

GRANT STATUS REPORT

2020

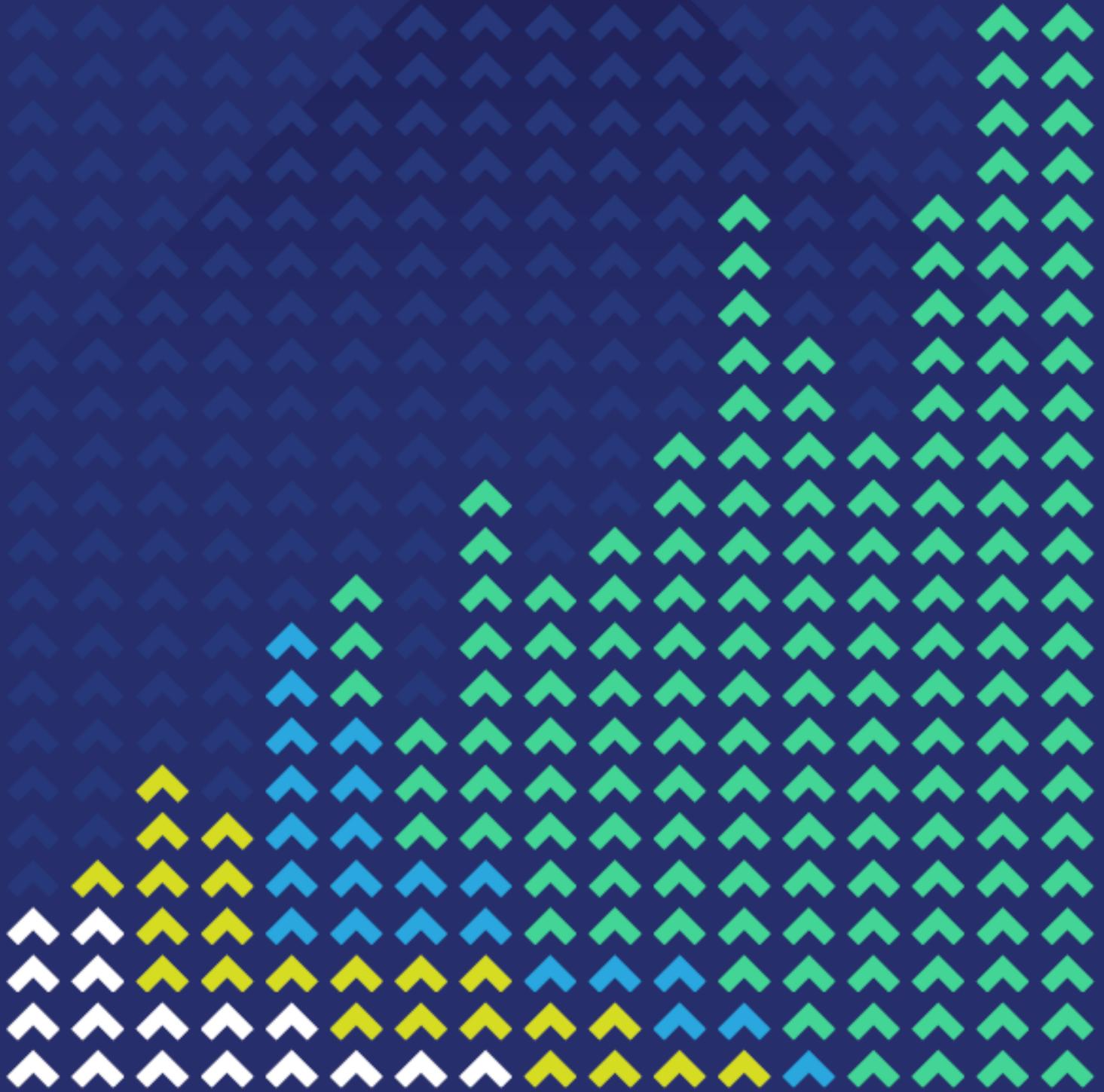


TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	1
List of Figures	2
Acknowledgments	3
1 Introduction	4
2 Key Observations	5
3 Overview of ESPIG Portfolio	7
3.1 Description of ESPIG Portfolio	7
3.2 Distribution by Region	10
3.3 Distribution by Income and Fragility	10
3.4 Distribution by Grant Agent.....	11
4 ESPIG Performance	13
4.1 Disbursement and Implementation Analysis	13
4.2 Impact of COVID-19 on Implementation of ESPIGs	17
4.2.1 Extent of COVID-19 Impact on ESPIG Implementation	17
4.2.2 Implementation and Activities Affected by COVID-19.....	18
5 COVID-19 Accelerated Funding	20
5.1 Overview of GPE'S COVID-19 Response	20
5.2 COVID-19 Accelerated Funding Portfolio	20
5.3 Thematic Allocation of COVID-19 Accelerated Funding	22
5.3.1 Thematic Allocation Overview	22
5.3.2 Amount Allocated and Proportion Supporting Each Thematic Area	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5.4 Streamlined Grant Processes for Faster Response.....	25
5.4.1 Factors Influencing Duration of Grant Processing	25
5.4.2 Mechanisms that Enabled Fast Approval	26
5.4.3 Facilitating Fast Disbursement	27
5.5 Monitoring and Evaluation	27
6 Closed Grants	29
7 Education Out Loud and Knowledge and Innovation Exchange	30
7.1 Education Out Loud	30
7.2 Knowledge and Innovation Exchange	32
8 Analysis of Administrative Costs	35

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. ESPIG portfolio, FY17–FY20	8
Table 2. ESPIG portfolio across regions (active, closed and pending as of June 30, 2020)	10
Table 3. List of ESPIGs by disbursement and implementation status, active as of June 30, 2020	15
Table 4. Off-track grants per grant agent (in number and percentage), FY20	15
Table 5. Cumulative disbursement ratings of off-track grants in FY20 prior to COVID-19	16
Table 6. Average disbursement lag, as of March 31 and June 30, 2020	18
Table 7. COVID-19 accelerated funding portfolio, as of July 31, 2020	21
Table 8. Number and grant amount by grant agent(s) for COVID-19 AF as of June 30, 2020	22
Table 9. Biweekly volume of applications and average days taken from submission to approval	26
Table 10. KIX fund utilization, as of June 30, 2020	32
Table 11. Regional KIX hubs	33
Table 12. Description of type of administrative costs associated with grants	35
Table 13. Agency/supervision and direct management and administrative costs by FCAC status	36
Table 14. Agency/supervision and direct management and administrative costs by grant size	36

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. ESPIGs approved by grant amount, FY18–FY20	9
Figure 2. Distribution of number of regular ESPIGs approved by grant size, FY18–FY20	9
Figure 3. Total active, closed and pending ESPIGs, by income category, FY18–FY20	11
Figure 4. Total active, closed and pending ESPIGs, by FCAC status, FY18–FY20	11
Figure 5. Number of ESPIGs managed per grant agent, FY18–FY20	11
Figure 6. ESPIG amount managed per grant agent, FY18–FY20	12
Figure 7. ESPIG implementation and disbursement status, FY16–FY20	14
Figure 8. Approved COVID-19 AF grants by income category, FCAC and region	21
Figure 9. COVID-19 AF grant allocation by thematic area	23
Figure 10. Average proportion allocated to different modality of distance learning	24
Figure 11. Number and value of ESPIGs closed per fiscal year, FY17–FY20	29
Figure 12. Trend in total grant agent costs, FY13–FY20 (in percentage)	36

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Grant Status Report (GSR) was prepared under the guidance and technical leadership of the Secretariat's Grant Operations Team Lead, Sven Baeten, and Senior Economist Jean-Marc Bernard, who both reviewed all drafts and provided valuable feedback and inputs on the report. The preparation of this report was made possible by the following Secretariat colleagues, who wrote sections of the report, provided important data inputs, or served as peer reviewers: Wilson Idahosa Aiwuyor, Sarah Beardmore, Yuri Borovsky, Aditi Desai, Peter Bourke, Phuong Nhu Ha, Kyoko Yoshikawa Iwasaki, Sai Sudha Kanikicharla, Gauri Khanduja, Ian Macpherson, Yuliya Makarova, Rudraksh Mitra, Kareen Nzakimuena and Mohammad Muntasim Tanvir. The team is grateful to David Glass, Ana Angela Tobar Lozano and Edward Matthew Robirds for their support.

Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the Global Partnership for Education or the World Bank Group concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city, area or its authorities, frontiers or boundaries.

Published by:

Global Partnership for Education

1850 K Street N.W. Suite 625

Washington D.C., 20006, USA

www.globalpartnership.org

Email: information@globalpartnership.org

Cover design: Edward Matthew Robirds

1 INTRODUCTION

The Grant Status Report (GSR) is prepared annually by the GPE Secretariat. It is prepared to update the Board of Directors (the Board) and its Grants and Performance Committee (GPC) in fulfillment of the requirements described in the GPC's terms of reference to "track progress on the portfolio of grants awarded from GPE resources".¹ A product of collaborative efforts across the Secretariat, this year's report covers the 2020 fiscal year, i.e. July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.² The report is based on data provided by grant agents, country partners, coordinating agencies and Secretariat staff.

In addition to presenting an overview of the education sector program implementation grant (ESPIG) portfolio, a key focus of the GSR is the analysis of ESPIG performance on the basis of whether the programs are "on track", "at risk" or "off track" with regard to achieving their targets. The report indicates how the grant agents have worked with governments and local education groups to address implementation issues for off-track grants. It also provides some additional information on how the portfolio supported by specific grant agents compares to the overall status of grants. Building on the effective partnership review (EPR), the Secretariat will continue to reinforce these elements of grant agent accountability. Further, this year's report includes additional sections covering GPE's response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as well as analysis on the impact of the pandemic on grant implementation. It also has a section on two key GPE initiatives: Education Out Loud, a fund to support civil society's role in shaping education policy to better meet the needs of communities, especially of vulnerable and marginalized populations, and Knowledge and Innovation Exchange, which consists of a funding mechanism that provides grants at global and regional levels for knowledge generation and innovation, and of regional hubs which bring together representatives of national education systems to identify shared education policy priorities and exchange information and good practices.

In 2019, in consultation with the GPC, the Grant Performance Report – renamed Grant Status Report this fiscal year – was streamlined (away from the broader coverage of the previous annual portfolio reviews) to focus mainly on ESPIG portfolio and implementation analysis, which aligns with Indicator 25 of the GPE Results Framework.³ Reporting on the education sector plan development grant (ESPDG) and the program development grant (PDG) are therefore excluded from the GSR and will instead be made available on the GPE website. Similarly, other grant analysis/reporting, including analysis on ESPIG thematic components; implementation modalities and alignment; risk management and operational risk framework; audit report analysis; and updates on misuse of funds are reported in the annual GPE Results Report or presented directly to the relevant Board committees.

It is important to note that ESPIG performance issues covered in this report do not include outputs, outcomes and impacts of the grants. These are covered in other dedicated reports and studies, including country-level evaluations, independent summative evaluations and the annual GPE Results Report.⁴ To obtain a broader picture of grant performance issues, the GSR should therefore be complemented by other relevant publications from the Secretariat.

¹ See "Grants and Performance Committee Terms of Reference", available on GPE website: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/country-grants-and-performance-committee-terms-reference>.

² The data used in the section on COVID-19 response grant is as of July 30, 2020.

³ Indicator 25 measures the "proportion of GPE program grants assessed as on-track with implementation". It, along with other indicators of the GPE Results Framework for 2016–2020, can be found at <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/gpe-results-framework-2016-2020>.

⁴ Available on GPE website: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/results/monitoring-evaluation>.

2 KEY OBSERVATIONS

During this fiscal year, the partnership approved a record implementation grant amount of US\$967.8 million. This is more than the combined amount (US\$863.3 million) approved in the previous three fiscal years (US\$538.9 million in FY19, US\$199.6 million in FY18 and US\$124.8 million in FY17). The number of grants approved in FY20 also increased substantially to 76, which more than doubles the 35 grants approved in the previous three fiscal years combined. In terms of the overall implementation grant portfolio,⁵ 61 country partners benefitted from 113 ESPIGs worth US\$2.58 billion in FY20, compared with FY19 when 50 country partners benefitted from 57 ESPIGs valued at US\$2.08 billion.⁶

The significant increase in approved grant amount can be partially attributed to the partnership's COVID-19 response, as US\$370.8 million of the FY20 amount was for COVID-19 accelerated funding (COVID-19 AF) support to enable country partners to cope with the impacts of the novel coronavirus pandemic on their education systems.

However, it is important to note that, excluding COVID-19 AF, the ESPIG amount approved in FY20 (US\$597 million) surpassed last year's achievement when the approved ESPIG amount (US\$538.9 million) more than doubled that of FY18 (US\$199.6 million). In terms of number of grants, the ESPIGs approved nearly doubled to 33 in FY20 from 17 in FY19.

The diversity of grant agents continues to increase. The number of organizations that serve as grant agents continues to grow – in FY20 the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) joined the existing grant agents. In addition, grant agents with a smaller portfolio, such as Agence Française de Développement (AFD), Save the Children US and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), substantially increased the number of grants and grant amount for which they serve as grant agents.

ESPIGs that remained active at the end of FY20 were rated according to their performance in implementation. The implementation rating was based on an assessment of whether an ESPIG is on track to achieve its major outputs. As such, an ESPIG is considered off track when it has significant shortcomings that limit the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is uncertain. An ESPIG is considered at risk when there are moderate shortcomings but the grant agent considers a resolution likely. In addition, the report uses a disbursement rating which is based on the assessment of the percentage of the cumulative amount disbursed compared with the percentage of time elapsed in the grant period.

In terms of implementation, the share of grants that reported to be on track is the highest in the last five years. This is an indicator of a higher percentage of well-designed grants limiting the need to deal with implementation issues. At the same time, the FY20 implementation ratings show a moderate increase in the number of grants (six grants, 19.4%) that are off track – with substantial implementation issues to be addressed – compared with four grants (13.8%) in FY19 and three grants (10.7%) in FY18. In

⁵ This includes grants that were: 1) approved in the current and previous fiscal years, and 2) active at any time during FY20 or approved in FY20 but yet to commence implementation (i.e. pending) at the end of the fiscal year.

⁶ There is a discrepancy between the number of grants and the number of country partners for two reasons. First, each of the country partners with multiple provinces/states accessing GPE grants is counted once, while each grant received by every province/state is counted individually toward the total number of approved grants. This includes Somalia (Federal, Somaliland and Puntland), Tanzania (Mainland and Zanzibar) and Pakistan (Balochistan and Sindh provinces). Second, four countries (Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines) access their allocations through a single regional application submitted by the Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). So, while these countries are counted as four country partners, one grant is recorded for them.

comparison with FY16 (11 grants, 20.4%) and FY17 (10 grants, 20.8%), there is a decrease in off-track grants.

For disbursement, the FY20 ratings however show a significant increase in the number of grants that are off track compared with the last five years. In FY20, 35.5% of ESPIGs (11 out of 31 grants) were rated as off track in cumulative disbursements. While most of these grants were already off track on disbursement before the start of the pandemic, initial figures show that COVID-19 had a negative impact on disbursements, especially of already off-track grants.

With one exception, programs that were reported as off track in implementation in the 2019 report have been restructured to deal with the implementation challenges. Governments and grant agents, in consultation with the local education groups (LEGs) and supported by the Secretariat, including through country missions, have discussed solutions to implementation issues in all of these countries. This has led to a restructuring in four (Chad, Congo DR, Lesotho and Yemen) out of five grants that were off track in FY19, though these restructurings happened only during the second part of FY20 (and in one case only at the start of FY21). The timing of the grant restructurings, combined with the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of agreed measures, means that they haven't (yet) led to an upgrading of the status of these grants.

COVID-19 has a negative impact on program implementation. Initial figures show that disbursement deteriorated for most of the grants after the COVID-19 outbreak and that the deterioration was most notable for at-risk and already off-track grants. The COVID-19 related factors that have contributed to implementation challenges include school closures affecting activities such as teacher training, textbook piloting, impact evaluation, and evaluation of disbursement-linked indicators; delayed procurement and construction; and restrictions to local and international travel. Programs have been taking mitigation measures to address implementation challenges, but the prolonged crisis may continue the need for reassessment.

As an emergency response grant, the COVID-19 AF supports mitigation and recovery efforts. The mitigation effort is to alleviate the impacts of the pandemic on education systems. Recovery supports efforts to ensure that all children can safely return to school and that education systems are restored and strengthened to cope with future emergencies.

As of the end of July 2020,⁷ 52 country partners had benefitted from 51 COVID-19 response grants worth US\$422 million, with over half of the resources (56%) going to low-income countries. Sub-Saharan Africa received 75% of approved COVID-19 grants, while countries affected by fragility or conflict (FCACs) received 54% of approved COVID-19 grants. Activities supported by the grant align with GPE's strategic goals of learning, equity and system strengthening. The proportion of the grant allocated to these three thematic areas (learning – 38%, equity – 37%, system strengthening – 24%) is approximately the same as that of the regular ESPIGs, except that the allocation to the system thematic area is slightly smaller for COVID-19 funding, for which the focus on emergency response.

⁷ To get a broader understanding of the thematic make-up of the COVID-19 AF portfolio, the data in the COVID-19 AF analysis extends slightly beyond FY20 to the end of July 2020 since a majority of the COVID-19 response grants were coded by the end of July..

3 OVERVIEW OF ESPIG PORTFOLIO

3.1 DESCRIPTION OF ESPIG PORTFOLIO

During FY20, 61 country partners benefitted from 113 grants (active, closed and pending) worth US\$2.58 billion. Of these, 43 grants worth US\$370.8 million were COVID-19 accelerated funding (COVID-19 AF),⁸ a funding window that was introduced by GPE to help countries cope with the impacts of the novel coronavirus pandemic on their education systems.

Excluding the COVID-19 AF window, 58 country partners benefitted from 70 ESPIGs⁹ (active, closed and pending) worth US\$2.21 billion, including 14 Multipliers¹⁰ for a value of US\$275 million¹¹ and 9 regular accelerated funding (AF) for a value of US\$69.2 million. Of the 70 ESPIGs, 11 closed in FY20, while 27 started implementation,¹² increasing the number of active ESPIGs from 38 to 46. The average time between approval and implementation start date in FY20 was 4.7 months (which is in line with past trends¹³). This calculation excludes accelerated funding and additional financing grants due to their different timelines, so the FY20 sample only considered 16 grants. A quarter of these (4 grants)¹⁴ had a delay of around 10 months and when we exclude these, the average delay drops to 2.8 months. In addition, when we look at the time between the approval date and the start date for all the grants that commenced implementation between FY18 and FY20,¹⁵ we find that the average time between approval and implementation start date was 4.3 months. We also find that this figure varies across the grant agents: the World Bank – 6.9 months; Sida – 5.9 months; AFD – 2.4 months; Save the Children US – 2 months; UNICEF – 1.5 months.

14 ESPIGs were pending (i.e. had not yet started implementation) at the end of the fiscal year.¹⁶ While most of them were slated to commence implementation after July 1, 2 grants (Myanmar and Cote d'Ivoire) received effectiveness extensions beyond 12 months after approval and are now expected to become effective in the next fiscal year. Table 1 presents an overview of all ESPIGs (active, closed and pending) since FY17. The table also provides an overview of the FY20 portfolio with and without COVID-19 AF. A detailed list of ESPIGs and COVID-19 AF grants is presented in Annexes 1A and 1B.

⁸ The data in this section, including COVID-19 AF data, is as of June 30, 2020.

⁹ The term ESPIG as used here refers to: regular ESPIG, ESPIG and Multiplier combined, Multiplier, regular accelerated funding, and additional financing.

¹⁰ This includes 11 Multiplier grants which are combined with regular ESPIGs.

¹¹ This includes the ESPIG component of Multiplier grants which are combined with regular ESPIGs.

¹² Of these, 21 were approved during FY20.

¹³ 4.7 months in FY20; 3.6 months in FY19; 4.8 months in FY18.

¹⁴ Benin, Nepal, Tanzania–Mainland and Uzbekistan.

¹⁵ The report looked at grants that commenced implementation between FY18 and FY20 (rather than only looking at FY20) in order to have a meaningful sample size of grants per grant agent. Furthermore, only grant agents that had at least three grants which commenced implementation between FY18 and FY20 were analyzed. Grants with two grant agents were excluded.

¹⁶ The 14 pending ESPIGs are: Cote d'Ivoire, Honduras, Mali, Mauritania, Myanmar, Pakistan–Punjab, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia–Federal, Sudan, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe. Myanmar was approved in 2018, Cote d'Ivoire in 2019, and the remainder in 2020. Of these pending grants, the majority (10) were slated to become effective on or after July 1, 2020 according to the approval documents. 2 grants (Rwanda and Sudan) were originally expected to become effective in April 2020; however, they received an effectiveness extension into the next fiscal year. Another 2 grants (Myanmar and Cote d'Ivoire) received effectiveness extensions beyond the 12 months after approval and are expected to become effective in the next fiscal year.

GPE ANNUAL GRANT STATUS REPORT 2020

Table 1. ESPIG portfolio, FY17–FY20

	NEW APPROVED	ACTIVE	CLOSED	PENDING	TOTAL (ACTIVE, CLOSED & PENDING)	ACTIVE & CLOSED
ESPIG portfolio as of June 30, 2017						
Number of grants	4	48	10	3	61	58
Value (US\$ million)*	124.8	1961.9	357.4	202.3	2521.6	2319.3
ESPIG portfolio as of June 30, 2018						
Number of grants	14	34	24	8	66	58
Value (US\$ million)*	199.6	1445.7	870.3	94.1	2410.1	2316
ESPIG portfolio as of June 30, 2019						
Number of grants	17	38**	12**	9**	57**	49
Value (US\$ million)*	538.9	1293.3	464.5	320.9	2078.7	1757.8
ESPIG portfolio as of June 30, 2020 (excluding COVID-19 AF)						
Number of grants	33	46**	11**	14**	70**	57
Value (US\$ million)*	597	1239.1	624.5	347.6	2211.2	1863.6
ESPIG and COVID-19 AF portfolio as of June 30, 2020						
Number of grants	76 (COVID-19 AF = 43)	74** (COVID-19 AF = 28)	11** -	29** (COVID-19 AF = 15)	113** (COVID-19 AF = 43)	85 (COVID-19 AF = 28)
Value (US\$ million)*	967.8 (COVID-19 AF = 370.8)	1438.7 (COVID-19 AF = 199.6)	624.5 -	518.7 (COVID-19 AF = 171.2)	2,582.0 (COVID-19 AF = 370.8)	2063.2 (COVID-19 AF = 199.6)

* Grants approved before December 2016 exclude the supervision allocation. For grants approved thereafter, the supervision allocation is included in the grant amount.

** In some instances, a grant is counted in more than one category (active, closed, pending). For example, if a country has an ESPIG that is active and an additional ESPIG financing that is pending (and these two finance the same program), these are considered as one grant in the “total” column. However, they are counted as one in each of the “active” and “pending” columns. Therefore, the columns “active, closed and pending” should not be added to get the column “total”.

A record grant amount of US\$967.8 million was approved in FY20 for ESPIG and the COVID-19 response. Even when COVID-19 AF is excluded, the approved ESPIG amount shows an increase on previous years. In FY20, the partnership approved a total of US\$597 million in ESPIGs compared with US\$538.9 million in FY19. (Figure 1 shows the ESPIGs approved by grant amount for FY18 to FY20; Figure 2 shows the distribution of ESPIGs approved by grant size for the same period.) Although the approved ESPIG amount (excluding COVID-19 AF) was only slightly higher than that of FY19, the number of ESPIGs approved nearly doubled (from 17 to 33). This increase was mainly due to a large increase in the number of smaller grants approved (up to US\$20 million). This is driven primarily by the relatively high number of additional ESPIG financing (additional maximum country allocation – MCA) and regular AF. In FY20, 9 additional MCAs were approved compared with just 1 in FY19, and 6 regular AF grants were approved compared with 4 approved in FY19.¹⁷ It is also important to note that the authority delegated by the GPE Board to the CEO to approve all COVID-19 AF grants as well as all grant amounts up to US\$10 million may

¹⁷ In December 2019, the Board allocated an additional US\$250 million in AF grants to 19 countries. This has probably had a positive impact on the approvals in 2020, as 5 out of the 6 approved accelerated requests relate to this specific allocation (though one happened before the Board decision). However, it has to be noted that the number of AF requests already increased in previous years, so some requests may also have been submitted without the specific allocation. If AF grants are excluded, the trends reported above wouldn’t substantially change, and the number of approvals would increase from 13 to 27. For this reason, it has been decided to include the AF request in this overview, in line with the methodology adopted in previous fiscal years.

have contributed to the record number of the FY20 approval, as all 43 COVID-19 AF and 9 regular ESPIGs approved during this fiscal year were approved by the CEO.

Figure 1. ESPIGs approved by grant amount (US\$), FY18–FY20

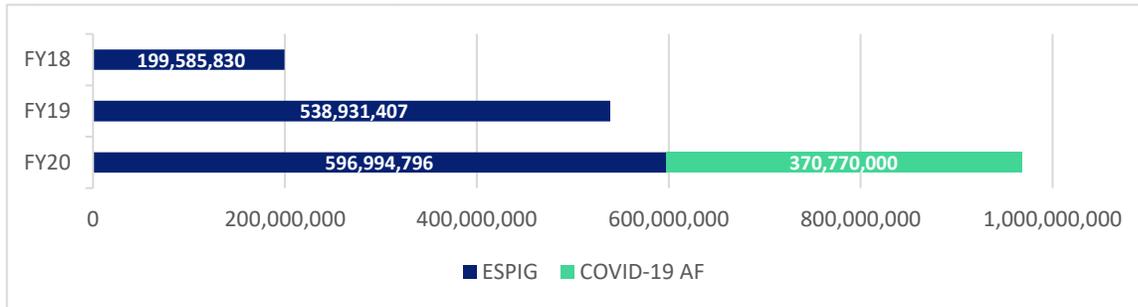
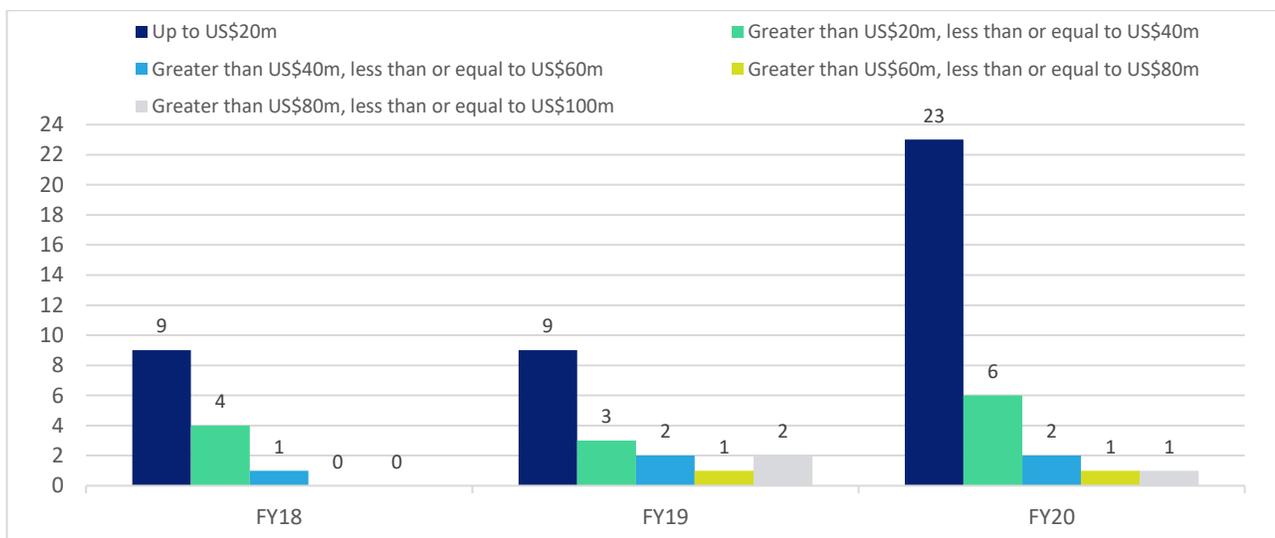


Figure 2. Distribution of number of regular ESPIGs approved by grant size, FY18–FY20



Note: the above chart compares regular ESPIGs only (excluding COVID-19 AF, as this is unique to the FY20 portfolio).

During FY20, the GPE Secretariat implemented a different reporting methodology to further track monthly disbursements made from the GPE trust fund and quarterly utilization by programs. *Disbursements* thus refers to financial transfers made from the GPE trust fund to grant agents, while *quarterly utilization* refers to transfers to and actual expenditure by programs.

For the FY20 portfolio (including COVID-19 AF), the cumulative¹⁸ trust fund disbursement was US\$1.55 billion, of which a cumulative amount of US\$832.5 million had been utilized for programs as of June 30, 2020.¹⁹ In terms of non-cumulative amount, the trust fund disbursed a total of US\$567.37 million in FY20, of which US\$297.4 million was for regular ESPIG and US\$269.97 million went to COVID-19 AF. Of the ESPIG disbursement, 55% was for FCACs. Regular ESPIG utilization (non-cumulative) reached US\$146.7 million, 54% of which was utilized for FCACs.

¹⁸ *Cumulative disbursement or utilization* is the total amount disbursed or utilized in the life cycle of the grants in the ESPIG portfolio at the end of the period under consideration. This is different from *annual (FY) disbursement or utilization*, which only covers the amount disbursed or utilized in the current fiscal year.

¹⁹ The utilized amount excludes COVID-19 AF, for which utilization figures had not been received as of June 30.

The rest of this section – distribution of ESPIGs by region, grant agent, income and fragility status – excludes COVID-19 AF grants, which are examined in detail in Sections 4 and 5.

3.2 DISTRIBUTION BY REGION

With over US\$963 million (as of end-FY20), Sub-Saharan Africa continued to have the largest share of ESPIGs under implementation, representing 77.7% of the active ESPIG amount. This was an increase from the previous year in terms of proportion (71.8% in FY19) and amount (about US\$928 million in FY19). South Asia had the second largest amount: US\$139 million or 11.2% of the active ESPIGs as of end-FY20. Table 2 presents a breakdown of the ESPIG portfolio across regions.

Table 2. ESPIG portfolio across regions (active, closed and pending as of June 30, 2020)

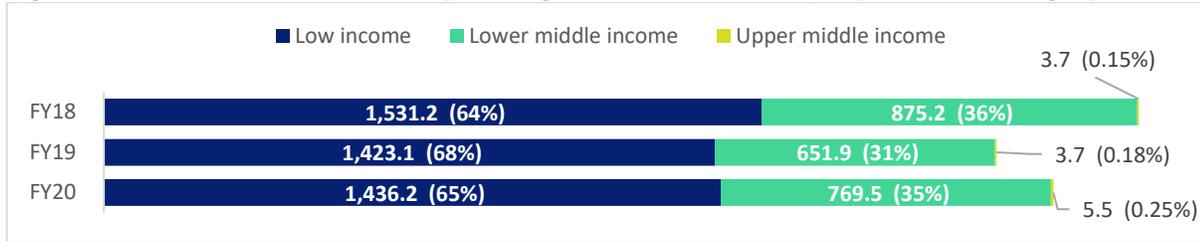
REGION	NUMBER OF ESPIGs	% NUMBER OF ESPIGs	FCACs*	% FCACs IN A REGION	% ESPIGs THAT ARE FCACs	GRANT AMOUNT	% GRANT AMOUNT
Active as of June 30, 2020							
East Asia & Pacific	3	6.5	1	3.3	33.3	44,799,000	3.6
Europe & Central Asia	1	2.2	0	0	0	10,000,000	0.8
Latin America & Caribbean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Middle East & North Africa	2	4.3	1	3.3	50	82,600,000	6.7
South Asia	5	10.9	1	3.3	20	138,532,407	11.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	35	76.1	27	90	60	963,205,830	77.7
Total	46	100	30	100	52.2	1,239,137,237	100
Closed as of June 30, 2020							
East Asia & Pacific	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Europe & Central Asia	1	9.1	0	0	0	49,900,000	8
Latin America & Caribbean	1	9.1	0	0	0	2,000,000	0.3
Middle East & North Africa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Asia	2	18.2	1	20	50	93,300,000	14.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	7	63.6	4	80	57.1	479,300,000	76.7
Total	11	100	5	100	45.5	624,500,000	100
Pending as of June 30, 2020							
East Asia & Pacific	3	21.4	2	25.0	66.7	83,299,796	24
Europe & Central Asia	1	7.1	0	0	0	10,000,000	2.9
Latin America & Caribbean	1	7.1	0	0	0	10,000,000	2.9
Middle East & North Africa	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Asia	1	7.1	1	12.5	100	50,625,000	14.6
Sub-Saharan Africa	8	57.1	5	62.5	62.5	193,630,000	55.7
Total	14	100	8	100	57.1	347,554,796	100

*This column refers to the number of approvals (not number of country partners or grants) in each region that are FCAC.

3.3 DISTRIBUTION BY INCOME AND FRAGILITY

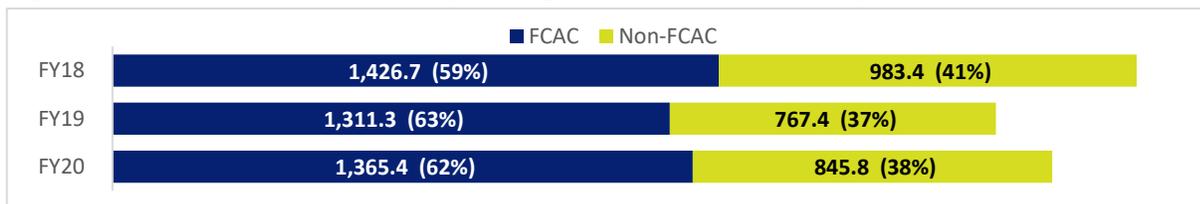
Following the trend from previous years, low and lower middle-income countries benefitted from a larger portion of the portfolio (active, closed and pending ESPIGs). As Figure 3 shows, low-income countries benefitted from 65% of the FY20 portfolio. Though this income category's share of the portfolio slightly decreased from 68% in FY19 to 65% in FY20, its allocation increased by US\$13.1 million or 1% in FY20. In the same period, funding for the lower middle-income countries increased by 18%. Notably, despite benefiting from the smallest share of the total portfolio (US\$3.7 million in FY19 and US\$5.5 million in FY20), the upper middle-income countries received the largest increase in allocation by 48.6% in FY20.

Figure 3. Total active, closed and pending ESPIGs (US\$ million), by income category, FY18–FY20



As shown in Figure 4, FCACs received more in allocation in FY20 (US\$1.365 billion) than in FY19 (US\$1.311 billion), but a slightly lower proportion (62%) of funding allocations as compared with FY19 (63%).

Figure 4. Total active, closed and pending ESPIGs (US\$ million), by FCAC status, FY18–FY20

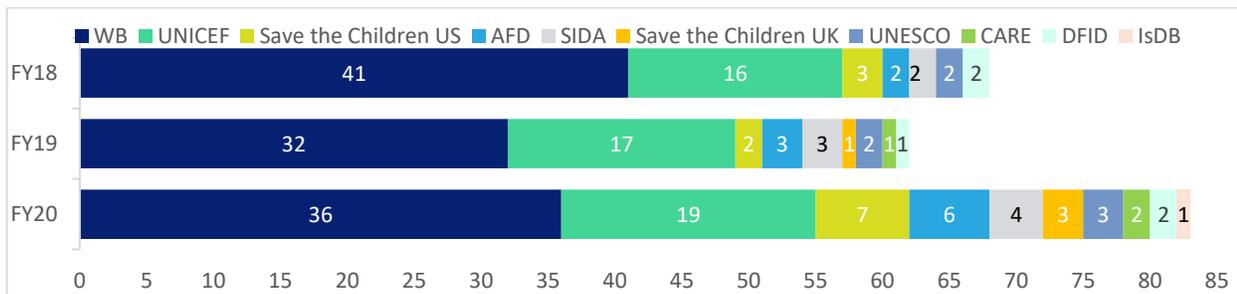


3.4 DISTRIBUTION BY GRANT AGENT²⁰

10 organizations (listed in Figure 5) acted as grant agents over the course of FY20 compared with 9 in FY19. The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) became a new grant agent in FY20.

In terms of the number of ESPIGs, the World Bank (WB) remains the grant agent with the largest portfolio, though with a decreased proportion of these grants: 60% in FY18, 52% in FY19, 43% in FY20. UNICEF remains the grant agent with the second largest portfolio, administering 23% of total grant portfolio – a decrease compared with this grant agent’s share of 27% in FY19 and 24% in FY18. The grant agents with the biggest percentage increases in number of ESPIGs administered between FY18 and FY20 are (in ascending order): Save the Children US (3 to 7) and AFD (2 to 6).

Figure 5. Number of ESPIGs managed per grant agent, FY18–FY20



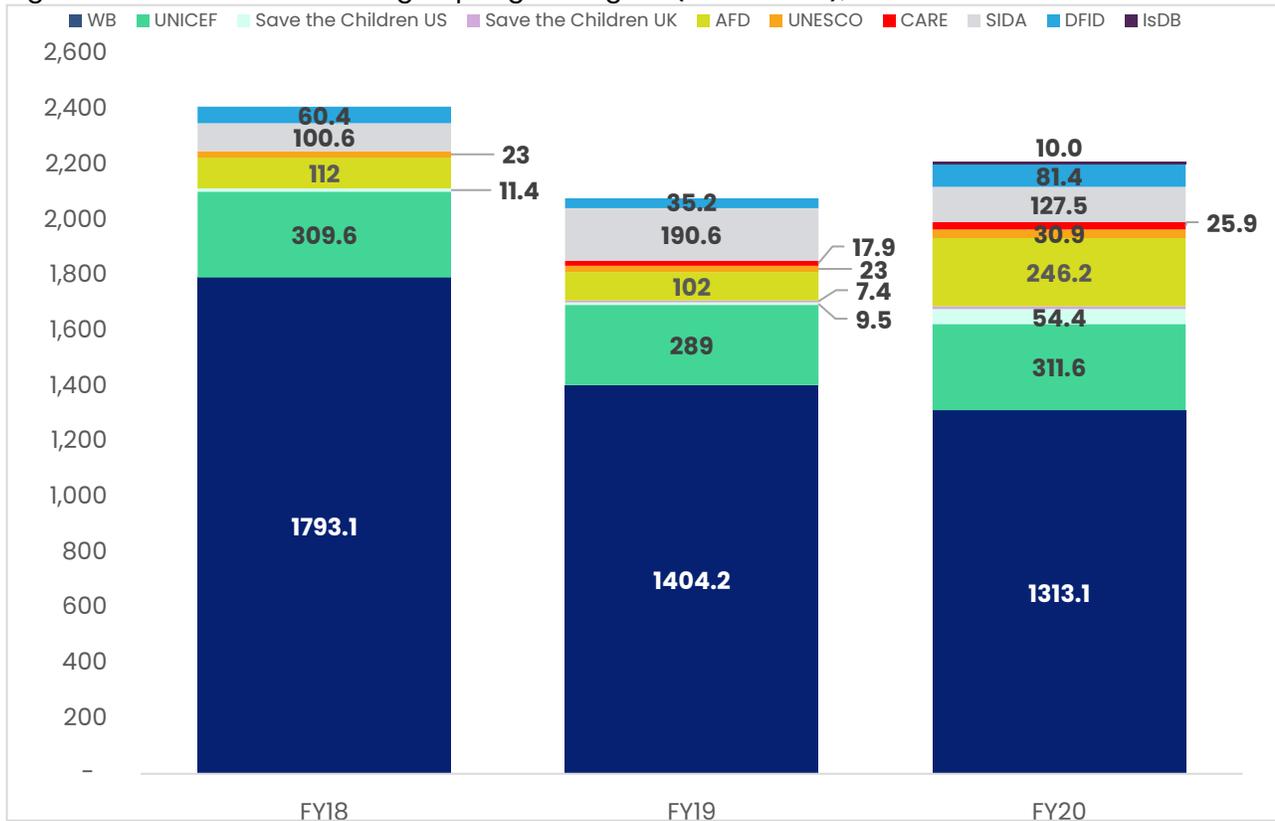
In terms of ESPIG amount administered per grant agent, the trends broadly reflect the trends in the number of ESPIGs. The amount for which the World Bank acted as grant agent has steadily decreased

²⁰ In order to conduct an appropriate analysis of the number of ESPIGs managed per grant agent, each approval is considered separately (even when it is part of the same grant). When an approval has two grant agents, these are considered separately too. This methodology applies to the Distribution by Grant Agent section only and explains why the total number of ESPIGs per fiscal year in this section may appear not to match the (actual) figure in other sections.

over the last three fiscal years: US\$1.79 billion in FY18; US\$1.40 billion in FY19; US\$1.31 billion in FY20. The amount administered by UNICEF has remained fairly constant: US\$310 million in FY18; US\$289 million in FY19; US\$312 million in FY20.

The grant agent with the biggest absolute grant amount increase is AFD, making it the grant agent with the third largest portfolio, not far behind UNICEF. AFD’s portfolio went from US\$112 million in FY18 to US\$246 million in FY20 (more than doubling). This US\$134 million increase is the biggest absolute increase by far, followed by Save the Children US’s US\$43 million increase. In fact, Save the Children US had the biggest percentage increase in grant amount (it increased by about five times), from US\$11.4 million in FY18 to US\$54.4 million in FY20. Figure 6 shows the ESPIG amount administered by each of the grant agents over the period FY18 to FY20.

Figure 6. ESPIG amount managed per grant agent (US\$ million), FY18–FY20



4 ESPIG PERFORMANCE

4.1 DISBURSEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION ANALYSIS

This section examines performance of ESPIGs in terms of disbursement and implementation, and assigns ratings of “on track”, “at risk” or “off track”.²¹ The *implementation rating* is based on the assessment of whether an ESPIG is on track with implementation to achieve its major outputs. A program is considered off track when it has significant shortcomings that limit or jeopardize the achievement of one or more outputs and a resolution is uncertain. A program is considered at risk when there are moderate shortcomings but the grant agent considers a resolution likely. *Disbursement rating* is based on the assessment of the percentage of the cumulative amount disbursed compared with the percentage of time elapsed in the grant period (see Annex 2A for more details on definition of ratings and methodology).

The sample of active grants with available ratings in FY20 (31 grants) is comparable to FY19 and FY18 (29 and 28 grants respectively). The overall number of active ESPIGs in FY20 was 46 (excluding COVID-19 response grants). However, 15 of these were new grants for which the first progress reports and grant agents’ ratings were not yet due to be reported to the GPE Secretariat in FY20²² (hence these grants being excluded from the sample of active grants).

Findings from three types of analyses are presented in this section: (i) trends analysis based on the last five years of available data for implementation and disbursement ratings (FY16 to FY20); (ii) the FY20 review of active grants with narratives explaining status changes from FY19; and (iii) the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of ESPIGs.

(i) FY16 to FY20 trends

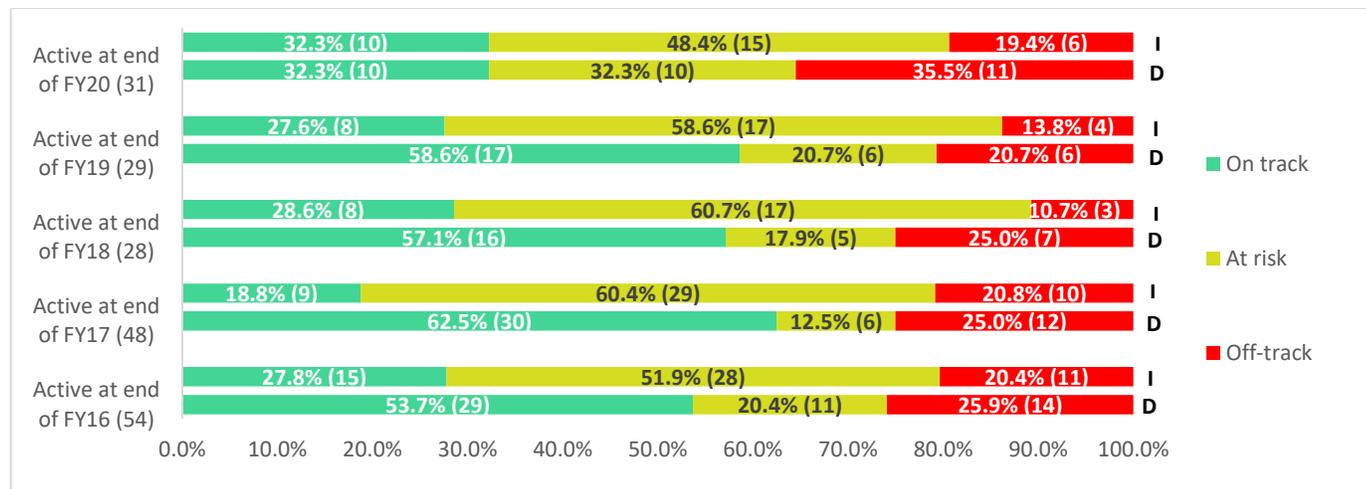
The FY20 implementation ratings show an increase in the share of off-track grants compared with FY18 and FY19; however the share is slightly lower than in FY16 and FY17. The share of off-track grants in FY20 is 19.4% compared with 13.8% and 10.7% in FY19 and FY18 respectively. The increase in FY20 is not significant in terms of the actual number of off-track grants (6 grants in FY20 compared with 4 in FY19 and 3 in FY18). Compared to FY16 and FY17, there are fewer off-track grants in terms of both the share and the number of grants (see Figure 7).

²¹ Outputs, outcomes and impacts of grants are not included in this report. These are covered in other dedicated reports and studies, including country-level evaluations, independent summative evaluations and the annual GPE Results Report available at: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/results/monitoring-evaluation>.

²² According to the GPE ESPIG reporting policy, grant agents are allowed 15 months from the start date of the grant to submit the first progress report (more details on the ESPIG reporting policy at <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/policy-education-sector-program-implementation-grants>). The new effective grants for which the first progress report (and the grant agents’ ratings) are not yet available include grants Burundi, Cameroon, Eritrea, Ghana, Guinea, Maldives, Mozambique, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, Somalia–Federal (Save the Children) additional financing, Somalia–Somaliland accelerated funding, Sudan, Tanzania–Mainland, Tanzania–Zanzibar ESPIG and Multiplier. Although these new grants are not included in this year’s implementation and disbursement analysis, their performance is closely monitored by the Secretariat through engagement with coordinating agencies, ministry of education focal points, grant agents and development partners on a regular basis. The disbursement and implementation analysis for these new grants will be included in the 2021 GSR.

On the other hand, the share of on-track grants based on their implementation status shows improvement in FY20 compared with previous years. The share of on-track grants (32.3%) is the highest in the last five years (see Figure 7).²³

Figure 7. ESPIG implementation and disbursement status (in percentage and number of ESPIGs), FY16–FY20



Note: I = implementation rating, D = disbursement rating

The FY20 disbursement ratings show a significant increase in off-track grants compared with the last five years, both in terms of the share and the number of grants (see Figure 7). In FY20, 35.5% of ESPIGs (11 out of 31 grants) were rated as off track in cumulative disbursements.

(ii) FY20 ratings and changes from FY19²⁴

In terms of combined rating (of implementation and disbursement), the downgrade of grants to off-track status in FY20 is mainly due to a downgrade in their disbursement ratings.²⁵ In FY20, 13 out of 31 grants (42%) were rated off track in either disbursement or implementation. This is a two-fold increase in the share and the number of off-track grants compared with the previous year (six grants, or 21%). Of these 13 off-track grants, 8 became off track in FY20. Only 1 of these 8 grants became off track due to the downgrade in its implementation rating compared with FY19 (Guinea Bissau). The rest of the grants became off track due to their cumulative disbursement rating: either as a result of the downgrade of their disbursement ratings compared with FY19, or based on their first disbursement ratings assessed as off track (Sierra Leone, Somalia–Federal)²⁶ (see Table 3).

²³ According to the GPE Results Framework methodology on tracking the overall status of implementation of the grants (Indicator 25), grants that are expected to achieve all of their major outputs, or most of their outputs with moderate shortcomings, are classified as “on track.” According to this methodology, slightly behind grants (grants that are expected to achieve most of their outputs with moderate shortcomings) should be classified as “on track”. However, in this Grant Status Report and previous Portfolio Reviews, “slightly behind” (or “at risk”) grants are examined as a separate category of grants as part of a more granular approach to implementation status analysis.

²⁴ As in the previous fiscal year, this year’s analysis of implementation and disbursement ratings is based on active grants as of June 30, 2020. For details on grants that closed in FY20, please see Section 6 on closed grants.

²⁵ For combined ratings, a grant is considered off track overall if its status is off track in either disbursement or implementation.

²⁶ Disbursement ratings for Cambodia, Central African Republic, Liberia, Madagascar, and Nepal were downgraded to off track in FY20 compared with FY19. Sierra Leone and Somalia Federal (CARE), submitted their first progress report and had their first ratings (off track) assigned in FY20.

Table 3. List of ESPIGs by disbursement and implementation status, active as of June 30, 2020

DISBURSEMENT STATUS FY20	IMPLEMENTATION STATUS FY20	NUMBER OF ESPIGs	LIST OF ESPIGs
On track	On track	5	Djibouti, The Gambia, Malawi, Somalia–Puntland, Tanzania–Zanzibar
On track	At risk	5	Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Uzbekistan
At risk	On track	4	Bangladesh, Kenya, Somalia–Somaliland, South Sudan
At risk	At risk	4	Afghanistan, Cabo Verde, Lao PDR, Zimbabwe
At risk	Off track	2	Congo DR, Guinea Bissau
Off track	On track	1	Somalia–Federal
Off track	At risk	6	Cambodia, Central African Republic, Liberia, Madagascar, Nepal, Sierra Leone
Off track	Off track	4	Chad, Comoros, Lesotho, Yemen
Total		31	

Note: The difference between implementation and disbursement ratings can be explained, to a large extent, by the difference in these two ratings' assessment methodologies. The disbursement rating calculation is based on a formula, taking into account cumulative disbursement and cumulative grants' elapsed period of implementation as of the end of the fiscal year (i.e. as of June 30, 2020 for FY20). The assessment of implementation rating, on the other hand, reflects the assessment of implementation progress made during the 2020 fiscal year only. In many cases, the implementation progress assessment may not even cover the full fiscal year status as the submission of progress reports (and implementation ratings) is linked to the grants' reporting cycle, rather than fiscal year cycle.

Of the grants that were off track in implementation or disbursement in FY20, the World Bank is grant agent for 43% (6 grants), while UNICEF is grant agent for 36% (5 grants). However, it is important to note that this is in line with their relative share in the total portfolio (46.9% for WB, and 31.3% for UNICEF). Grant agents for the other off-track grants are Care International (1 grant) and UNESCO (2 grants). See Table 4.

Table 4. Off-track grants per grant agent (in number and percentage), FY20

Grant agent	# of grants in sample	GA's share of total (%)	# of off-track grants in GA's portfolio	% of off-track grants in total	% off-track in GA's Portfolio	# off-track grants in FCAC	% of off-track grants in FCAC
WB	15	46.9	6	42.9	40	3	50
UNICEF	10	31.3	5	35.7	50	4	80
UNESCO	2	6.3	2	14.3	100	1	50
AFD	1	3.1	0	0	0	0	0
Save the Children	2	6.3	0	0	0	0	0
SIDA	1	3.1	0	0	0	0	0
CARE	1	3.1	1	7.1	100	1	100

In line with the effective partnership review (EPR), the Secretariat organized meeting with all grant agent to review progress on all active and pending programs. From grant agents' side, participation generally included a GPE focal point at headquarters and, where relevant regional level, as well as staff supporting implementation of the GPE funded program and their management (chief of education, practice manager). From the Secretariat, regional managers have led these meetings, with participation from country leads, education specialists and monitoring officers. In specific cases staff from the Risk and Compliance team participated. Grant agents have presented current status of programs and participants have engaged in discussions on actions to address identified issues.

Of the 13 off-track grants, 5 remained off track from last year (Chad, Comoros, Congo DR, Lesotho and Yemen).²⁷ Government and grant agent, in consultation with the local education group (LEG) and supported by the Secretariat, including through country missions, discussed solutions to implementation issues in all of these countries. This led to a restructuring in four (Chad, Congo DR, Lesotho and Yemen) out of five grants that were off track in FY19, though these restructurings only happened during the second part of FY20 (and in one case only at the start of FY21). The timing of the grant restructuring, combined with the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of agreed measures, means that the status of these grants has not (yet) been upgraded. In Comoros, some issues have been addressed, but others (non-reimbursement of advanced and non-justified funds, and intervention strategy of non-state actors) remain unresolved at the end of FY20 (see Annex 2B).

The performance of the off-track grants has been affected by COVID-19 (see Section 4.2 on the impact of COVID-19 on ESPIG implementation). A significant number of grants with off-track ratings (9 out of 13 grants) reported that COVID-19 had contributed to challenges in implementation.

However, cumulative disbursement ratings of these off-track grants as of end-December 2019 and end-March 2020 show that most were off track on disbursement before the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of 11 off-track grants on disbursement, 4 (Comoros, Yemen, Central African Republic, Sierra Leone) were already off track in December and March 2020, and an additional 4 grants (Lesotho, Cambodia, Liberia, Madagascar) became off track in March (before COVID-19 had its full effect on grant implementation) (see Table 5). However, while most off-track grants reported implementation issues prior to COVID-19, they also indicate the negative impact of the pandemic on progress with remedial actions. The comparison of average disbursement lag as of 31 March, 2020 and as of June 30, 2020 shows that disbursement lag deteriorated most for off-track grants, indicating that events that happened during the fourth quarter, including COVID-19, exacerbated the delay in disbursements for these grants.

Table 5. Cumulative disbursement ratings of off-track grants in FY20 prior to COVID-19

ESPIG	End-March 2020	End-December 2019
Group 1: Remained off track in disbursement in FY20		
Chad (fixed part)*	At risk	Off track
Comoros	Off track	Off track
Lesotho	Off track	At risk
Yemen	Off track	Off track
Group 2: Turned off track in disbursement in FY20		
Cambodia (fixed part, UNESCO)	Off track	At risk
Central African Republic	Off track	Off track
Liberia	Off track	At risk
Madagascar	Off track	At risk
Nepal**	On track	N/A (not yet effective)
Sierra Leone	Off track	Off track
Somalia–Federal	At risk	Off track

* Chad's cumulative disbursement rating slightly improved in March 2020, compared with December 2019, due to the impact of the additional financing to ESPIG effective as of March 1, 2020 and the subsequent extension of the ESPIG's closing date until December 31, 2022.

** Nepal is a recent grant (effective as of February 14, 2020). Its cumulative disbursement rating was not yet available in December 2019 and was on track in March 2020.

Next to the impact of COVID-19, reasons reported by the grant agents for implementation issues and disbursement delays include delays in procurement (Cabo Verde, Chad, Lesotho); challenges related to recruitment of teachers (Chad) and teacher strikes (Guinea Bissau, Lesotho); delays in setting up the

²⁷ There were 6 grants rated off track in either disbursement or implementation in FY19, of which one closed (Ethiopia) in FY20.

Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and the recruitment of key staff (Guinea Bissau). In Central African Republic, there were delays in classroom construction due to delays in the transportation of supplies and the lack of reliable local manufacturing and construction companies. Lack of local service provider capacity also affected the Liberia program. There were also delays associated with the structure and functioning of the government in several partner countries: the reorganization of the ministry of education (Madagascar), a high turnover of leadership at the ministry (Lesotho), overstretched ministry staff dealing with multiple responsibilities (Sierra Leone) as well as weak institutional capacity (Liberia, DRC) and issues of government leadership (Comoros). In programs that included the variable part and require verification of the results-based indicators, there were delays associated with the establishment of the verification agency (Madagascar) and the verification process (Nepal).

Eight out of the 13 off-track grants either in implementation or in disbursement (62%) were for FCACs (Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo DR, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Somalia–Federal, Yemen). Implementation delays in some of these countries were also a result of external factors, such as political instability (Congo DR, Guinea Bissau, Liberia) and ongoing conflict (Yemen). (See Annex 2B for more details on individual grants).

Mitigation measures that have been taken or are being prepared to address implementation issues and disbursement delays include strengthened project implementation team, supervision, monitoring and coordination by government and grant agent (Chad, Guinea Bissau, Central African Republic, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Yemen); adapting the program (implementation) in light of COVID-19 (Cambodia, Liberia, Somalia, Congo DR, Lesotho); and program restructuring (Guinea Bissau, Chad, Congo DR, Lesotho, Madagascar, Nepal, Yemen) or extension (CAR, Sierra Leone).

4.2 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ESPIGS

The outbreak of COVID-19 is affecting the implementation of ESPIGs in various ways. Country partners are forced to postpone, change or cancel activities planned for ESPIGs due to school closures, travel restrictions, prohibition of large gatherings and supply chain disruption. This section looks at the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation and disbursement of ESPIGs, as well as activities that are particularly affected and mitigation measures devised by countries.

4.2.1 The extent of COVID-19 impact on ESPIG implementation and disbursement

COVID-19 is affecting the implementation of all ESPIGs²⁸ that were active as of June 30, 2020. The previous section shows an increase in the share of off-track grants, which is the highest it has been in the last three years. Though delays in implementing activities can be caused by various factors, implementation status reports and other sources of information from countries indicate that country partners are facing difficulties in implementing activities as planned due to the pandemic.

Disbursement deteriorated for most of the grants after the COVID-19 outbreak, but most notably for off-track grants. The disbursement lag²⁹ for all grants got worse during the last quarter of FY20 (April 1 to June 30, 2020), except for five grants that were mostly on track. The comparison of average

²⁸ Strictly speaking, COVID-19 hasn't (yet) impacted two grants that started implementation just before the end of the fiscal year: the Mozambique accelerated funding grant which started on June 22, 2020 and the Maldives ESPIG and Multiplier grant which started June 29, 2020.

²⁹ Disbursement lag is a value generated by deducting the percentage of cumulative grant amount disbursed from the percentage of the elapsed grant period. For example, if a four-year grant that has been implemented for two years has disbursed 50% of its grant amount, the disbursement lag would be 0. A value smaller than 0 indicates disbursement is lagged relative to time elapsed. See Annex 2B for categorization of disbursement ratings.

disbursement lag as of end-March and end-June 2020 for on-track, at-risk and off-track grants (Table 6) shows that disbursement lag deteriorated most for off-track grants, indicating that events that happened during the fourth quarter, which would include COVID-19, exacerbated the delay in disbursements for these grants.

Table 6. Average disbursement lag, as of March 31 and June 30, 2020

Disbursement status	Average disbursement lag as of end-March 2020	Average disbursement lag as of end-June 2020	Difference between disbursement lag in March and June 2020
On track (N=10)	0.07	0.06	0.01
At risk (N=10)	-0.14	-0.17	0.04
Off track (N=11)	-0.28	-0.34	0.06
Grand total	-0.12	-0.16	0.04

4.2.2 Implementation and activities particularly affected by COVID-19

School closure affected various types of activities that take place at school level. As of end-June 2020, out of 39 country partners with active ESPIGs, 25 had closed schools nationally, 10 had closed schools in some localities and 4 had schools open (see Annex 3A).³⁰ On average, schools had been closed for 98 days in these 39 country partners by the end of June 2020. Activities planned in GPE-funded projects that were reported to be affected by school closure include piloting newly developed textbooks (Benin), real-time data collection at school level (Malawi), school supervision (Somalia), pre-service teacher training (Cambodia), impact evaluations (Laos PDR) and evaluation of disbursement-linked indicators (Madagascar). To mitigate the impact of school closure on students' learning, countries are devising alternative modes of education, for example, through TV, radio and printed materials (e.g. Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Zanzibar). Countries are also preparing for safe school reopening; for example, Uzbekistan requested reallocation of funds to procure non-contact thermometers to be used in preschools.

Teacher training is one of the activities most noted as being affected by COVID-19. Because of the restriction of large gatherings and adherence to social distancing norms, many countries had to postpone teacher trainings or change modality of planned trainings. For example, in Cambodia, in-service teacher training was interrupted due to restrictions on public gatherings. To continue teacher training even during the pandemic, some countries, like Somalia, Cabo Verde, Cambodia and Congo DR introduced distance learning for teacher training, or mixing online training with in-person training with a limited number of participants.

Construction and procurement were also delayed. For example, Cambodia, Central African Republic and Nepal reported delays in importing materials, for construction and for teaching and learning, due to disruption of supply chain. Restrictions on civil work led to the postponement of construction in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Somalia. On the other hand, Zanzibar managed to finish all construction work planned for the fiscal year as this was allowed to proceed even during the pandemic.

Travel bans had a negative impact on activities that involve international consultants and those that require in-country travel. In Cambodia, Djibouti and Zanzibar, consultancy services provided by international consultants had to be halted. International travel restrictions are also affecting ESPIG applications (e.g. Burundi) and ESP development (e.g. Laos) which involve international consultants. In

³⁰ Burundi, Laos PDR, Niger and Papua New Guinea had their schools open. GPE compilation based on data of UNESCO global monitoring of school closures caused by COVID-19 (database), <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>.

GPE ANNUAL GRANT STATUS REPORT 2020

Congo DR, as domestic air travel has been restricted, use of radio is being considered to provide training to teachers in remote areas. Technical meetings and workshops continued, for example by using web conferencing systems, in Benin and Cambodia.

5 COVID-19 ACCELERATED FUNDING

5.1 OVERVIEW OF GPE'S COVID-19 RESPONSE³¹

Following WHO's declaration of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as a pandemic in mid-March 2020, GPE quickly stepped up to provide necessary support to country partners.³² The COVID-19 pandemic is causing an education emergency of unprecedented scale. The combined impact of school closure and economic downturn risks reversing decades of progress on education in partner countries and exacerbating inequalities. GPE started providing financial support to country partners as early as March 25, two weeks after the outbreak was declared a pandemic. GPE's assistance in response to COVID-19 includes three types of funding: multi-country education sector plan development grant (ESPDG), COVID-19 AF, and a global grant for coordination, learning and knowledge sharing on learning continuity.

The multi-country ESPDG funding is GPE's first funding mechanism specifically dedicated to COVID-19 response. This US\$8.8 million funding is channeled through UNICEF to support 87 countries to kickstart their education system's response to the pandemic, for example, by supporting governments to develop their COVID-19 response plans for education.³³

The COVID-19 AF aims at supporting interventions included in the government response plan that enable continued learning and the recovery of education systems from school closure. The total allocation for this funding window amounts to US\$500 million, and consists of the first tranche of US\$250 million (announced on March 31, 2020) and the second tranche of US\$250 million (announced on June 1, 2020).

Of the first tranche, US\$25 million was set aside for a global grant on continuity of learning to support global and regional coordination, learning and knowledge sharing. This grant is managed by a consortium of three grant agents: UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank.³⁴

5.2 COVID-19 ACCELERATED FUNDING PORTFOLIO

As of the end of July, 2020, 51 COVID-19 AF grants were approved for 52 country partners in the amount of US\$422 million³⁵ In addition to these grants, three applications totaling US\$10 million are under review, and 13 country partners have also expressed an interest to apply for the grant by September 2020 for a total of US\$41.5 million (see Table 7 for an overview; a list of all COVID-19 AF grants is presented in Annex 1B). It is worth noting that the timely response and coordinated efforts of the country partners, grant agents, coordinating agents and LEGs in submitting quality applications in record time during the pandemic highlighted the strength of the partnership approach.

³¹ The data in this section is as of end-July 2020.

³² See the timeline of GPE's response to the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/covid19?location=initial-view>.

³³ Details of this grant can be found in the UNICEF proposal for the funding: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/unicef-proposal-covid-19-response>; and in the summary of activities funded by the grant: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/summary-activities-funded-covid-19-planning-grants>.

³⁴ For more detailed information on this grant, see the joint proposal by UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/unesco-unicef-world-bank-joint-proposal-consortium-grant-agents>.

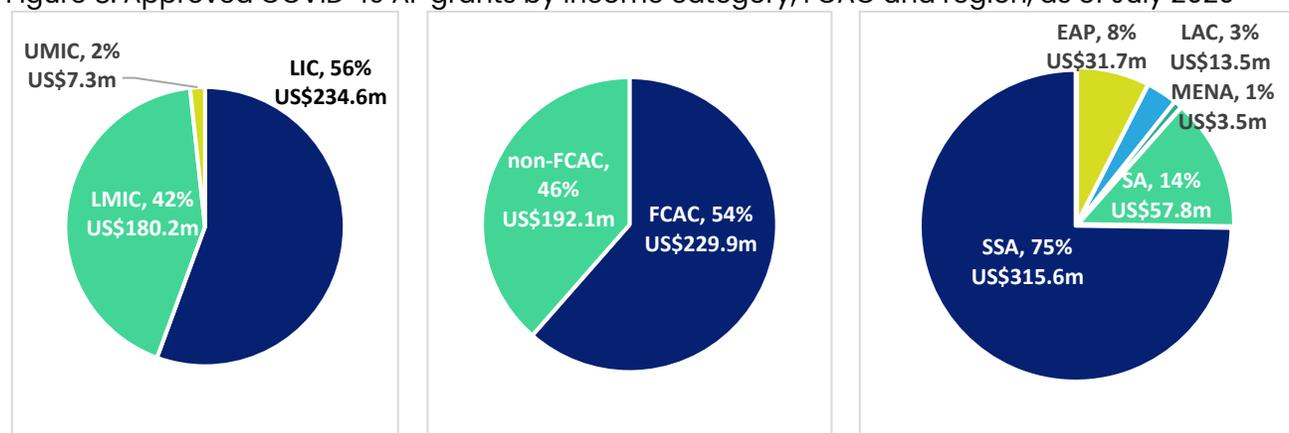
³⁵ There is a discrepancy between the number of grants and the number of country partners because there are two grants each for Somalia (Federal government and Puntland) and Tanzania (Mainland and Zanzibar) and a grant for Organisation of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) benefits four countries (Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, and St Vincent and the Grenadines).

Table 7. COVID-19 accelerated funding portfolio, as of July 31, 2020

Status	Number of grants	Grant amount (US\$ million)
Expressed interest	13	41.5
Application being reviewed	3	10
Approved and active	51	422
Total	67	473.5

A large share of GPE’s COVID-19 AF grants goes to countries whose education systems are likely to be affected severely by the pandemic. The allocations are based on the country’s school-aged population³⁶ and, as with regular ESPIGs, the COVID-19 AF window has prioritized the low- and vulnerable middle-income countries. As a result, a large share of resources goes to countries that were already struggling with learning crisis even before the pandemic. Out of US\$422 million that has been allocated for this funding window, 56% of resources went to low-income countries. Sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the lowest completion rates and highest out-of-school rates, received 75% of the funding. Finally, 54% of funding went to countries affected by fragility and conflict (FCACs).

Figure 8. Approved COVID-19 AF grants by income category, FCAC and region, as of July 2020



Note: LIC: low-income country; LMIC: lower middle-income country; UMIC: upper middle-income country. EAP: East Asia and Pacific; LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA: Middle East and North Africa; SA: South Asia; SSA: Sub-Saharan Africa

UNICEF and the World Bank manage 86% of the total grant amount for COVID-19 AF.³⁷ As shown in Table 8, UNICEF serves as grant agent for the largest number of COVID-19 AF grants (52.9%, 27 out of 51), followed by the World Bank (31.4%, 16 out of 51). In total, there are 7 different grant agents for COVID-19 AF grants.³⁸

³⁶ GPE COVID-19 Response BOD/2020/03 DOC 02, Table 1, https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/document/file/BOD-2020-03-DOC%2002%20-%20GPE%20COVID-19%20Response_0.pdf.

³⁷ Designation of a grant agent for COVID-19 AF follows a similar procedure for the regular ESPIGs, where the country government selects a grant agent in consultation with the LEG. Interested grant agents that were pre-accredited and had the capacity to act were eligible for selection by the government.

³⁸ UNICEF, the World Bank, Sida, AFD, UNESCO, Save the Children and OECS. One grant (Niger) is managed jointly by AFD and UNICEF.

Table 8. Number and grant amount by grant agent(s) for COVID-19 AF as of June 30, 2020

COVID-19 AF Grants				
Grant agent	Number of grants	Proportion of grants	Grant amount (US\$ million)	Proportion of grant amount
UNICEF	27	52.9%	188.7	44.7%
WB	16	31.4%	173	41%
Sida	1	2%	15.2	3.6%
AFD	2	3.9%	14	3.3%
UNESCO	1	2%	11	2.6%
AFD/UNICEF	1	2%	11	2.6%
Save the Children	2	3.9%	6.2	1.5%
OECS	1	2%	3	0.7%
Grand total	51		422	100%

5.3 THEMATIC ALLOCATION OF COVID-19 ACCELERATED FUNDING

The approved grants allocate resources to mitigation or response efforts in line with the GPE strategic goals of learning, equity and system strengthening (the “thematic areas”). The Secretariat coded and costed all approved COVID-19 grants, using a code book developed for this type of funding, to monitor how much is allocated to different programmatic activities and to each thematic area (see Annex 3B). This section briefly discusses the thematic allocation of the 51 COVID-19 AF grants that were approved by July 2020. Note that the thematic allocation described below is based on the original program documents submitted by grant agents, which are subject to revisions based on the reduced final allocation per country³⁹ and possible reallocation of funds during the implementation.⁴⁰

5.3.1 Thematic allocation overview

As mentioned above, COVID-19 AF grants support GPE’s three strategic goals: learning, equity and system.⁴¹ Across the 51 grants, 39% of total funding is primarily allocated to activities related to learning, 37% to equity and 24% to system strengthening. The proportion allocated each to equity, learning and system is approximately the same as that of the regular ESPIGs, except that the allocation to system is slightly smaller for COVID-19 grants due to their focus on emergency response. Allocation to system strengthening for COVID-19 grants contributes to building resilience of the education system for similar crisis in the future.⁴²

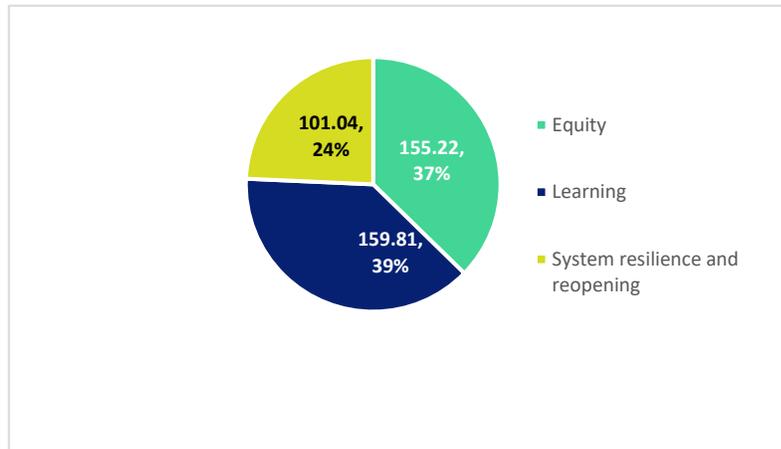
³⁹ Due to high demand, the initial funding window was unable to cover all countries that expressed an interest in the grant. The Board doubled the available resources to US\$500 million and reduce the per-country allocation. Consequently, some countries that had applied for the initial higher amount were requested to submit a revised program, which may not be fully reflected in this coding and costing data.

⁴⁰ Given the unpredictability of the COVID-19 situation, GPE allows countries and grant agents to reprogram the grant, in consultation with the LEG, for an amount not exceeding 25% of the allocation.

⁴¹ The coding for COVID-19 AF splits activities across different categories based on the activity description. For instance, “improving access to radio learning, with a focus on communities that do not have adequate access” would be evenly split between learning and equity.

⁴² Examples of activities for each thematic area, whether focused on mitigation or recovery, include support to marginalized children without access to technology (equity); provision of distance/home-based learning/tutoring programs (learning) and provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities to support school reopening (system). See Annex 3B for more information and country examples.

Figure 9. COVID-19 AF grant allocation by thematic area (in US\$ million and percentages)



Country partners allocated 39% of their COVID-19 AF to mitigation efforts while the remaining 61% was allocated to recovery efforts. Mitigation refers to activities that aim to alleviate negative impacts of COVID-19 on education outcomes and continued learning. Recovery, on the other hand, focuses on ensuring that all children can safely return to school and education systems are restored and strengthened to cope with future emergencies. All 51 grants support both mitigation and recovery.⁴³

5.3.1.1 Support to school reopening

Reopening of education facilities is the most funded recovery activities across the grants. A total of US\$51 million, or 20% of all funding for recovery, is allocated for the reopening of education facilities. All grants with activities in this area support hygiene programs in schools in preparation for reopening (e.g. construction of WASH facilities, disinfecting and sanitization of classrooms). Other activities supported under this area include development of guidelines and protocols for safe school reopening and expansion of learning space by adding tents to maintain social distancing in classrooms, among others.

5.3.1.2 Modality of distance learning

All grants support distance education of some kind to provide continued learning during school closure, except for Afghanistan.⁴⁴ 78% of the total allocation to distance learning – US\$40.4 million out of US\$52 million – is provided through printed materials or low-tech modality (e.g. radio or TV), reflecting connectivity challenges in partner countries. Indeed, the average proportion of population with access to internet among the countries that received COVID-19 grants is 22.6%.⁴⁵ As shown in Figure 10, the proportion allocated to medium- to high-tech modalities (e.g. tablets, mobile internet, SMS) is larger in countries with higher income and better internet penetration rates. TV broadcasting and/or online learning platforms are supported in most of the grants for small island developing countries (8 out of 10), where distance education through these modalities in order to reach the widely dispersed population had been considered appropriate even before the pandemic.⁴⁶

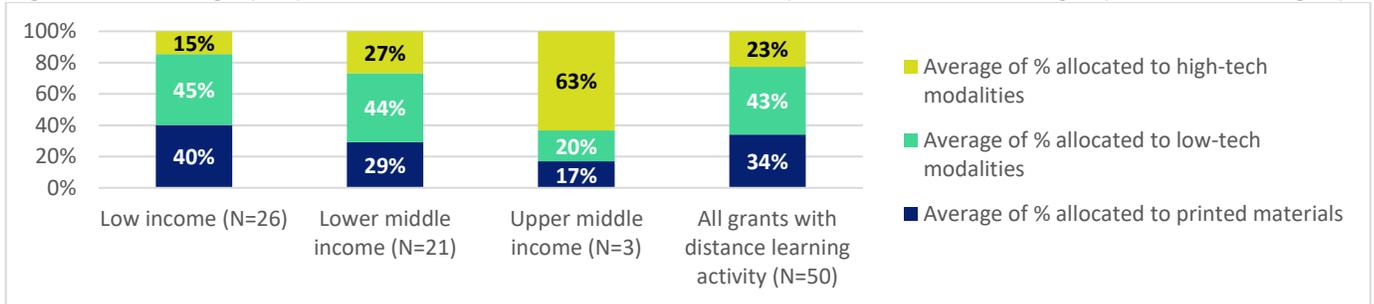
⁴³ Activities covered in the COVID-19 AF grants reflect only a part of the sector response. In some countries, activities included in GPE's COVID-19 AF took into consideration what other development partners were doing. For instance, Education Cannot Wait (ECW) supported 15 out of the 51 countries that received GPE's COVID-19 grants. The Secretariat ensured complementarity and avoided program overlaps through its quality assurance process.

⁴⁴ In Afghanistan, distance learning is supported by a grant funded by ECW. See Section 4.5 for complementarity between GPE and ECW.

⁴⁵ According to World Development Indicator: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS>.

⁴⁶ UNESCO IIEP (1993), Educational Strategies for Small Island States.

Figure 10. Average proportion allocated to different modality of distance learning, by income category



Where medium- to high-tech modality is employed, various measures are taken to ensure distance education reaches all target population. For example, printed materials or low-tech modalities of distance learning are also available for those without internet connectivity, or e-learning is combined with interventions to increase internet accessibility such as provision of internet infrastructure. Out of 50 grants supporting distance learning, 47 (94%) combine at least two modalities to reach as many children as possible.⁴⁷

5.3.1.3 Focus on marginalized children

There is a strong focus on marginalized children across the grants. Interrupted learning and economic shock will exacerbate inequalities and expose the most vulnerable children to additional risks. All 51 grants have specific measures to support marginalized populations in their mitigation efforts and 44 grants (86%) for their recovery efforts. The amount specifically allocated to support those population adds up to US\$49.2 million (US\$22 million for mitigation and US\$27.2 million for recovery). These support aim to addresses specific inequalities identified in the country, for example, based on gender, location, household income and ethnicity. In addition, activities coded under other themes (e.g., distribution of print-based distance learning materials) are also targeted to children in poor, rural, and remote areas.

Most grants include specific activities to reduce gender-specific barriers. 35 out of the 51 grants (69%) include this type of activity in their mitigation efforts and 42 grants (82%) in their recovery efforts. Targeted support to gender equality amounts to US\$12.7 million (US\$3.7 million for mitigation and US\$9 million for recovery).

41 out of the 51 grants (80%) support children with disability in their mitigation efforts. These grants take specific measures to ensure children with disability continue to learn during school closure, including translation of distance learning materials into braille and adding sign language to educational programs on TV. 26 out of the 51 grants (51%) also target children with disability in their back-to-school campaigns during the recovery phase.

All country partners with large refugee and/or IDP populations support these populations either in the COVID-19 AF, in the government response plan or in the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) funding. 12 of the 51 GPE grants (24%) support refugees and/or IDPs in their mitigation efforts for a total of US\$3.1 million and 6 grants (12%) do so in their recovery efforts for a total of US\$2.4 million. Of the 10 partner

⁴⁷ The remaining four grants provide distance education solely through printed materials (Haiti) or low-tech modality (Burkina Faso and Benin). In the case of Afghanistan, there is no provision on distance learning through the GPE grant as this was supported by ECW.

countries with the largest refugee and/or IDP population,⁴⁸ four countries⁴⁹ include support to these populations in GPE's COVID-19 AF grants; the remaining 6 countries plan to address needs of these populations in the government response plan for COVID-19 and/or in the ECW funding.⁵⁰ In some countries, partners draw on the regular GPE AF window to respond to the needs of displaced populations (e.g. Burkina Faso, Nigeria).

5.3.1.4 School feeding and cash transfer

To incentivize children to go back to school when it reopens, recovery grants will spend US\$6.7 million to offer school meals and US\$2.2 million to provide targeted financial and in-kind support. It is estimated that millions of children in GPE partner countries may never return to school following the COVID-19 lockdown.⁵¹ One of the most effective ways to incentivize children to return to school is through school feeding and cash transfers. 14 of the 51 COVID-19 AF grants (27%) support nutrition programs and 5 grants (10%) support targeted incentives, of which 3 grants provide financial support to children. Back-to-school campaigns (supported in 86% of grants) and remedial courses (supported in 78% of grants) are also expected to encourage children to return to school. In many countries (e.g. Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda), government and development partner financing is also being pursued to support school feeding and nutrition programs.

5.4 STREAMLINED GRANT PROCESSES FOR FASTER RESPONSE

In an emergency situation, how quickly grants get approved and disbursed directly influences the outcome of the response. This section looks at the duration of Secretariat approval of grants and presents measures taken to speed up disbursement, to learn lessons that could accelerate future emergency responses and potentially streamline regular grant processes.

5.4.1 Factors influencing duration of grant processing

Across the 51 grants approved by the end of July 2020, the average time taken from application submission to approval was 33.8 days. This is much shorter than regular ESPIGs, which take approximately 3 months on average⁵² to approve final grant application package.⁵³ The time taken from application to approval for COVID-19 AF grants has varied widely across grants, from 7 days to a maximum of 77 days.⁵⁴ This section aims to understand the characteristics of grants that took longer for approval.

⁴⁸ The 10 countries host to the largest refugee and/or IDP populations are: Pakistan, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Sudan, Uganda, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Congo DR and Afghanistan. See UNHCR (2020), Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2019 (p.22 for refugees and p.30 for IDPs).

⁴⁹ Sudan, Uganda, Nigeria and Somalia.

⁵⁰ Pakistan, Ethiopia, Bangladesh and South Sudan recognize refugees and IDPs in the government response plan. Bangladesh and Congo DR target these populations in the ECW funding.

⁵¹ Secretariat estimates based on Save the Children (2020), Save Our Education: Protect every child's right to learn in the COVID-19 response and recovery: <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/almost-10-million-children-may-never-return-school-following-covid-19-lockdown>.

⁵² Note that for grant amounts up to US\$10 million, authority for approval has recently been delegated directly to the CEO, reducing the time taken to approve smaller regular ESPIGs.

⁵³ According to a study conducted by the Secretariat, ESPIG development – from the receipt of the funding model requirements matrix to the completion of the final assessment of the ESPIG application – takes 10 months, after which an additional 3 months is required for review and approval by the GPC. This process includes development of the program scope and concept note, local consultation, and development of the draft program.

⁵⁴ The Mali application took 77 days from submission to approval. This was due to multiple issues identified in the Secretariat's initial review, which led to a request for resubmission of the application.

The average duration taken from application to approval was longer for grants that resubmitted their application based on the Secretariat’s comments. Countries that had to resubmit grant applications (28 countries) took 36 days on average to get approval compared to 31 days for countries (23) that did not resubmit. A close look at original applications submitted reveals that applications that took more than 40 days to get approved (14 countries) had some issues that required scrutiny during the quality assurance process and clarifications from the grant agents. Although most of the grants, irrespective of days taken from application submission to approval, called for some kind of clarification, these grant applications often had one or more of the following issues:

- Unclear link between the activities proposed and COVID-19 (e.g. procurement of vehicles, textbooks, school desks and benches);
- Ambiguity on whether the grant supported levels beyond basic education and/or non-state schools;
- Discrepancy between the program narrative and budget;
- Insufficient focus on or unclear targeting criteria for reaching disadvantaged children.

The average duration taken from application to approval was shorter for the countries that applied by early May. As the volume of applications increased, applications took longer to get approved (see Table 9). Out of the 51 grants approved by July 30, 36 applications (70%) were received during the first two weeks of May. This could be due to the first-come, first-served nature of the initial US\$125 million available through this grant window, which may have resulted in several countries submitting applications around the same time, to be able to access the first tranche. To meet the high demand from country partners, the Board decided to increase the total allocation from US\$250 million to US\$500 million and readjust each country allocation.⁵⁵

Table 9. Biweekly volume of applications and average days taken from submission to approval

Month/Date (2020)	Number of applications received	Average days from application to approval
4/21 – 5/4	7	15.1
5/5 – 5/18	36	37.8
5/19 – 6/1	6	34.5
6/2 – 6/15	1	29.0
6/30 – 7/1	1	21.0
Total	51	33.8

5.4.2 Mechanisms that enabled fast approval

Delegated authority and a streamlined proposal review process in the Secretariat contributed to significantly speeding up the approval process. The Board delegated the authority to approve all proposals for the COVID-19 AF window to the CEO.⁵⁶ This not only expedited the approval process but also reduced the workload of the committees. In addition to this, quality assurance and review of applications within the Secretariat were streamlined by creating a dedicated review team that consisted of staff with different specializations (e.g. quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation,

⁵⁵ GPE (2020) GPE COVID-19 accelerated funding (BOD/2020/05 DOC 02): <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/document/file/2020-05-GPE-Board-COVID-19-additional-funding-proposal.pdf>.

⁵⁶ https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/document/file/BOD-2020-03-DOC%2002%20-%20GPE%20COVID-19%20Response_0.pdf

gender); redeploying staff to allow surge support⁵⁷; and differentiating issues that required clarification prior to approval from those that could be addressed through decision language in the approval letter.⁵⁸

Country-level processes were also accelerated. Similar to regular AF grants, the grant agent selection process was simplified. Though the standard process of selecting the grant agents for regular ESPIGs – which mainly consists of transparency, government approval and LEG endorsement – is maintained, for COVID-19 AF grants, only interested grant agents that were pre-accredited and had the capacity to act were eligible for selection by the government.⁵⁹ Country-level processes were also expedited to enable fast submission of applications, while maintaining the critical elements of inclusive decision-making at the country level (LEG and/or education cluster coordination). A fuller assessment of the extent to which various stakeholders participated in the grant process will be undertaken during an evaluation of this funding window (see Section 5.5).

5.4.3 Facilitating fast disbursement

As of June 30, 2020, US\$270 million had already been disbursed from the GPE trust fund to the grant agents for 26 COVID-19 AF grants. Fast disbursement is another key to timely emergency response. However, different grant agents have different modalities, and some require more formal procedures resulting in a longer time to start implementing a grant after approval. The Secretariat worked with these grant agents to address these issues, for example through retroactive financing to contribute to timely disbursement. Some country partners applying for COVID-19 AF with the World Bank as the grant agent requested retroactive financing of the eligible activities and expenditures. In accordance with World Bank policies, in emergency operations, the retroactive financing of up to 40% of the grant amount is allowed for payments made by the country partners up to 12 months before the Financing Agreement is signed.⁶⁰

Programming the COVID-19 AF as additional financing to the existing ESPIG is also expected to help speedy disbursement. This is because the implementation arrangements of the “parent” grant can be applied to the COVID-19 grant, enabling both faster grant approval as the assessment of implementation arrangements is minimal, and faster disbursement because implementation arrangements are pre-existing. For example, in Senegal, AFD (the grant agent for both the COVID-19 AF and the regular ESPIG) structured the COVID-19 grant as an additional component of the ESPIG, thereby using the implementation arrangement of the latter grant for the former.

5.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Compared to regular ESPIGs, the COVID-19 AF window requires more frequent and standardized reporting. This is to enable continuous learning from the grant implementation in this quickly evolving situation as well as periodical assessment of whether activities funded through the COVID-19 AF grants

⁵⁷ Given the importance of responding urgently to the global crisis and the demand from partner countries, surge support often meant that the review team staff volunteered to work longer hours over the three-month ‘surge’ period and rebalance workload to colleagues and/or delay less urgent tasks. It is likely that the same is true of the country partners, grant agents, coordinating agents, LEGs and other partners – all of whom played a critical role in developing programs and engaging in dialogue with the Secretariat during the final stages of program review.

⁵⁸ This process ensured that grants were approved with the condition that adjustments would be made to the programs and reported back to the Secretariat as needed, rather than holding up the application until everything had been corrected.

⁵⁹ A waiver would be sought so that accredited international nonprofit organizations (INGOs) would not require a formal country-level grant assessment if the allocation was more than US\$5 million. However, risk would still be considered by the Secretariat.

⁶⁰ Subject to the necessary approvals.

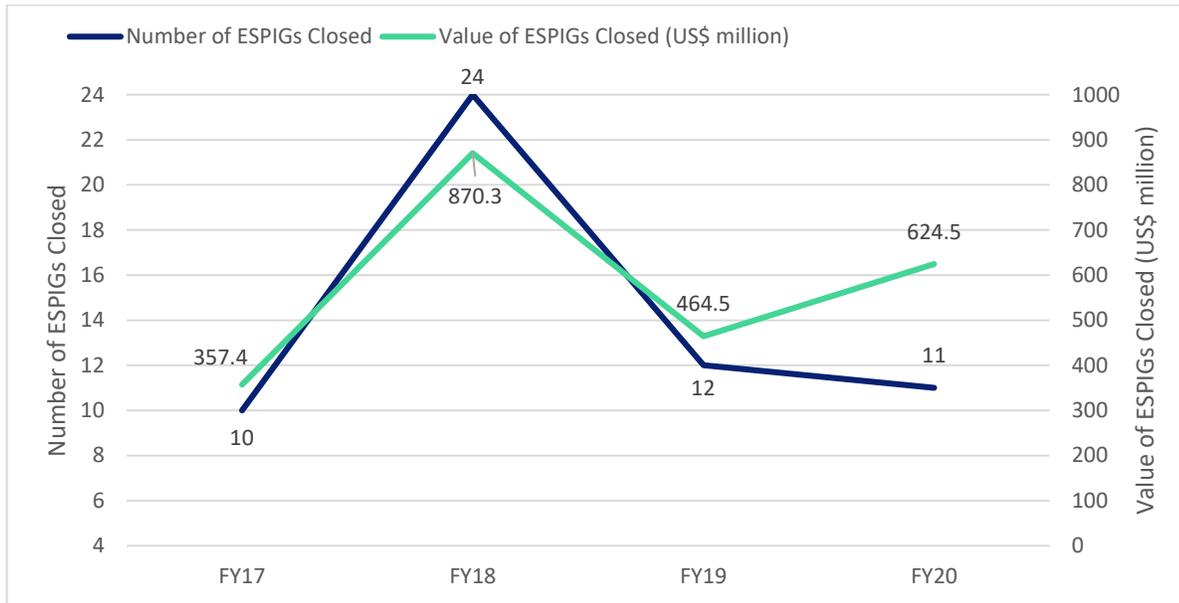
are being implemented on schedule and reaching their intended beneficiaries. There are two major differences between reporting for regular ESPIGs and for COVID-19 AF grants. Firstly, while normal ESPIGs are required to report their implementation status annually, COVID-19 AF grants are required to report on this quarterly. This will enable close oversight of COVID-19 grants as well as course correction if expected outcomes are not being achieved. Secondly, there is a set of core indicators that must be included in the results framework of the program that the grant is supporting, if the program has relevant activities related to those indicators. Core indicators will enable the funding window as a whole to generate comparable data across grants to facilitate an understanding of what works in certain contexts, which may be helpful in identifying effective interventions in emergency contexts in the future. All relevant core indicators will be disaggregated by gender, with additional disaggregation by household income, level of education, age group, ethnicity, disability and geographical zone, where available.

In addition, all grants are required to have costed “learning from evidence” plans that specify how information on the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the grant will be collected, analyzed and utilized on an ongoing basis. Grant agents will report on the findings of the learning from evidence plans in the grant completion reports. This will form a key element of the evidence base for a summative evaluation of this funding window. Results of the monitoring will be reported to the GPC and be made available online around December 2021. In addition, there will be a comprehensive evaluation of GPE’s COVID-19 related response in coming years.

6 CLOSED GRANTS

In FY20, the implementation of 11 ESPIGs was completed (with a value of US\$624.5 million). The value of closed ESPIGs increased by more than a third (34%) in comparison with FY19 (12 ESPIGs but with a value of US\$464.5 million). As demonstrated in Figure 11, the number of closing grants over the last four fiscal years has been between 10 and 12, with a notable exception in FY18.

Figure 11. Number and value of ESPIGs closed per fiscal year, FY17–FY20



The average length of the closing ESPIGs (excluding AF) has remained relatively steady: 4.2 years in FY18; 4.5 years in FY19; and 4.4 years in FY20.

There has been a modest increase in closing delays: 1.05 years in FY18; 1.09 years in FY19; 1.44 years in FY20. We measure this by looking at the difference between the original and actual closing dates.⁶¹ When these delays are broken down by FCAC status for the last three fiscal years, no strong relationship is observed. When they are broken down by grant agent, only the World Bank has a sufficiently large portfolio to have statistically meaningful figures for trends analysis. ESPIGs for which the World Bank is the grant agent generally closed with a delay of about a year (0.90 year in FY18; 0.86 year in FY19; 1.28 years in FY20), which is slightly below the average for each fiscal year⁶² (1.05 years in FY18; 1.09 years in FY19; 1.44 years in FY20). However, it should be noted that this looks at implementation time from effective start of the program. When the time lags between approval dates and start dates for the ESPIGs that closed in the last three fiscal years are included, ESPIGs in the World Bank’s portfolio tend to have taken around 6 months (6.4 months in FY18; 5.6 months in FY19; 6.5 months in FY20) to start, which is slightly above the average (5.5 months in FY18; 4.8 months in FY19; 6.3 months in FY20).

⁶¹ Accelerated funding grants are excluded from this exercise because they have significantly different timelines.

⁶² The average is the mean of the differences (between the original and actual closing dates) for all the grants that closed in a given fiscal year.

7 EDUCATION OUT LOUD AND KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION EXCHANGE

Education Out Loud (EOL) and the Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) were approved by the GPE Board of Directors in 2018 under the new financing and funding framework (FFF). The mechanisms were designed in consultation with the partnership under the oversight of the Strategy and Impact Committee between April 2017 and October 2018. KIX was designed as a reinforcing mechanism to GPE's operational model. The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) was selected as the grant agent and core implementing partner for KIX, while Oxfam IBIS was selected for EOL. Both KIX and EOL became operational following the approval of their respective grant agent's program proposal by the GPE Board in March 2019.

7.1 EDUCATION OUT LOUD

EOL is GPE's fund to support civil society's role in shaping education policy to better meet the needs of communities, especially of vulnerable and marginalized populations. It is the biggest fund in the world supporting civil society advocacy for education.

The total GPE allocation for EOL is US\$55.5 million, of which US\$10.5 million was transferred by the GPE trustee to the grant agent (Oxfam IBIS) as of June 30, 2020. As of this date, the grant agent had disbursed a total of US\$3.6 million to grantees. EOL has the following three funding components:

- **Component 1 aims to strengthen national civil society engagement in education planning, policy dialogue and monitoring.** This component builds on the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF)⁶³ to support national education coalitions with grants between US\$100,000 and US\$300,000 for 2 years. Eligible organizations include national education coalitions (NECs) which are former recipients of CSEF grants and are based in countries which are either current GPE partners or actively seeking partnership. Annex 4 provides information on the grants that were approved in FY20 for the education coalitions under operational component one.
- **Component 2 aims to strengthen civil society roles in promoting the transparency and accountability of national education sector policy and implementation.** This component supports national organizations in eligible partner countries to undertake social accountability initiatives with grants between US\$450,000 and US\$1.2 million for 2 to 3 years.
- **Component 3 aims to create a stronger global and transnational enabling environment for national civil society advocacy and transparency efforts.** This component supports global, regional or multi-country civil society alliances, which include at least one national civil society actor in partner countries eligible for GPE funding, with grants between US\$450,000 and US\$1.2 million for 2 to 3 years.

⁶³ See details on GPE website: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/funding/civil-society-education-fund>.

Implementation highlights

The first call for proposals for national education coalitions (operational component 1) took place between August and October 2019, and received 54 submissions, of which 27 were approved by regional independent selection panels for immediate implementation. The remaining 27 proposals are going through further review and improvement processes to ensure that they meet the quality standard required of all proposal implementation plans.

In the approved proposals,⁶⁴ a range of priority areas have been identified by the grantees based on their country context analysis. Recurring themes for advocacy and social accountability are around inclusive and gender-sensitive public expenditure based on strong education sector plans, and promoting education needs for the most marginalized groups (e.g. children with disability, refugee children, rural poor, ethnic groups, youth, victims of bullying and gender-based violence), including balanced deployment of properly trained teachers and appropriate investment in relevant learning materials. Common operational strategies proposed include consultation and research for evidence-based advocacy, citizen-led monitoring of education sector plan and budget implementation and identifying and promoting good education policies and practices. A total of US\$13.5 million has been allocated to support these proposals.

The first call for proposals for transnational advocacy (operational component 3) received 109 applications between December and January 2019, of which 10 applications have been shortlisted.⁶⁵ Shortlisted applications are focused on thematic areas such as inclusive education, education equality, early childhood development, education rights for migrants and refugees, addressing child marriage and gender-based violence, and education financing. A total of US\$10 million is earmarked for transnational advocacy grants.

The first call for proposals for national social accountability initiatives (operational component 2) was launched in April and closed in July 2020. This call elicited 338 eligible applications from 50 countries, and a decision on selected grantees will be made in September 2020. A total of US\$11 million is earmarked for national social accountability grants.

EOL will be investing in the learning and capacity building of its grantees, and US\$6.9 million is budgeted for this purpose.

Adapting and responding to COVID-19

In March 2020, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic led to widespread lockdowns, school closures, travel bans and economic impacts. Oxfam IBIS has undertaken contingency planning to address the potential impacts of these challenging conditions for EOL implementation throughout 2020. While at present no material changes have been required to the initial programming, budget or timeline for EOL, the following considerations have been made as part of ongoing efforts to address the risks of the pandemic:

- **A reassessment of the strategic context for advocacy and accountability work** as education systems and policies are affected by emergency measures, dwindling financial resources and erosion of previous gains.

⁶⁴ See GPE website: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/news/education-out-loud-allocates-us135-million-54-coalitions-strengthen-advocacy-education>.

⁶⁵ See GPE website: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/news/10-civil-society-alliances-shortlisted-global-and-regional-advocacy-grants-through-education>.

- **Streamlining the grant approval and implementation process.** In particular, grant guidelines have included explicit reference to the role of EOL in improving the accountability of education responses to COVID-19 and virtual review and approval of grant applications. Grantees have been invited to update their original proposals and learning plans to address the new emergency operating environment, including changes to budget, timeline and strategy. Some national education coalitions will be engaged to undertake monitoring of government action during school closures to ensure continuity of learning and the impact on local communities. Opportunities for grantees to realign timelines and strategic priorities are contained in existing project agreements to remain relevant for beneficiaries and other stakeholders involved in EOL-supported activities.

7.2 KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION EXCHANGE

The goal of KIX is to contribute to improved policy dialogue and practice to strengthen national education systems in GPE partner countries. It is designed to support the generation and dissemination of national and regional knowledge and strengthen the capacity of governments and national stakeholders to more routinely integrate new knowledge and innovations into policy and practice at appropriate scale.

KIX consists of 1) **a funding mechanism** which provides grants at global and regional levels for knowledge generation and innovation; and 2) **regional KIX hubs** which bring together representatives of national education systems in four regional hubs to identify shared education policy priorities and exchange information and good practices in response. These two components of KIX are supported by an online platform.

GPE has allocated US\$72 million to KIX, of which nearly US\$13.3 million had been disbursed to the grant agent (IDRC) as of June 30, 2020.⁶⁶ Table 10 shows funds utilized by the grant agent as of this date.

Table 10. KIX fund utilization, as of June 30, 2020

Project elements	Expenses in US\$
DIRECT PROJECT COSTS	
Research and knowledge exchange grants	10,531,292
Global grants	7,232,518
Action research on scaling innovation	422,253
Regional hubs	2,876,521
Program implementation support activities	135,210
Program activities	69,154
Opportunities and adaptive management fund	1,230
Learning exchange platform	64,826
Program management and administration	1,384,073
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS	
Administrative cost recovery	843,540
TOTAL	12,894,115

⁶⁶ The budget for KIX has also been supported with an additional CA\$6 million from the grant agent, IDRC.

Implementation highlights

The first year of KIX implementation, from April 2019 to March 2020, focused on establishing firm foundations followed by an escalated set of activities past the end of the financial year.⁶⁷ Key achievements include:

- 1. Funding mechanism:** In July 2019, KIX launched a call for proposals of multi-country, multi-regional projects on “strengthening education systems with proven innovations in developing contexts”. In October, 192 proposals were received from 278 organizations, spanning 65 GPE partner countries. An independent panel of experts from institutions across the globe assessed and ranked shortlisted proposals. With additional financing of US\$12 million provided by the GPE Board, IDRC and GPE jointly selected the winning cohort of 12 projects for a total investment of US\$23.3 million.⁶⁸ The portfolio of KIX global grants spans 42 GPE partner countries focused on five thematic areas: teaching and learning, early childhood care and education, equity and inclusion, data systems, and learning assessment systems. The consortia of 35 implementing partners includes multilaterals, civil society organizations, universities and think tanks. The projects will work with governments and national stakeholders to adapt and scale innovations such as using technology for teacher professional development, integrating early childhood education in sectoral planning, and strengthening educational management information systems (EMIS), as illustrated in Annex 5.
- 2. Regional KIX hubs:** Regional hubs are the core of KIX; they are the primary mechanism for knowledge sharing.⁶⁹ Each of the four hubs is a regional forum that facilitates knowledge exchange, learning and collaboration among key national education stakeholders in GPE member countries. Hubs identify policy priorities and mobilize evidence to inform national policy debates and sector planning and implementation cycles. Through a competitive, open selection process in 2019, regional learning partners⁷⁰ were selected to run four hubs (see Table 11).

Table 11. Regional KIX hubs

KIX hub	Regional learning partners	Participating countries	Emerging priorities ⁷¹
Africa 19 (English-speaking GPE partner countries in Africa)	UNESCO – International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa, UNICEF – Eastern and Southern Africa, the African Union	Eritrea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia (Somaliland and Puntland), South Sudan, Tanzania (Mainland and Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Improving teaching and learning effectiveness; learning assessment systems; equity and inclusion; strengthening governance and management; expanding pre-primary education coverage
Africa 21 (French-speaking GPE partner countries in Africa)	Institut de la Francophonie pour l'Éducation et la Formation (IFEFF), Conférence des ministres de l'Éducation des États et gouvernements de la Francophonie (CONFEMEN),	Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Togo	Pre- and in-service teacher training; equity and inclusion; gender equality; quality of teaching and learning in bi- and multi-lingual environments

⁶⁷ See “Knowledge and Innovation Exchange Annual Report 2019-2020,” available on GPE website: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/gpe-knowledge-and-innovation-exchange-annual-report-2019-2020>.

⁶⁸ See “KIX Global Grants Portfolio Summary,” available on GPE website: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/kix-global-grants-portfolio-summary>

⁶⁹ For more information on the KIX regional hubs, see: <https://www.gpekix.org/regional-hubs>.

⁷⁰ For more information on the partners selected to run the KIX hubs, see: <https://www.gpekix.org/regional-hubs>.

⁷¹ These are emerging priorities that have informed regional calls for proposals. The hubs will engage in a number of learning and knowledge exchange activities in these areas and beyond.

	L'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF)		
Europe, Asia, Pacific (EAP)	Network for international policies and cooperation in education and training (NORRAG)	Afghanistan, Albania, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Georgia, Kyrgyz Republic, Laos, Maldives, Moldova, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sudan, Tajikistan, Timor Leste, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, Yemen	Systematic implementation of new curricula to improve teaching and learning; using data for planning; leaving no one behind, especially in the wake of COVID-19
Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)	SUMMA (Laboratory of Education Research and Innovation for Latin America and the Caribbean), Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)	Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Equity in education in rural communities; capacity building within the education sector for successful implementation of national policy reform processes; gender equality; equity and inclusion

3. Research on scaling: Through an open and competitive process, the Brookings Institution was selected as a partner to build knowledge and capacity on scaling the impact of educational innovations in GPE partner countries. With an overall budget of US\$2 million, the Brookings Institution will design and lead action-research across KIX-funded projects focused on scaling and conduct complementary research on education scaling science.⁷²

4. Online platform: The first phase of the KIX online platform is a public-facing website that was scheduled to be launched in July 2020 with the full platform to be operational in October.⁷³

5. COVID-19 observatory: In response to the COVID-19 crisis, an Africa-based observatory focused on gender, equity and inclusion was established that seeks to collect and mobilize evidence on (i) education system issues to support continuity of learning approaches, and (ii) negative consequences of school closures beyond learning. With a budget of US\$350,000, the observatory will be implemented by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), International Centre for Girls' and Women's Education in Africa (CIEFFA) and the UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

Adapting and responding to COVID-19

- KIX has adapted and responded as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold. In addition to establishing the COVID-19 observatory, it has supported virtual knowledge sharing, built on its hub architecture to support the global education response, and is a partner in the GPE COVID-19 Continuity of Learning Global Grant.⁷⁴
- Regional KIX hubs and KIX global grantees have adjusted work plans, particularly for activities that include field-based data collection and on-the-ground country engagement. For now, none have had to change their objectives or major research activities.

⁷² See also: <https://www.gpekix.org/project/research-scaling-impact-innovations-education>.

⁷³ See: <https://www.gpekix.org/>.

⁷⁴ See "UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank Joint Proposal for a Consortium of Grant Agents," <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/unesco-unicef-world-bank-joint-proposal-consortium-grant-agents>.

8 ANALYSIS OF ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

The Secretariat monitors, on an ongoing basis, the costs of agency fees and supervision allocations, as well as direct management and administrative costs associated with GPE grants. See Table 12 for a description of these types of costs.

Table 12. Description of type of administrative costs associated with grants

Type of cost	Description and purpose
Agency fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency fees are typically used to support the grant agent's (GA) headquarters' overhead costs incurred in the management and administration of grant funds. These fees are identified in the application separately from the country allocation. Agency fees required by the GA to manage the funds are determined by the GA's internal regulations. Agency fees are typically expressed as a percentage of the amount of the grant allocated to the country. Costs have historically ranged from 0% to 8%. For newly eligible INGOs, these costs are capped at 7% of the grant amount (including amounts allocated to sub-recipients for agency fees). Effective from January 1, 2018, the agency fee for UNICEF was reduced from 8% to 7%.
Supervision allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These funds are used by the GA to fulfill its roles and responsibilities related to supervision of an approved allocation and the amount requested is included in each application, and typically itemized within the program budget. For all ESPIG applications submitted prior to the second round of 2016, GAs performing the role previously referred to as a "supervising entity" were eligible to receive funding to cover their supervision costs in addition to the country allocation for the period of the grant, plus an extra year to cover 6 months prior to the start of grant implementation and 6 months following the close of implementation. The GA can apply for additional supervision fees during implementation, where needed.⁷⁵ With effect from the second round of applications in 2016, the GA's supervision costs have been financed, similarly to the direct management and administrative costs, from within the overall country allocation and must be disclosed within the proposal's budget.⁷⁶
Direct management and administrative costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are the direct administrative costs of implementing the programmed activities funded by the grant (e.g. the salary of a program manager) and are costed within the program budget (i.e. payable from the country allocation), which are not covered by indirect costs or the agency fee. There are no formal limits on the percentage or dollar value of the grant that these costs may incur, but the costs must be reasonable.

During this fiscal year, the total value of approved ESPIGs (including COVID-19 AF) was US\$967.8 million, of which US\$71.3 million⁷⁷ went to supervision allocation, and direct management and administrative costs. In addition, US\$35.4 million was approved in agency fees.

Between December 2011 and June 30, 2020,⁷⁸ the total value of approved ESPIGs was US\$4.48 billion. Of this amount, US\$4.34 billion⁷⁹ went towards program implementation (grant agents' supervision allocations included), and US\$145.4 million was for agency fees and additional supervision allocations.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ During FY20, three active grants requested additional supervision allocations totaling US\$500,800: Malawi (US\$150,000), Nigeria (US\$200,800) and Uganda (US\$150,000).

⁷⁶ For further information, see [BOD/2015/10 Doc 06](#).

⁷⁷ This figure includes administrative costs for COVID-19 AF grants which are subject to downward revision after the completion of ongoing report-back requests and verification process.

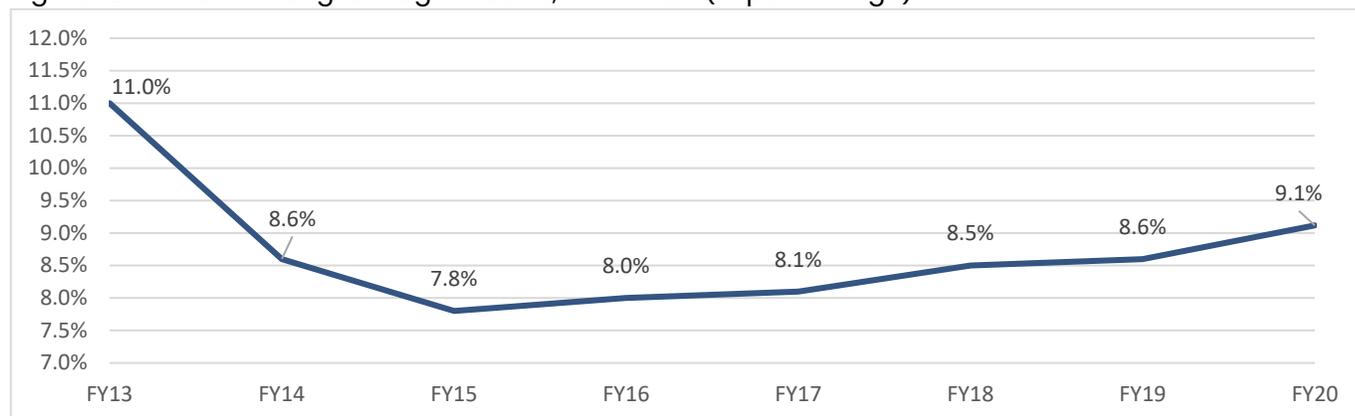
⁷⁸ This analysis began when the first portfolio review was produced in 2013 and, for ongoing consistency, December 2011 continues to be the starting date.

⁷⁹ Excluding COVID-19 accelerated funding.

⁸⁰ This figure includes supervision allocation costs that were paid on top of the grant amount and does not include the supervision allocation costs starting the second round of 2016 that are included in the grant amount.

When other administrative costs (direct program management and supervision costs) are added to agency fees and additional supervision allocations, the total costs amount to US\$408.6 million, or 9.1% of the total approved grant allocations for the period December 2011 to June 30, 2020. This represents an increase of 0.5% from the 8.6% reported in FY19 (see Figure 12). The accelerated increase is in part due to the large number of small COVID-19 AF grants approved in FY20, and will be slightly reduced due to reductions requested by grant agents as part of the report-backs and the ongoing verification process. When the COVID-19 AF grants are excluded, the historical administrative costs are 8.9%.

Figure 12. Trend in total grant agent costs, FY13–FY20 (in percentage)



Typically, fragile states and smaller grants continue to incur higher supervision and direct management and administrative costs when expressed as a percentage of total allocation, compared to larger grants and joint funding arrangements, which generally incur lower costs (see Tables 13 and 14). Costs tend to be higher when UN agencies and international non-profits act as grant agents, as their agency fees are in the range of 7% of the grant value.⁸¹

Table 13. Agency/supervision and direct management and administrative costs by FCAC status

Country status	Total value of approved allocation (US\$), Dec 2011–June 2020	Agency/supervision and direct management & administrative costs %
Fragile or conflict-affected countries	2.606 billion	10.4%
Non-fragile or conflict-affected country	1.730 billion	7.1%
Total	4.336 billion	9.1%

Table 14. Agency/supervision and direct management and administrative costs by grant size

Grant size	Total value of approved allocation (US\$), Dec 2011–June 2020	Agency/supervision and direct management & administrative costs %
Less than US\$10 million	330.1 million	16.9%
Greater than or equal to US\$10 million	4.006 billion	8.5%
Total	4.336 billion	9.1%

⁸¹ Historical range is up to 8%. Effective January 1, 2018, agency fees for all grant agents is within the 7% range.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Washington

1850 K Street NW
Suite 625
Washington, DC 20006
USA

Paris

66 Avenue d'Iena
75116 Paris
France

Brussels

Avenue Marnix 17, 2nd floor
B-1000, Brussels
Belgium

MAILING ADDRESS

Global Partnership for Education

MSN IS 6-600
1818 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20433
USA