

Ethiopia

A long-term commitment to education spurs results

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



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

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

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

A strong foundation for Ethiopia's education system

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

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



GPE partner: Since 2004

Challenges addressed:

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

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

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

Grant agent: World Bank

Coordinating agencies:

USAID and Norwegian Embassy

Achievements in education

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

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

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

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

A multi-donor fund

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

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

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

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

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

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

These textbooks are aligned to the new school curriculum, which aims to narrow learning gaps, and respond to learning needs. Designed to be responsive to international economic developments, democracy, and gender equality, the new curriculum has been implemented simultaneously across all grades.

School grants improve the learning environment

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

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

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

Ethiopia's commitment to education is paying off

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

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

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