

Afghanistan

Community schools boost girls' enrollment

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is supporting the Government of Afghanistan to make education more accessible for children in remote and insecure areas, an important contribution to strengthen the country's fragile education system.



GPE/Jawid Jilali

According to government estimates, 20 percent of Afghanistan's 2.5 million school-aged children and youth are out of school. Most of these children are girls, children in remote and insecure areas, and children from vulnerable groups, which are the focus of GPE's support for Afghanistan. With robust education policies and strategies, and the capacity to implement them, the government and its development partners can build on the gains achieved by GPE's support to deliver lasting results in education that can help break the inter-generational cycle of poverty and contribute to peace and security.

GPE's focus on disadvantaged children

Afghanistan became a GPE partner in 2011. From the outset, GPE's support focused on disadvantaged children in remote rural areas in 13 provinces, especially those affected by security and political instability, including Helmand and Uruzgan. These areas have the country's lowest education and economic indicators, and high gender inequality.

Since 2011, GPE has worked closely with the government and other partners to bring them together for joint education planning. The results of this effort show that GPE's well-established processes to support the government in planning

and delivering education services are effective. But significant challenges remain for working in one of the world's harshest terrains for development.

The next phase of GPE's support will be integrated with the World Bank-administered Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund to make donor support more coordinated in helping to advance the government's economic development priorities.



GPE partner: Since 2011

Challenges addressed: Inequity in education; education in fragile contexts; gender inequality among students and teachers

Key interventions: Community-based education; training of female teachers

GPE grants:

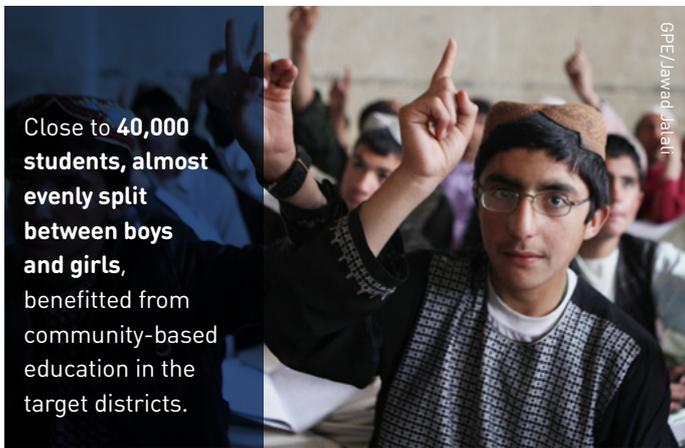
US\$100 million (2018–2023)

US\$55.7 million (2012–2018)

Grant agent: World Bank

Coordinating agencies:

USAID, UNICEF



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Close to **40,000** students, almost evenly split between boys and girls, benefitted from community-based education in the target districts.

Achievements and challenges

GPE is working closely with the government to strengthen the education sector in the long term, and ensure ongoing coordination with partners, a strategy that has enabled GPE to scale up its interventions and avoid duplicate efforts. Since 2013, GPE has supported the government’s four priorities that reflect the major difficulties faced by Afghanistan’s education sector. These are:

- **Mobilizing local communities to overcome cultural, societal and political barriers to education**, particularly for girls, to tackle low enrollments in primary education. 41 percent of the GPE program’s budget was spent on interventions in this area, reflecting how community mobilization for education can deliver substantial gains.
- **Tackling traditional obstacles to enrollment** through alternative approaches, such as community-based education, accelerated learning programs, and mosque-based education.

- **Increasing the number of qualified female teachers** in areas with high gender disparities to increase the enrollment of girls.
- **Helping expand the capacity of the Ministry of Education** in planning and policy formulation, and to streamline its administrative systems for education.

Innovative approaches that work

The results of GPE’s support show the effectiveness of alternative approaches to education where formal systems are not adequate. Close to 40,000 students, almost evenly split between boys and girls, received an education outside a formal school environment through community-based education in the target districts. This is the only way in these areas to successfully provide education to more children, particularly girls, and accelerate learning.

Some 200 qualified and trained female teachers now work in these districts, a highly encouraging result since some of these districts are among the most volatile in the country. In Afghanistan, the correlation is strong between the number of female teachers and the number of girls in school.

The low capacity of the Ministry of Education’s affects the implementation of school improvement plans and other education programs. GPE’s efforts to strengthen that capacity continue to be a focus for the partnership’s work in Afghanistan.

But overall Afghanistan is making progress in providing a quality education for all children—and significantly so in gender equality, where the **rate of girls enrolling in primary school increased from 44 percent in 2002 to 87 percent in 2015.**



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