Education sector plans	△	▲	▲
Transitional education plans	☆	★	★

KEY FINDINGS

- Between 2016 and 2020, GPE granted more than US\$30.6 million to 59 partner countries and federal member states to develop education plans and sector analyses.
- The proportion of education plans meeting quality standards increased from 58 percent in 2014–15 to 90 percent in 2019–20.
- There was a wide variation in the effectiveness of joint sector reviews from year to year during GPE 2020. Between 19 and 35 partner countries organize sector reviews each year. In 2020, that number was further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Inclusiveness of local education groups has increased significantly over the GPE 2020 period. Nine out of 10 education groups have participation from national or regional civil society organizations. Nearly seven out of 10 education groups involve teachers' organizations.

Strengthening sector planning and policy implementation are among the key objectives of the GPE 2020 strategic plan and operational model. Education sector plans are the main vehicle by which the partnership supports sector planning at the country level. This chapter provides an update on indicators that monitor the quality of education plans and on those related to mutual accountability and the inclusiveness of country-level policy dialogue.

4.1. EDUCATION PLANS

GPE gives partner countries the tools and support they need to strengthen planning and dialogue, as well as sector monitoring, and help them achieve their education goals. By providing technical and financial support during the planning cycle, GPE aims to promote quality education sector plans, which are fundamental in building stronger and more equitable education systems.¹ Over the GPE 2020 period,² GPE granted more than \$30.6 million to 59 partner countries and federal member states to support their planning processes through the education sector plan development grants.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION SECTOR PLANS AND TRANSITIONAL EDUCATION PLANS (Indicator 16a)

GPE's results framework monitors progress on the overall quality of education plans as measured by the partnership's education sector plan and transitional education plan quality

standards (Indicator 16a).³ An education sector plan must meet at least five out of seven quality standards to achieve the benchmark for a quality education sector plan;⁴ a transitional education plan, employed by countries affected by fragility or conflict, must meet at least three out of five quality standards to achieve the benchmark for a quality transitional education plan.⁵ The following sections discuss the two plans.

Quality of Education Sector Plans

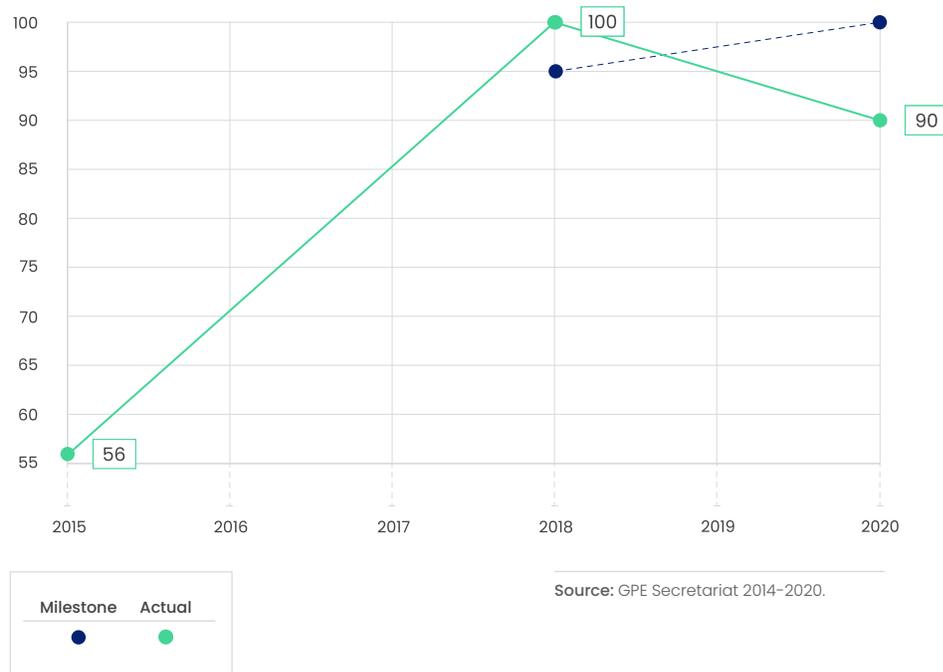
Sector plans have shown an overall increase in quality since the beginning of the GPE strategic period 2016–20,⁶ but with some setbacks in 2020.⁷ The proportion of education sector plans meeting the benchmark of five out seven quality standards increased to 100 percent in 2016–18 from the baseline of 56 percent in 2014–15 (figure 4.1). This increase is likely linked to the strengthened quality assurance process for education sector plans/transitional education plans established during that period. However, there was a slight decrease to

1. For more information on GPE's technical assistance and funding to lower-income country governments to help them develop and implement good quality education plans, see "Education Sector Planning," Global Partnership for Education, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/what-we-do/education-sector-planning>.
2. Education sector plan development grants granted from January 1, 2016, through December 31, 2020.
3. For details on any indicator methodology, replace X with the number of the indicator in the following link: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/methodology-sheet-gpe-result-indicator-X>.
4. GPE education sector plan quality standards mirror the seven key characteristics for education sector plan preparation as outlined in GPE-IIEP, *Guidelines for Education Sector Plan Preparation* (Paris: UNESCO-IIEP; Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Education, 2015), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-preparation>. The seven quality standards: (i) Guided by an overall vision: The plan, for instance through a mission statement, indicates overall direction; (ii) Strategic: It identifies the strategies for achieving the vision; (iii) Holistic: It covers all subsectors (early childhood education, primary, secondary and higher education), and should also include nonformal education as well as adult literacy; (iv) Evidence-based: It starts from an education sector analysis providing data and assessments that form the information base on which strategies and programs are developed; (v) Achievable: It is based on an analysis of the current trends and thoughtful hypotheses for overcoming financial, technical and political constraints to effective implementation; (vi) Sensitive to the context: It includes an analysis of the vulnerabilities specific to a country; and (vii) Attentive to disparities: It includes disaggregated data for gender, children with disabilities and/or geographic disparities.
5. GPE transitional education plan quality standards are based on the characteristics of a quality transitional education plan as outlined in GPE-IIEP, *Guidelines for Transitional Education Plan Preparation* (Paris: UNESCO-IIEP; Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Education, 2016), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-transitional-education-plan-preparation>.
6. Since 2014, a number of education plans have been assessed annually for this exercise: 16 education sector plans (2014–15), 28 education sector plans and four transitional education plans (2016–18), and 20 education sector plans⁶ and two transitional education plans (2019–20).
7. The education sector plans assessed during 2019–20 are the Central African Republic, Guinea, Honduras, Haiti, Kenya, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mali, FS Micronesia, Mozambique, Pakistan-KP, Pakistan-Punjab, Pakistan-Sindh, Sao Tome and Principe, Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Uganda, Vanuatu and Zambia.

FIGURE 4.1.

PROGRESS IN THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION SECTOR PLANS DECLINED, AND THE FINAL TARGET WAS NOT MET.

Percentage of education sector plans meeting the benchmark of five out of seven quality standards



90 percent for the final year of the current planning period, meaning that the target (100 percent) for this indicator was not met.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the country-level process for the development of education sector plans suffered because of lockdowns and travel restrictions globally. Ministry officials and development partners faced challenges in organizing face-to-face meetings and sustaining sector dialogue required to prepare plans as a result of some of the disruptions brought on by the COVID-19 crisis. Typically, the education plan development process is an iterative one that goes through a long process of including inputs and feedback from all partners in the local education group. Operating in already resource-constrained contexts has imposed additional challenges for the local education groups and governments, making it harder for them to work toward finalizing education plans. Data show that education sector plans that were unable to meet the benchmark for 2019–20 were endorsed after March 2020, which was the beginning of the pandemic in several countries. This could potentially explain the decline in meeting the final targets. The measurement of quality does not capture this aspect. The following paragraphs present an

analysis of each quality standard to better understand the trends of Indicator 16a.

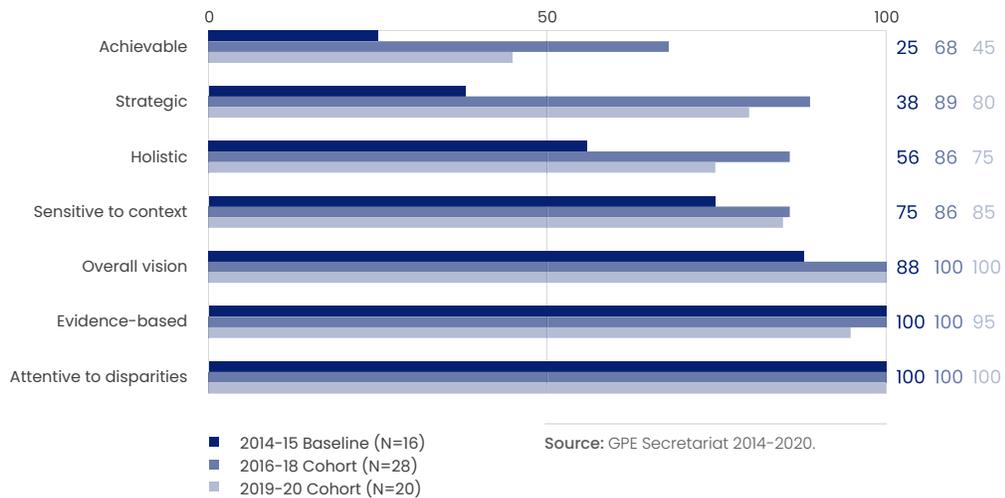
The quality standard “achievable”⁸ reviews the extent to which the education sector plan reflects key considerations for its implementation as related to the financial framework, the implementation capacity, the monitoring tools and the action plan. Progress on this standard has been unsteady through the years, and it has frequently been the quality standard most challenging for education sector plans to meet. At baseline, this standard was met by 25 percent of the education sector plans (4 out of 16), showing a relatively strong increase in 2016–18 at 68 percent (19 out of 28) and dropping to 45 percent in 2019–20 (9 out of 20) (figure 4.2). Most often, education sector plans are unable to meet this standard when the partner countries are not able to produce or submit an action plan or a simulation model. In other words, it means that the implementation of the sector plan has not been sufficiently discussed and planned as these two elements are linked to the financial framework and the execution of the activities. The country-level evaluations show that in-country actors often do not use the education sector plans to guide implementation, monitoring and reporting. This raises the question

8. See footnote 4 of this chapter.

FIGURE 4.2.

PROGRESS ON QUALITY STANDARDS HAS SHOWN VARIATIONS IN PERFORMANCE FROM YEAR TO YEAR.

Percentage of education sector plans meeting each quality standard



of relevance of the plans to the practical needs of the country-level partners.⁹ The evaluations suggest that GPE ensures a close connection between the country-level planning process and the resulting plans to improve the relevance of the plans. Education sector plans have met the quality standards “holistic” and “strategic” at a slightly higher level, with 75 percent (15 out of 20) and 80 percent (16 out of 20) meeting these standards, respectively, in 2019–20. Progress has been more impressive on the other quality standards, with 100 percent of education sector plans meeting “overall vision,” 95 percent (19 out of 20) meeting “evidence-based,” 85 percent (17 out of 20) meeting “sensitive to context” and 100 percent meeting “attentive to disparities.” The main limitation of this analysis is that the sample is not comparable from one year to another as it includes different countries.

An education sector plan usually covers 5–10 years, and only five countries resubmitted their plans over the period 2014–20: Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique, Pakistan–Sindh and Togo, which all previously shared their education sector plans with the Secretariat in 2014–15. In this group, three out five education sector plans met the benchmark in 2014–15, while four out of five did so in 2019–20. The same number of plans met the quality standards “overall vision,” “strategic,” “holistic,” “evidence-based,” and “attention to disparities,” at both points

in time. But the number meeting “achievable” improved from 2014–15 to 2019–20, while those meeting “sensitive to context” declined over the same period. Despite the improvement on the quality standard “achievable,” the education sector plan development grant evaluation indicates that good quality plans are still not effectively implemented because of weak capacity for implementation and monitoring.

Quality of Transitional Education Plans

For transitional education plans, the target for 2020 has been met. Progress has been generally more consistent for Indicator 16a. 100 percent of the transitional education plans met the benchmark of three out of five quality standards in 2016–18 and 2019–20. These data show us that the quality of these plans has been consistent over the GPE 2020 period.

STRATEGIES FOR STRONGER LEARNING, EQUITY, AND EFFICIENCY IN EDUCATION SECTOR PLANS (Indicators 16b–d)

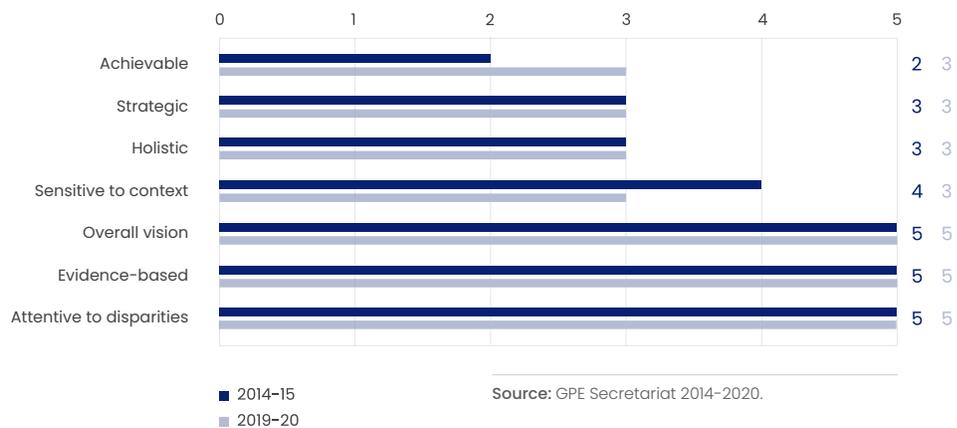
In addition to monitoring the overall quality of education sector plans, GPE tracks the quality of their strategies related to GPE 2020’s three strategic goals: teaching and learning (Indicator 16b), equity (Indicator 16c) and efficiency (Indicator 16d). These indicators look at the proportion of plans in

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

FIGURE 4.3.

OVERALL MIXED PROGRESS ON QUALITY STANDARDS FOR SAME SAMPLE OF COUNTRIES OVER TIME.

Number of education sector plans meeting each quality standard, among the five assessed in both 2014-15 and 2019-20



each strategic area that have a strategy that meets quality standards.¹⁰ If a plan meets four out of five criteria within each strategic area, it is considered to have met the quality benchmark for that strategic area.

Over the strategic period 2016–20, the progress made on these indicators has been varied and the milestones frequently unmet. Notably, progress is required for education sector plans to meet the benchmark for having a teaching and learning strategy meeting the necessary quality standards (Indicator 16b). At baseline, 50 percent of plans met the benchmark for Indicator 16b, and improved to 82 percent in 2016–18 and 80 percent in 2019–20 (figure 4.4). In most cases where the quality standards were not met, the education sector plan strategy for teaching and learning is neither measurable nor implementable, and plans do not contain details of implementing the strategies.¹¹ Interventions related to teaching and learning are left out of the operational plans.

Education sector plans should also contain strategies to respond to marginalized groups (e.g., by gender, disability or displacement). Indicator 16c measures the progress against these aspects. In 2016–18, 100 percent of education sector plans submitted met the benchmark (figure 4.4), but the proportion declined to 75 percent in 2019–20. The plans that failed to meet the benchmark for this indicator did not contain strategies that were either implementable or measurable. Data

show that most plans not meeting the benchmark for the equity strategy do have a monitoring and reporting system at all levels and an existing education management system. However, local education groups have not been able to finalize the implementation of the education sector plan, and thus the benchmark remained unmet.

Education sector plans should also include a sound strategy to tackle efficiency-related challenges of repetition, dropout and transition. A majority of GPE partner countries face these issues, but very few education sector plans proposed adequate strategies to remedy them. In the 2016–20 period, progress on this indicator (16d) has been uneven, and in addition to not having efficiency strategies that can be implemented and monitored, plans do not identify the underlying causes for the efficiency challenges faced in the country. Indicator 16d performed similarly with an increase from 44 percent at the baseline to 93 percent in 2016–18, but it decreased to 75 percent in 2019–20, thus missing the 2020 target of 100 percent (figure 4.4).

The indicators on education sector plan quality improved significantly from baseline to 2016–18 but declined slightly for the 2019–20 sample. It is important to keep in mind that the COVID-19 crisis has affected sector dialogue particularly around the preparation of sector plans. Data for 2020 confirmed that some of the plans that were finalized after the

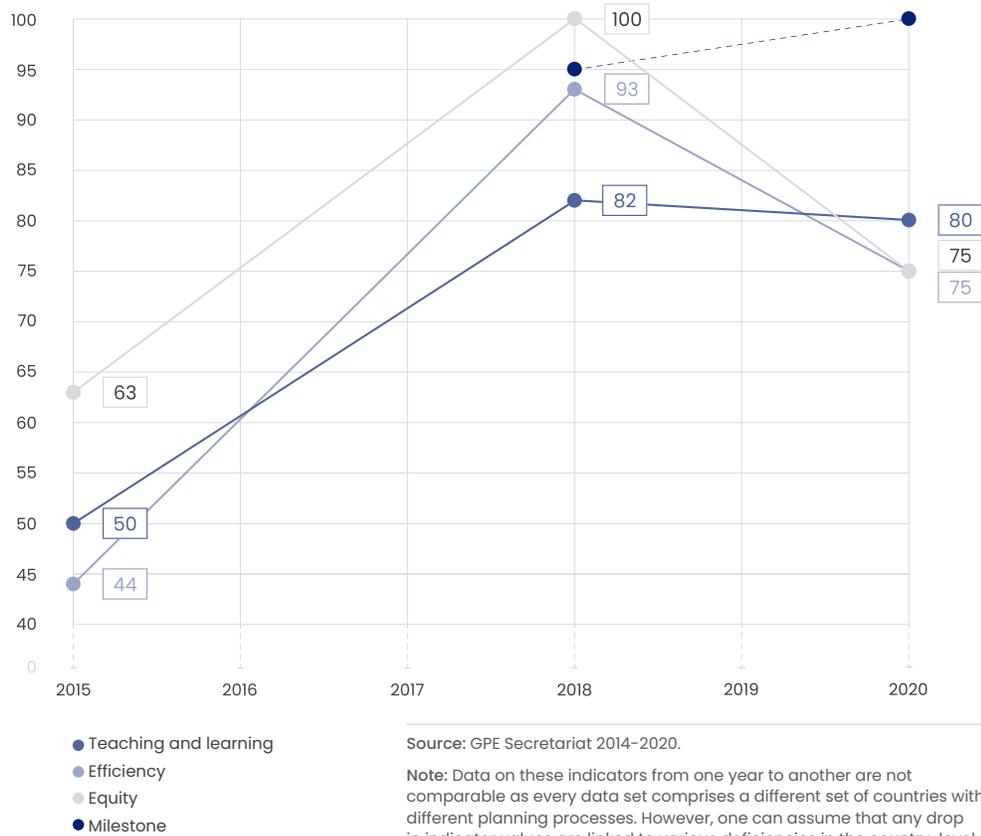
10. The quality standards to assess plan strategies are (i) evidence-based: includes identification of the underlying causes of the challenge; (ii) relevant: addresses the underlying causes of the challenge; (iii) coherent: aligns the action plan to the strategies; (iv) measurable: includes indicators with targets; and (v) implementable: identifies cost, funding source, responsible entity and time frames for operationalization. GPE, Results Framework Methodology (Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Education, 2019), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/results-framework-indicators-methodological-briefs>.

11. Though there are interventions to improve teaching and learning, the sector plans and their supporting documents often do not have the right or sufficient set of indicators to measure progress.

FIGURE 4.4.

OVERALL QUALITY OF STRATEGIES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING, EQUITY AND EFFICIENCY SHOWED MIXED IMPROVEMENT.

Proportion of strategies in teaching and learning, equity and efficiency meeting quality standards



Source: GPE Secretariat 2014-2020.

Note: Data on these indicators from one year to another are not comparable as every data set comprises a different set of countries with different planning processes. However, one can assume that any drop in indicator values are linked to various deficiencies in the country-level process for developing education sector plans. Overall baseline values for Indicators 16b-d have been updated to correct earlier technical errors.

beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic did not meet the quality benchmark.

4.2. SECTOR MONITORING AND POLICY DIALOGUE

JOINT SECTOR REVIEWS (Indicator 18)

Joint sector reviews bring together stakeholders crucial to the education sector and serve as a valuable tool for responsive sector planning. They also act as platforms for building and supporting mutual accountability. Typically, joint sector reviews are led by government with participation from a

variety of stakeholders who engage in dialogue, review status, and monitor expenditure, progress and performance in the implementation of national education sector plans or sector implementation frameworks. Effective joint sector reviews take a critical look at past achievements as well as bottlenecks in plan implementation and propose forward-looking remedial actions.¹²

Indicator 18 measures the effectiveness of joint sector reviews against five key dimensions, or quality standards.¹³ Over the GPE 2020 period, between 19 and 35 partner countries organized joint sector reviews every calendar year. The sample of countries assessed annually varied every year and did not consistently contain the same set of countries. Looking back

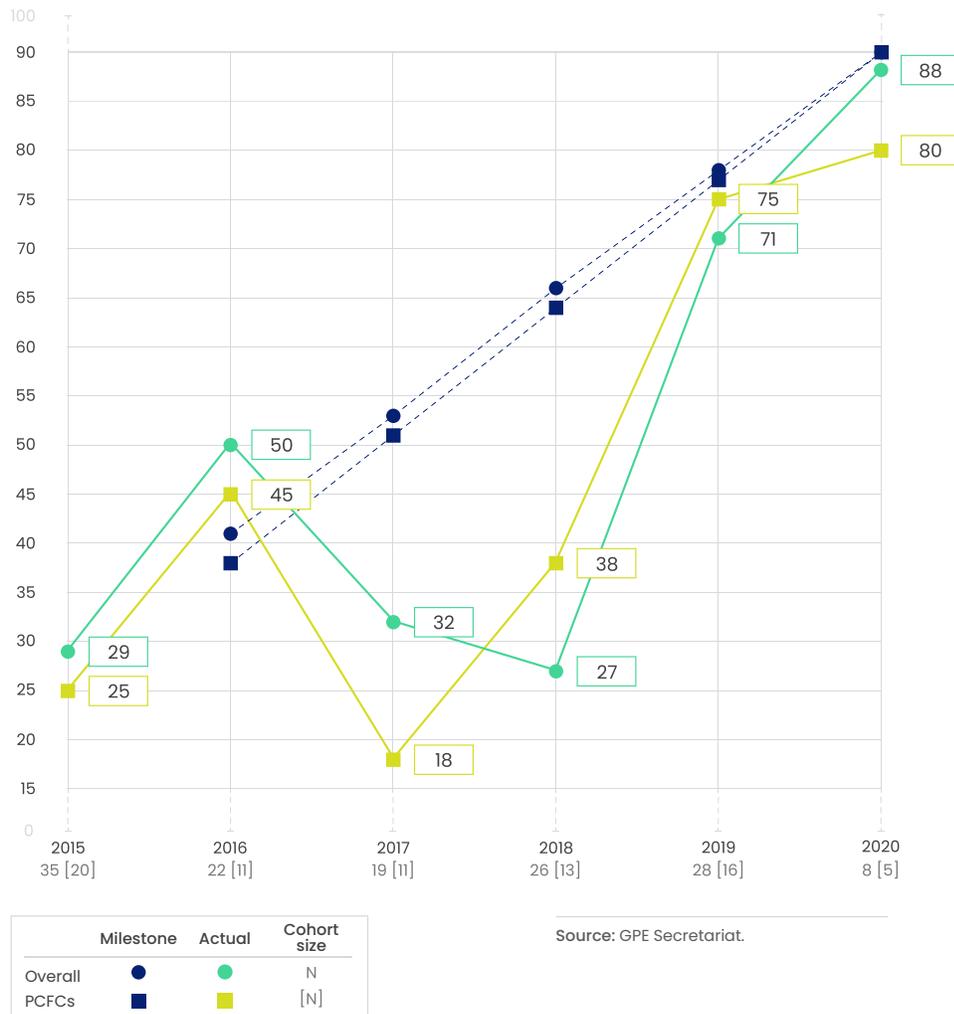
12. GPE, *Effective Joint Sector Reviews as (Mutual) Accountability Platforms: Key Takeaways for Policymakers and Practitioners* (Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Education, 2017), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/key-takeaways-effective-joint-sector-reviews-mutual-accountability-platforms>.

13. The five dimensions, or quality standards, to assess the effectiveness of joint sector reviews are (i) participation and inclusion; (ii) evidence-based; (iii) comprehensive; (iv) monitorable; and (v) policy making instrument.

FIGURE 4.5.

THE PROPORTION OF JOINT SECTOR REVIEWS MEETING QUALITY STANDARDS HAS CONTINUALLY FLUCTUATED.

Proportion of joint sector reviews meeting three or more quality standards



at how joint sector reviews have progressed since 2015, data show that there has been a wide variance in their performance. They performed particularly poorly in the years 2017 and 2018 after which there was a massive upswing in their performance in 2019 (figure 4.5).¹⁴ The same volatility can be observed across the performance of all quality standards through the years (figure 4.6). PCFCs similarly exhibit a wide variance in overall performance and across individual quality standards.

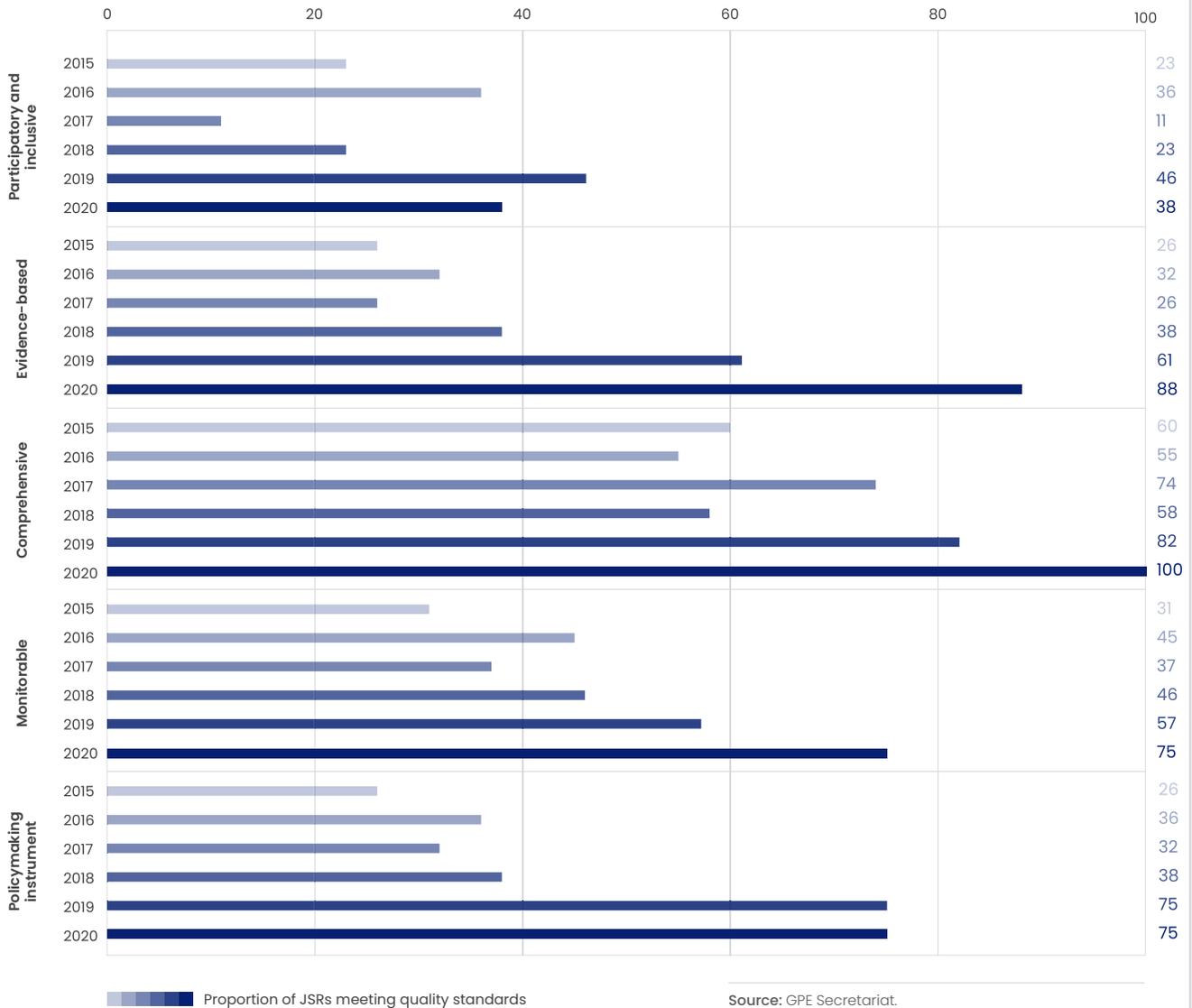
In 2020, joint sector reviews took place in 15¹⁵ out of 71 partner countries and federal member states, of which only eight (53 percent)¹⁶ could be assessed. The number of countries organizing reviews was unusually low because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Three out of these 15 joint sector reviews (20 percent) took place pre-COVID-19, while the rest (80 percent) were conducted virtually or as a mix of in-person and virtual events well into the pandemic. Given that the sample of reviews analyzed this year is unusually small (only eight

14. In 2019, Indicator 18 came close to meeting the milestone for the first time, falling just one country short of meeting three or more quality standards and narrowly missing the 75 percent milestone for that year.
 15. Joint sector reviews took place in Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia–Puntland, Tanzania–Zanzibar, Zambia and Zimbabwe in 2020. The reviews held in Benin, Burundi, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Senegal and Zambia could not be assessed because of insufficient documentation.
 16. The joint sector reviews organized in seven countries could not be assessed owing to insufficient documentation produced or unavailability of certain review related documents in a timely fashion.

FIGURE 4.6.

ALL QUALITY STANDARDS HAVE SHOWN IMPROVEMENTS SINCE 2015, BUT THE DEGREE OF PROGRESS HAS BEEN MIXED.

Proportion of joint sector reviews meeting each quality standard, 2015–20



Source: GPE Secretariat.

Note: The N for each year is as follows: 35 in 2015, 22 in 2016, 19 in 2017, 28 in 2019, and 8 in 2020.

reviews with data available),¹⁷ the data presented for 2020 should be interpreted with caution. Despite the relatively good overall performance this calendar year, there is a shortfall in meeting the target.

In 2020, seven out of eight joint sector reviews assessed overall, and four out of five reviews assessed for partner countries

affected by fragility and conflict met three or more quality standards. The analysis revealed notable performances across all but one standard that tracks participation and inclusion. Participation was relatively difficult to track down in some countries because meetings were held virtually and participant names were not gathered and recorded as would normally be the case. This could explain the dip in the

17. Many countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda and Senegal) that organized joint sector reviews in 2020 are those that have organized reviews almost every year or at least three times since 2016. These countries have good processes in place to organize joint sector reviews.

BOX 4.1.**ORGANIZING JOINT SECTOR REVIEWS IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19: NEPAL**

Joint sector review practices in Nepal have been regular and strong and have consistently met quality standards during the GPE 2020 period. In 2020, the review process was maintained but with adjustments. Keeping in mind the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the review focused on (i) a status update of the school sector development plan, including review of the impact of COVID-19 on achieving disbursement-linked indicators, and (ii) a status update of the COVID-19 education response. The latter included reporting from the Association of International NGOs in Nepal and the National Campaign for Education Nepal (a network of 409 civil society organizations). Consultations were held virtually prior to the three-day main review, in lieu of the joint sector review field visits. This shed light on the challenges that students were facing, how learning continuity was progressing through the use of technologies, the motivation of teachers, coordination and reporting between the levels of government, and school safety, among others. Through this process, policy priorities were identified to address the challenges emerging as a result of the pandemic.

Sources: GPE results framework Indicator 18; joint sector review documentation from Nepal.

performance of this standard for 2020. All (100 percent) of the joint sector reviews conducted in 2020 covered all the sub-sectors (early childhood, primary, secondary, technical and vocational education and training and higher education) addressed in the education sector plan, as well as nonformal education and adult literacy alongside reporting on externally funded activities. Seven out of eight reviews met the quality standard measuring the evidence base utilized to inform the review, while the remaining two standards, which assess monitorability and policy making aspects of the joint sector review, were met by six out of eight reviews.

However, as mentioned earlier, the data insufficiently reflect the full reality of sector monitoring in 2020. Understandably, education systems across partner countries were disrupted by the closing of schools in early 2020. Additionally, the sector was plagued by connectivity issues, and in many countries ministries were left with skeleton staff and limited in-country presence, if any, of development partners. Available resources were largely pooled toward designing and implementing emergency activities in most partner countries. As countries reemerge from the pandemic, ministries should reevaluate the scope of and how they organize joint sector reviews. The reviews will play an even more important role in helping countries gather data and information on the pandemic's true impacts on the education system, which could in turn help country partners determine the best way forward. **Box 4.1** provides an example of how Nepal organized its review during the pandemic.

Annual joint sector review data suggests that relatively few partner countries organize joint sector reviews every year and not all of those conducted produce sufficient documentation to be assessed. Data also suggests a worrying disconnect between the indicators developed to monitor education sector plans and what joint sector reviews actually monitor. It is hard to gauge if this is due to the partial use of education sector plans and/or because other monitoring frameworks are deployed during joint sector reviews. To help countries make their joint sector reviews more valuable to policymaking and strengthen the implementation and monitoring of education sector plans, GPE has provided technical (see **box 4.2**), analytical and financing support to partner countries.¹⁸

LOCAL EDUCATION GROUPS (Indicator 19)

"Local education group"¹⁹ is the term used by GPE to refer to a group whose mandate it is to engage in policy dialogue and alignment and harmonization of education sector support to a country-owned education sector plan. Local education groups serve as a concrete expression of mutual accountability in action and are critical for supporting improved sector outcomes in countries. Indicator 19 measures the inclusiveness of local education groups by tracking the representation of civil society organizations (CSOs) and teachers' organizations in the groups.

Both CSOs and teachers' organizations are critical for ensuring that the voices of marginalized groups are heard, and a broad base of interests are brought to the table while policy

18. This support includes (i) the *Practical Guide for Organizing Effective Joint Sector Review in the Education Sector* (<https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/practical-guide-effective-joint-sector-reviews-education-sector>); (ii) cross-country exchange around joint sector reviews; (iii) a new funding window (in the form of system capacity grants) for supporting joint sector reviews (since February 2020) (<https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-education-sector-plan-development-grants>), as part of the Effective Partnership Rollout; and (iv) overall technical support provided to countries.

19. Generally led by the government, the specific composition, title and working arrangements of education groups vary from context to context.

BOX 4.2.

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR CONDUCTING JOINT SECTOR REVIEWS DURING COVID-19

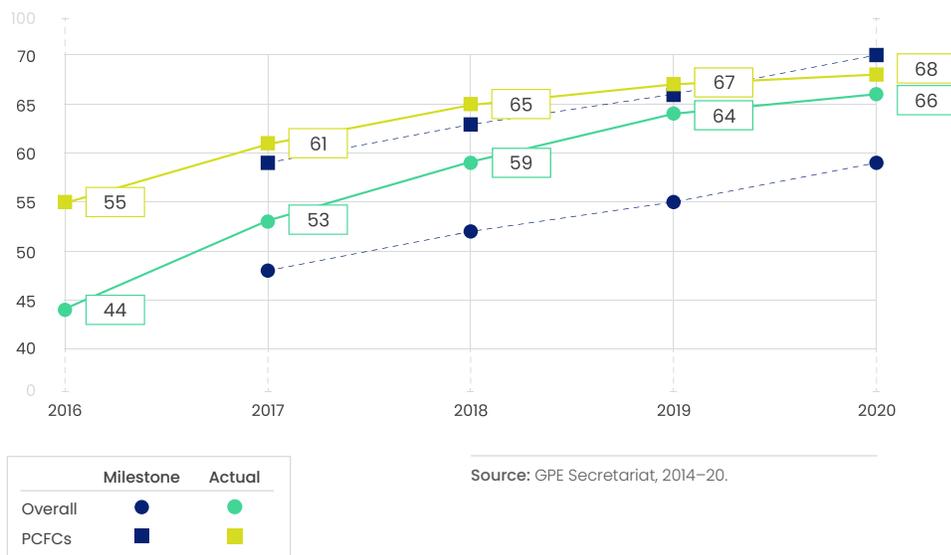
In late 2020, GPE started developing a guidance note, “Joint Sector Reviews during the COVID-19 Pandemic,”^a in response to a demand from partner countries for practical recommendations on how to continue organizing joint sector reviews in ways that are useful and responsive to countries’ monitoring needs and priorities, and feasible in the COVID-19 (and post-COVID-19) context. Pressures placed on education systems for reprogramming and sharpening COVID-19 education responses underline the need to strengthen monitoring systems to track changes and progress since the pandemic began, assess evolving needs and embed COVID-19 responses in a longer-term commitment to “building back better.” Complementing the existing joint sector review guidance,^b the note offers foundations and tips that can support ministries of education and their partners through different phases of the review process—both to safeguard and advance their sector and COVID-19 monitoring efforts and to prepare for the post-COVID-19 transition.

a. GPE, *Joint Sector Reviews during the COVID-19 Pandemic* (Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Education, 2021), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/joint-sector-monitoring-context-covid-19-pandemic>.
 b. GPE, *Practical Guide for Effective Joint Sector Reviews in the Education Sector* (Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Education, 2018), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/practical-guide-effective-joint-sector-reviews-education-sector>.

FIGURE 4.7.

THE PROPORTION OF LOCAL EDUCATION GROUPS WITH REPRESENTATION FROM CIVIL SOCIETY AND TEACHERS’ ORGANIZATIONS HAS SHOWN CONSISTENT IMPROVEMENT SINCE 2016.

Proportion of local education groups with civil society and teacher representation



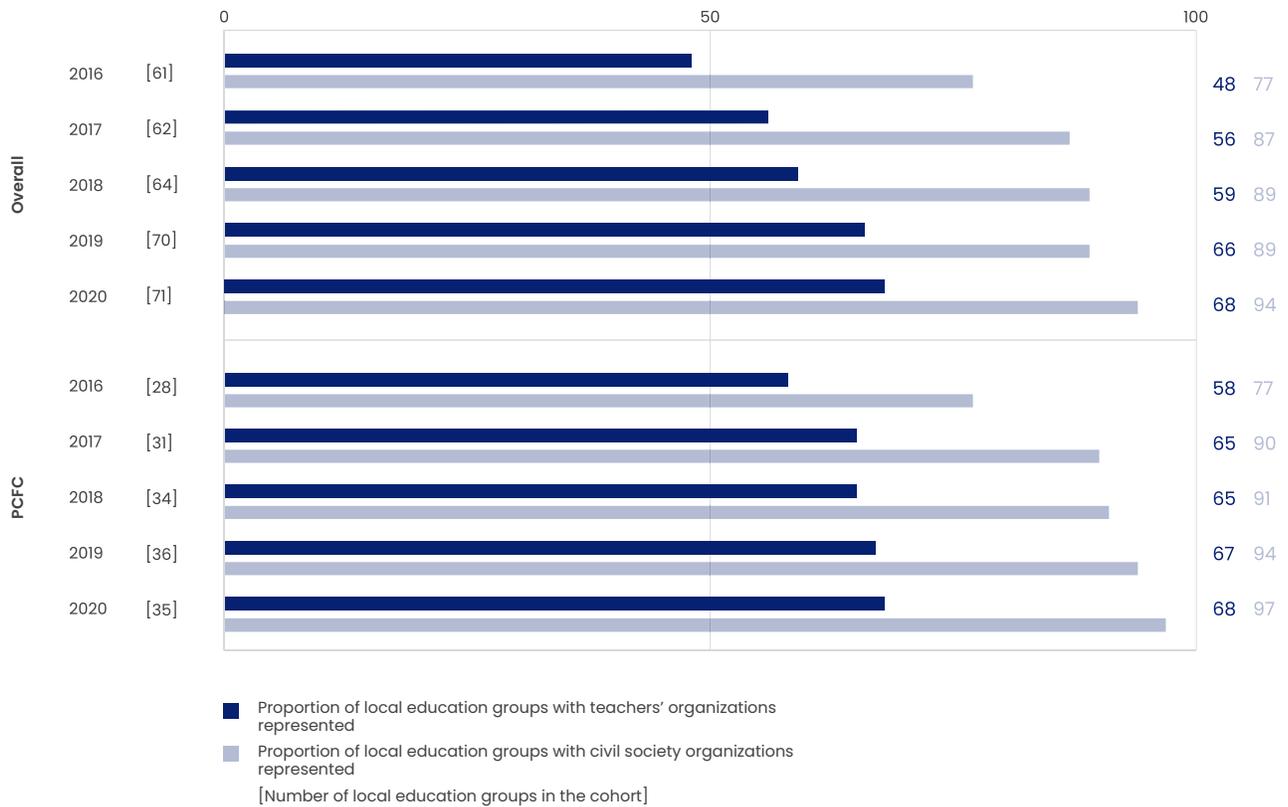
dialogue takes place. The engagement of CSOs and teachers’ organizations with local education groups is highly context sensitive. Across partner countries, CSOs have helped monitor implementation of grants and sector plans, and helped

gather data, evidence and knowledge that have fed into policy making in varying degrees. Teacher voices are represented in local education groups in several different ways. Several teacher’s organizations have direct membership in

FIGURE 4.8.

THE PROPORTION OF LOCAL EDUCATION GROUPS WITH REPRESENTATION FROM CIVIL SOCIETY HAS SHOWN IMPRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT, WHILE PROGRESS ON INTEGRATING TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS HAS BEEN SLOWER.

Representation of civil society and teachers' organizations on local education groups in GPE partner countries and federal states



the groups, while others are represented through their association with Education International²⁰ or by being members of national CSO coalitions. In countries where teachers' organizations are a part of the CSO coalition, they undertake some of the same tasks as CSOs. These organizations are also invaluable assets to the education landscape as they have their ears to the ground and can bring important perspectives and an understanding of what does and does not work with various reforms as well as grant implementation and monitoring.

As well as offering technical and financial support for effective partnerships (box 4.3), GPE has been striving to open the door to the participation of CSOs in local education groups for

several years. Since 2016, GPE has worked with partner countries to expand the breadth of inclusion and support meaningful participation in the groups. It has also conducted research on multi-stakeholder coordination practices and what determinants best contribute to local education group effectiveness, which has in turn informed guidance materials to help strengthen local education groups.²¹ This engagement has contributed to an increase in the proportion of partner countries' local education groups with representation from both CSOs and teachers' organizations from 44 percent in 2016 to 66 percent in 2020 (figure 4.7). Representation of CSOs and teachers' organizations has consistently performed above the milestones since 2016, except for PCFCs in 2020.

20. In financial year 2020, 48 percent of teachers' organizations on local education groups were members of Education International. Education International is a global union federation of teachers' trade unions consisting of 401 member organizations in 172 countries and territories that represents over 30 million education personnel from preschool through university.

21. Guidance materials include GPE, *Principles toward Effective Local Education Groups* (Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Education, 2019), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/principles-toward-effective-local-education-groups>; and GPE, *Local Education Group Self-Assessment and Performance Feedback Tools* (Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Education, 2019), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/leg-self-assessment-and-performance-feedback-tools>.

BOX 4.3.**TRIALED TOOLS AND MECHANISMS TO STRENGTHEN SECTOR COORDINATION**

As part of the Effective Partnership Rollout, GPE conducted two complementary pilots designed to strengthen country-level partnership, government ownership and focus on inclusive policy dialogue. Although the COVID-19 pandemic delayed country processes and changed the nature and modalities of pilot activities, the pilots were successfully carried out.

1. Pilot of a diagnostic local education group self-assessment tool. This pilot tested the utility of the tool and explored what might motivate country partners to use it. The tool is designed to facilitate dialogue among local education group members to assess the effectiveness of coordination practices and identify improvement areas, for example looking at the strategic value, and organizational and collaborative capacities of the local education group. The pilot benefited from the engagement of 14 countries that volunteered to trial and help improve the tool.^a

2. Pilot of financial support to the coordinating agency or ministry of education for administrative support to the local education groups and to support GPE-specific processes.

This pilot tested the impact of providing support of up to \$50,000 to each of eight countries, chosen through a lottery process, to support sector coordination. In four of the countries, the funding was channeled to the coordinating agency to ease administrative burdens, and in the other four countries it was channeled to the ministry of education to increase the centrality of country-level partnership.^b The funding, which was received amid increased pressures because of the COVID-19 pandemic, helped fill critical gaps through support to personnel, consultancies, communications and equipment, to strengthen capacities for coordination. Analysis from the pilot is intended to further inform efforts to build and sustain country-level capacity and inform the sector coordination window of the system capacity grant to be implemented under GPE's new operating model currently being piloted.

a. Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Guinea, Guyana, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Papua New Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, and Yemen.

b. Funding channeled to the coordinating agency: Burundi, Djibouti, OECS and Rwanda; funding channeled to the ministry of education: Nepal, Nigeria, Senegal and Uzbekistan.

Sources: GPE, *Local Education Group Self-Assessment and Performance Feedback Tools* (Washington, DC: Global Partnership for Education, 2019), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/leg-self-assessment-and-performance-feedback-tools>; GPE Secretariat.

Representation of CSOs has improved from 77 percent at baseline to 94 percent in 2020 (figure 4.8). To better understand and identify ways to support meaningful participation of CSOs in education groups, in fiscal year 2020 GPE has been tracking representation of both international and national/regional CSOs in local education groups. Ninety-nine percent of local education groups with CSO representation (66 out of 67 groups) have participation from national or regional CSOs, 55 percent of which are supported and funded by Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF). GPE provides funding to CSOs to organize and build capacity through CSEF (2009–20) and Education Out Loud (2020–24).²² Representation of teachers' organizations has also seen an improvement between 2016

and 2020 (figure 4.8), which is positive given the challenges involved in ensuring teachers organizations have a seat at the table.

In PCFC contexts where the capacities of governments are overstretched, data are lean or unavailable and certain areas are hard to reach, active CSO and teachers' organization presence and participation in local education groups is seen to have several advantages. On-the-ground knowledge and perspectives of CSOs and teachers' organizations in these contexts, shared through meaningful engagement in local education groups, could compensate for the lack of information and unavailability of relevant data. Combined

22. In 2020, the CSEF grants were succeeded by a new fund called Education Out Loud that provides support for CSOs. This fund builds on CSEF and includes grants that fund national education coalitions, national social accountability organizations and transnational alliances in GPE partner countries. By doing so, Education Out Loud aims to facilitate more comprehensive multilevel advocacy and expand the accountability network. More information on Education Out Loud can be found at <https://educationoutloud.org/>.

representation of CSOs and teachers' organizations in PCFCs has been on an upward trajectory since 2016 (figure 4.7). CSO participation has also risen between 2016 and 2020 (figure 4.8). Teachers' organization participation, on the other hand, has shown relatively slower progress in PCFCs between 2016 and 2020 (figure 4.8).

A NEED FOR MORE CONSISTENT PROGRESS IN SECTOR PLANNING, MONITORING AND POLICY DIALOGUE

The results over the GPE 2020 period show varied progress across indicators measuring the quality of education plans (Indicator 16) and the effectiveness of joint sector reviews (Indicator 18), although the 2020 target for these indicators were missed. Data show that some progress has been made in improving the overall quality of sector plans and the strategies (equity, teaching and learning, efficiencies) included in these plans. However, progress has lacked on the "achievability" aspect of sector plans and their monitoring. Only a modest set of countries organize joint sector reviews annually and the performance of those has been inconsistent and unpredictable. Local education groups, on the other hand, have shown

good improvement on the inclusion of civil society and teachers' organizations over the implementation period of GPE 2020 and the target for the related indicator (Indicator 19) was met. However, the inclusion of teachers' organizations in local education groups still requires work in some countries.

Unfortunately, all achievements (big and small) on these indicators alongside the resilience of education systems are now being tested by the COVID-19 pandemic. The onset of the pandemic particularly impacted the quality of education sector plans that were finalized after it began and the ability of countries to organize sector reviews. These setbacks may potentially have long-term implications in countries, especially on sector planning, monitoring and implementation. With this in mind as GPE implements its 2025 strategic plan, the system capacity grants will support and strengthen different aspects of planning, monitoring and coordination on an ongoing basis. Additionally, local education groups will continue to be closely engaged with the various aspects of the new operating model currently being piloted and GPE will continue its ongoing work to strengthen local education groups.