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# GIRLS' EDUCATION AWARENESS PROGRAM

## Opportunities for Business Impact

The business community and private foundations have strategic capabilities that can help more girls get a chance—at education and at a better life. The Girls' Education Awareness Program (GEAP) provides pathways for leveraging business and foundation expertise and other assets in marketing, communications, advocacy and related areas to deliver targeted, context-sensitive messages to community leaders, girls and their families. Messages are focused on changing underlying harmful social norms that keep girls from school and learning. The same capabilities that are effective in reaching customers, selling products and building brands can be applied to bringing about change in the norms and behaviors that keep girls from school.

Harmful social norms present some of the most stubborn barriers to girls' education—norms such as early marriage and favoring boys over girls when families decide who gets an education. Even when girls do attend school, they are often excluded from STEM-related subject areas, preventing them from acquiring the skills that would position them best in the labor force. In addition, COVID-19 has exacerbated longstanding barriers. With school closures, girls face increased risks. Millions of girls may never return to school.



Jalale Genati, 20, a third year student at Sebeta Special Needs Education Teachers College, Sebeta, Oromia, Ethiopia. Credit: GPE / Kelley Lynch

Breaking down barriers to girls' education unleashes a powerful force. The impacts range from improved family health to economic growth to the development of a new generation of leaders. Educating girls pays high dividends. Educated women become more employable and bring home higher wages to support families. As education opens up new possibilities for their lives, it also reduces child marriage and improves health for both today's girls and the next generation. Girls' education has also been linked to greater peace and stability.

Girls' education is hardwired into the strategy and operations of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The GPE partnership is comprised of 76 lower-income countries around the world. Many GPE member countries have established girls' education as a high priority for transforming education systems.

## PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: SENDING THE MESSAGE THAT GIRLS BELONG IN SCHOOL

GEAP is a social marketing collaboration among the business and foundations communities, ministries of education, donor governments, and other strategic partners, all aligned to change harmful social norms that keep girls from school. The program will be guided by education ministries' priorities and policies and will complement their existing strategies.

Marketing and communications teams from multiple companies will create and implement the contextualized messaging campaigns that speak to girls, their families and communities, and address some pivotal root causes holding girls back. Campaigns will unfold at country level, with segmentation to regions within countries as appropriate.

Three countries are the initial focus of GEAP, and will be the focus of the social marketing campaigns – Ghana, Kenya and Zimbabwe. Additional GPE partner countries will be added over the months ahead.

The GPE Secretariat will convene partners and facilitate implementation of the marketing campaigns.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE ACTION

Representative opportunities for engagement include:

- **Participate in campaign development:** Working with ministries of education and other business and foundation community partners, participate in campaign strategy and message creation. There is also a need for market research and analysis.
- **Implement one or more campaign elements:** Likely elements include targeted SMS drives, radio and television advertising, integrating messages into target-audience touch points as well as other forms of outreach and engagement.
- **Contribute to creating and/or executing campaign evaluation:** Design and/or implement systems for monitoring and measurement of campaigns, including tracking and analyzing reach and outcomes.
- **Share experience, knowledge and ideas:** Join convenings with ministries of education as well as business, foundation and development partners to share learnings and insights to inform strategies and to generate content for knowledge products.

## BENEFITS TO PARTICIPATING COMPANY AND FOUNDATION PARTNERS



### IMPACT

Compound the return on your CSR investment through collaboration and coordination with business partners, and through alignment with countries' game-changing priorities.



### LEARNINGS

Gain first-hand insights on the data challenges and opportunities in participating countries, and keep current on trends and needs inside ministries of education.



### VISIBILITY

Be recognized as a key partner in a program making significant impact on SDG4—with visibility in collaterals, knowledge products, media outreach and in communications throughout the GPE network.



### PARTNERSHIPS

Develop relationships with likeminded companies and foundations and learn from each other.



### EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Provide meaningful opportunities for your employees to engage on an important social mission.

## BACKGROUND

GEAP was developed by GPE in partnership with the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and ministries of education. The program responds to needs identified through consultations with ministries of education, companies and other partners, which culminated in a high-level dialogue held in November 2020. In the dialogue, partners looked for intersections of country needs on education and business capabilities.

That dialogue identified social marketing to address harmful traditional norms as a potentially high-impact solution to advancing girls' education, a priority objective for GPE partner countries.

The convening brought senior executives from the business community, including Avanti Communications, Ecobank, Econet, PwC and Rotary International together with education ministries of Kenya, Nigeria and Maldives.

## ABOUT GPE

GPE is a shared commitment to ending the world's learning crisis. We mobilize partners and funds to support 76 lower-income countries to transform their education systems so that every girl and boy can get the quality education they need to unlock their full potential and contribute to building a better world. GPE is currently calling on world leaders to "Raise Your Hand" and pledge at least \$5 billion for the next five years to help GPE transform education in up to 90 countries and territories, which are home to more than 1 billion children.

## BECOME PART OF THE GEAP

Business organizations and private foundations interested in participating in the GEAP are invited to inquire. Please contact:

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A grade five student hands her answer to a math problem to the teacher, Phonsivilay Primary School, Meun District, Lao PDR. Credit: GPE/Kelley Lynch