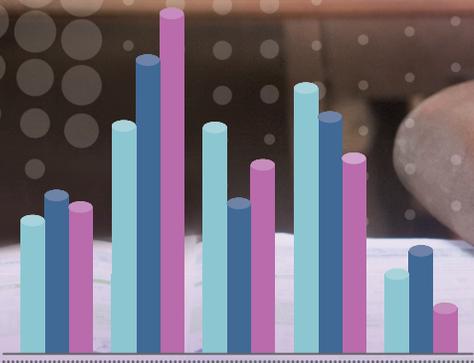
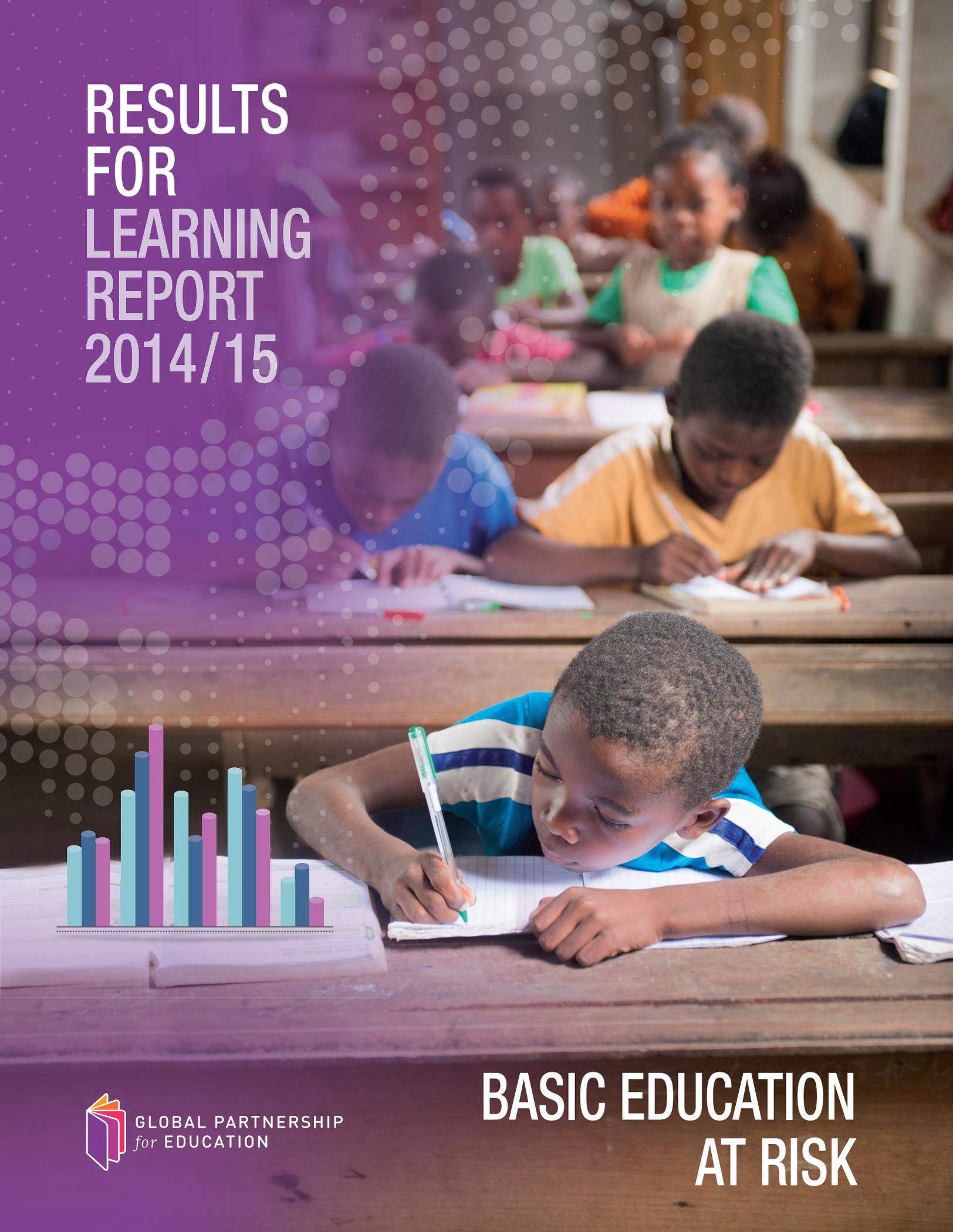


RESULTS FOR LEARNING REPORT 2014/15



GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP
for EDUCATION

BASIC EDUCATION AT RISK

RESULTS FOR LEARNING REPORT 2014

**BASIC EDUCATION
AT RISK**

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In GPE developing country partners, there is progress in reaching out-of-school children...

- The number of children enrolled in primary education rose to 185 million in 2012, up from 169 million in 2008.
- Over the same period, the number of out-of-school children declined by 4.4 percent. By comparison, the decrease in all developing countries was 2.9 percent.

...and getting more children to complete primary school...

- The rate of children who completed primary school in 2012 rose to 73 percent, a 7.6 percent increase since 2008.
- Fragile and conflict-affected countries (FCACs) account for most of the recent progress: their primary completion rates increased from 61 percent to 68 percent between 2008 and 2012, an 11.4 percent increase over the period.

...but the goal of Universal Primary Education remains distant.

- 41 million children of primary school age in developing country partners were not in school in 2012.
- One in four children was still not completing primary education in 2012.

Access to pre-primary and lower secondary education has improved...

- Access to preprimary education progressively increased between 2008 and 2012, by 2.6 percentage points on average, from 24.4 percent to 27.0 percent overall, and from 20.1 percent to 22.1 percent in FCAC partners.
- Eight out of ten children completing primary education transitioned to lower secondary education.

...but these levels of education still have a long way to go.

- Only one in four children in developing country partners had access to pre-primary education in 2012 (one in five in FCAC partners).
- Lower secondary school enrollments increased, on average, by 16 percent between 2008 and 2012.
- Only 42 percent of children completed lower secondary education.

Education is slowly becoming more equitable...

- On average, for 100 boys completing primary education, 89 girls completed primary school, and for 100 boys completing lower secondary education, 82 girls did.

...but some inequalities are hard to tackle.

- Income and geographic disparities are generally more marked than gender disparities, and the compounding effect creates large barriers to education.
- In some countries, girls from poor, rural households have virtually no chance of completing primary education.

Main Findings

The Global Partnership for Education has increased its support, especially for FCAC partners...

- GPE direct technical support to countries at all stages of the policy process has increased by 60 percent since 2011.
- From its inception through June 2014, the Global Partnership approved 110 program implementation grants for 54 countries, totaling US\$3.9 billion. Of that amount, US\$2.3 billion (or 60 percent) has been disbursed.
- The share of grants approved for FCACs has more than doubled since 2008 to reach 49 percent of approved grants. The total grants allocated to FCACs should reach US\$2 billion by the end of 2014.

...but education as a priority in global aid has declined.

- While overall development aid decreased by only 1.3 percent since 2010, aid disbursement for education dropped by 9.5 percent between 2010 and 2012. The decline was even faster for basic education and in developing country partners.
- Aid disbursements for education to FCAC partners dropped by more than 16 percent over the same period, a direct threat to the recent progress made in these countries.
- Basic education is losing priority. The share of the education budget spent on primary education fell from 45.7 percent in 2008 to 43 percent in 2012. In FCAC partners, it dropped from 53.8 percent to 46.2 percent in the same period, in spite of the low average primary completion rate of 68 percent in 2012.

Finally, the lack of data in the education sector remains a challenge...

- The lack of regular, quality data on learning outcomes and key domestic financing indicators is especially problematic.
- Of the key indicators published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the percentage for which information was missing increased between 2008 and 2011 – for outcome, service delivery, and domestic financing indicators.

...but the Global Partnership for Education is increasing its focus on, and support for, data.

- The Global Partnership has developed a data strategy to address these challenges.
- The new funding model strengthens GPE support for data.
- The Global Partnership has been working closely with the Learning Metrics Task Force and is leading the development of a proposal for an international platform in order to build capacity at the national and regional levels, expand the availability of data on learning, and thus strive to improve the quality of learning for all students.

The *Results for Learning Report* provides an analysis of education data and outcomes in developing country partners of the Global Partnership for Education (the Global Partnership or GPE). It aims to contribute to the dialogue on the development and monitoring of sound education sector policies within the Global Partnership. By focusing the attention of partners on the remaining education challenges that need to be addressed, this report represents

an opportunity to take stock of progress and sets a course for improving on the results that have already been achieved. These results have been produced because of the efforts of countries and their partners; this report does not assess the specific contribution of the Global Partnership in these accomplishments.

This report consists of four chapters, which are described in the following sections:

Chapter 1: Universal Primary Education: The Unfinished Agenda

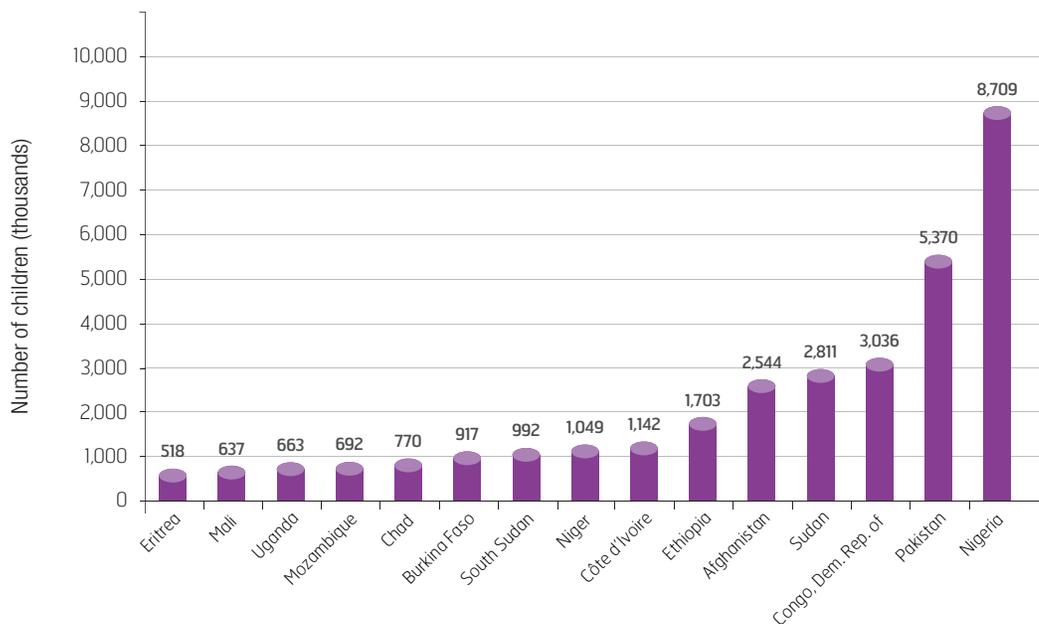
Universal primary education (UPE) has received considerable attention from the international education community. However, the work of achieving UPE is not yet done in the poorest countries.

In developing country partners, 25 percent of children were still not completing primary education and 41 million children of primary

school age were not in school in 2012 – 71 percent of the world’s total number of out-of-school children. Of these 41 million, 82 percent, or 33.5 million, are living in fragile and conflict-affected countries (FCACs).

In total, 30.2 million out-of-school children live in only 15 developing country partners (Figure 1).

Figure 1 GPE developing country partners with the most children out of school, 2012



Source: GPE compilation based on UNESCO Institute for Statistics data and Household Survey data.

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Despite the distance still to be covered, developing country partners have, on average, made substantial progress in improving access to and completion of primary education. The average primary completion rate (PCR) rose from 68 percent in 2008 to 73 percent in 2012.¹ The increase occurred mainly in FCACs, where the PCR went from 61 percent to 68 percent. The average PCR in non-FCAC partners remained almost unchanged, moving from 82 percent to 83 percent, raising questions about the capacity of these countries to reach the marginalized.

More countries have the capacity to enroll all their children, as indicated by the large majority of countries that have reached high gross enrollment ratios, but they struggle to ensure that all children complete primary education: only a minority have PCRs above 90 percent. Several developing country partners even show a significant decrease in survival rates (the proportion of pupils reaching the last grade of primary school), which means they will only achieve UPE if current trends are reversed.

As more children dropped out of school, survival fell by over 10 percentage points in Burundi, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique and Uganda. But other developing country partners succeeded in increasing survival rates while increasing or maintaining intake rates, including Cambodia, Cameroon and Côte d'Ivoire. This suggests that with appropriate commitment and support, countries with high or increasing access rates but low retention rates could start to reduce the number of children dropping out.

That progress could be reversed, however, by the decline in aid to primary education, particularly in FCAC partners. **Current trends also show that, while most children now have access to school, more attention should be paid to keeping children in school.** More effort and targeted policies are also required to reach out-of-school children, who tend to be members of vulnerable and marginalized groups. These results show that UPE, and particularly reaching the marginalized, need to be part of the post-2015 agenda.

Chapter 2: Overall Education Progress in GPE Developing Country Partners

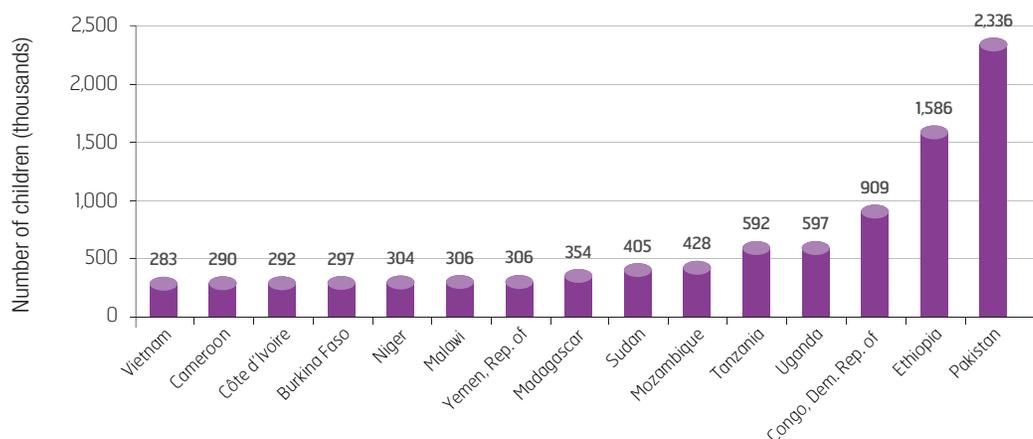
This chapter widens the analysis of the report beyond primary education to include pre-primary and lower secondary education in developing country partners.

In pre-primary education, progress was driven by an increase in public pre-primary school enrollment. However, **enrollment in pre-primary education remains low in most developing country partners.** In 2012, one in four children in developing country partners had access to pre-primary education (one in five in FCACs), with large disparities between countries. Most countries with high pre-primary enrollment or large increases in pre-primary enrollment also have primary completion rates higher than 90 percent; developing country partners with low primary completion, on the other hand, have been prioritizing primary enrollment.

Meanwhile, as more children complete primary education, attention to the lower secondary grades has increased. In 2012, 8 out of 10 children completing primary education transitioned into lower secondary education. As a result, enrollments increased on average by 16 percent (compared with 9 percent in primary education) over the 2008-2012 period, significantly higher than the 5 percent increase in the school age population. The increase in enrollments reached 27 percent in FCACs, showing that they are leading the progress in lower secondary education. However, further efforts are needed to prevent dropout, as completion rates are still low, at 42 percent on average in 2012 (31 percent in FCACs) meaning that more than half of these children do not complete lower secondary education (Figure 2).

¹ Computed for all 59 GPE developing country partners using the 2012 revised UN population database.

Figure 2 **GPE developing country partners with the largest number of children who do not complete lower secondary school, 2012**



Source: GPE compilation based on data of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (database), Montreal, <http://www.uis.unesco.org>.

Due to repetition and dropout, efficiency in primary education is also often low in developing country partners. For instance, 13 developing country partners spent more than six years of education to get one child to the beginning of grade 5, when four years should be sufficient. In some countries, increasing intake rates have been accompanied with decreasing retention, showing that a focus on retention is essential to ensure that children who start school remain there and complete primary education.

Gender parity has improved in recent years, for both access and completion, but slowly.

In 2012, in developing country partners, for every 100 boys completing primary education there were 89 girls (96 in non-FCACs and 85 in FCACs), showing that additional progress is needed. Household survey data provide a reminder that equity issues are complex and multidimensional. Among those aged 5 to 15 in developing country partners with recent MICS survey data, the likelihood of never having attended school was 1.2 times higher for girls than for boys, 2.1 times higher for rural children than for urban children, and 3.4 times higher for poor children than for children of wealthy families. Sources of disadvantage tend to compound themselves so that some population groups still have virtually no chance of

completing primary education. In Afghanistan, Burkina Faso and Mozambique, poor female rural children had less than one chance in 10 of completing primary education. It is therefore essential to help countries design and implement policies that reach all children, particularly the most marginalized and vulnerable.

Analysis of progress in education, which is a first step toward appropriate policies, relies on good quality, timely data. Unfortunately, data are often lacking in developing country partners. As a consequence, more than 40 percent of basic education data are missing in UIS publications for developing country partners. The urgent need for an improved evidence base in the education policy process is signaled by the fact that almost half all developing country partner sector plans lack analyses of the education sector, and almost a quarter do not have comprehensive results frameworks. Despite real progress, the lack of regular quality learning data is particularly worrisome in developing countries as countries have to face a learning crisis. To help improve this situation, the Global Partnership has been working closely with the Learning Metrics Task Force, which has recommended that assessment should be regarded as a public good.² Much focus has been put on the need to strengthen learning assessment systems in order

² For more information on the Learning Metrics Task Force, see: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/learning-metrics-task-force.aspx>.

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to improve learning policies, and ultimately learning itself. A promising proposal for an international platform, which could provide funding and technical support for regional and

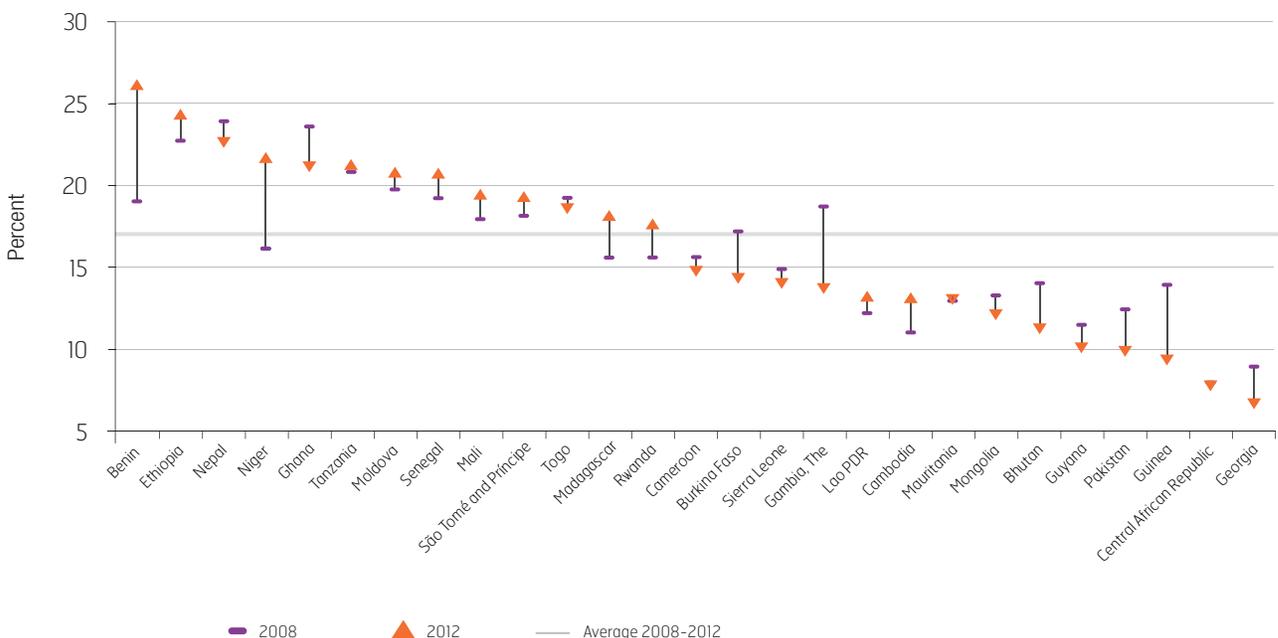
national learning assessments, is under development. The education community needs to do more to address the data and evidence gap.

Chapter 3: Domestic and External Financing for Education

Government spending is the most important source of finance for education. And the good news is that public spending on education as a percentage of total government expenditure increased from 16.7 percent in 2008 to 17.3 percent in 2012. In addition, the level of investment in education improved significantly after countries joined the Global Partnership. However, additional progress is needed. Only eight developing country partners are devoting more than 20 percent of public expenditure to education, and some countries sharply decreased their effort for education, such as Burkina Faso and The Gambia (Figure 3). And most of the countries devoting less than the average of 17.3 percent decreased their public expenditure

on education. The situation is particularly worrisome in the Central African Republic, Georgia, Guinea, Guyana and Pakistan, which allocate 10 percent or less of public expenditure to education. In that context, the follow-through on developing country partners' pledges from the replenishment conference in June 2014 will be particularly important as they could indicate further improvements. At the conference, 27 developing country partners pledged to increase the share of national budget allocated to education sector by 14 percent on average between 2014 and 2018, representing an additional US\$26 billion to the education sector over a four-year period.

Figure 3 **Public expenditure on education as a percentage of total expenditure, GPE developing country partners, 2008 and 2012 or most recent year**



Source: GPE compilation based on UNESCO Institute for Statistics (database), Montreal, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx>. The information for 2012 is the most recent data point available between 2010 and 2012.

The decline of primary education as a budget priority, even in countries far from UPE, is worrisome. On average, in the 35 developing country partners with available data, the share of the education budget spent on primary education fell from 45.7 percent in 2008 to 43 percent in 2012. In FCAC partners there was an even sharper decrease, from 53.8 percent in 2008 to 46.2 percent in 2012, even though the average primary completion rate remains low, at only 68 percent in 2012.

Our analysis of education systems indicates that many developing country partners could achieve substantially higher primary completion rates while investing the same share of GDP in education if they used resources more efficiently. In many countries, a combination of adequate investment in education and improvement in efficiency could significantly improve results.

However, donors are clearly making education a lower priority. **While total development aid**

decreased by 1.3 percent between 2010 and 2012, the amount going to education fell by almost 10 percent. The decrease in education aid accounted for 65 percent of the total aid decrease. In addition, overall support for basic education is falling faster than for other areas of education, reflecting a trend among donors to shift spending away from this subsector. Funding to education is even falling at a faster pace in developing country partners, in particular in FCAC partners, some of the world's poorest countries. Shockingly, education aid disbursements declined by more than 16 percent from 2010 to 2012 in FCAC partners.

The donors with the largest reductions in absolute terms between 2010 and 2012 were France (US\$319 million) and the Netherlands (US\$285 million). In contrast, aid to other major sectors increased over the same period – in the case of health, by 6.7 percent. Moreover, education still receives less than 2 percent of humanitarian aid.

Table 1: **Aid to education, 2010–2012**

Select bilateral disbursements, constant 2012 US\$ millions

	2010	2012	Average change 2010–2012 (%)	
Australia	325	566	▲	32
Switzerland	60	84	▲	18
Rep. of Korea	158	210	▲	15
Denmark	161	200	▲	12
Austria	132	154	▲	9
United Kingdom	940	1,071	▲	8
United States	922	956	▲	4
Belgium	223	202	▼	-5
Norway	342	300	▼	-6
France	1,187	1,547	▼	-9
Japan	1,170	909	▼	-12
Sweden	157	113	▼	-12
Canada	522	322	▼	-20
Netherlands	558	273	▼	-30
Spain	358	109	▼	-43

Source: GPE compilation based on OECD Data Lab (database), Development Assistance Committee, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, <http://www.oecd.org/statistics/>.

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The Global Partnership’s financial support to the education sector increased significantly in recent years. In 2012, the Global Partnership disbursed US\$354 million to basic education and became the biggest donor to the subsector in developing country partners. Moreover, GPE disbursements to basic education in FCAC partners increased by 42 percent, which was not

enough to compensate for the sharp decrease of other aid.

Increased domestic and external financing is required, particularly in the poorest and fragile countries, in order to reach universal basic education and improve education quality.

Chapter 4: Overview of GPE Support to Developing Country Partners

The Global Partnership is not just about financing; it provides a framework to all partners at the country level – including developing country governments, donor partners, international organizations, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations, and the private sector – to work together to ensure that (i) education policies are sound, credible, and rigorously monitored; and (ii) development aid is better coordinated and more effective, and funds results-oriented activities.

In addition to the direct technical assistance and support for inclusive policy dialogue provided by the GPE Secretariat, the Global Partnership **also provides support for improvements in the education sector through a variety of research and policy development initiatives**, through its Global and Regional Activities (GRA) Program and its thematic work. Disbursements on the GRA program have been completed within the last year and the underlying work is at a preliminary stage. As a result, the Global Partnership has not yet developed a comprehensive approach for harnessing the tools, guidelines, research and policy solutions developed through these initiatives into its approach to country-level support. As the Global Partnership moves forward, the GRA program represents an important opportunity to develop new policy solutions and for broader engagement on basic education.

GPE direct technical support to countries at all stages of the policy process has increased by 60 percent since 2011. This support focused increasingly on the entire national policy cycle, rather than mainly GPE grant processes.

Support for developing and implementing credible education sector plans accounted for 21 percent of all country visits in 2012, 42 percent in 2013, and 62 percent in the first half of 2014. Demand for such support appears high and is increasing with the new funding model.

The World Bank is responsible for supervising 77 percent of all approved grants and UNICEF for 15 percent of approved grants. Other partner agencies, including AFD (France), Belgium, DFID (United Kingdom), the Netherlands, SIDA (Sweden) and UNESCO, together supervise only 7 percent of all Program Implementation Grants.

More time is being taken for grant development, and there is less wait time between when a grant is approved and when the country receives the first tranche of funding. However, the wait time remains too long. Efforts should therefore be pursued to ensure that all approved GPE grants are processed and implemented more quickly.

The *Results for Learning Report* tracks choice of modality within the GPE grant portfolio as a means of determining whether GPE grants are encouraging further harmonization and use of country systems. The share of GPE grants implemented through project mode has increased over the past year, now standing at 82 percent. Further analysis indicates limited use of national systems for GPE grants. The implementation of the new funding model plus the advent of the second strategic planning process provide the Global Partnership an opportunity to reconsider and enhance how choice of modality and use of country systems are taken into consideration in its work.

Conclusion: Equity at the heart of basic education challenges

Despite significant progress over the last five years, developing country partners face complex equity issues in basic education that generally involved different factors such as poverty, gender, conflict, location and disability.

In developing country partners that are not fragile or conflict-affected, the lack of progress in completion of primary education shows that these countries are struggling to reach the 10 to 15 percent of the children not in school. Further, there is a need for more effective equity policies in many developing country partners. Reaching the marginalized requires more targeted policies, which can only be developed if relevant data are available. The Global Partnership, with its focus on policy process, data and the marginalized, should play an increasing role in improving equity policies.

The good news is that partners in FCAC countries have made significant progress over the last five years both in primary and secondary education. However, three elements show that this progress is at risk. First, they still have a long way to go to reach universal primary education, including significant challenges reaching the marginalized, particularly in remote or conflict-affected areas. Second, these countries have seen external aid to education decrease sharply between 2010 and 2012, and many of them depend heavily on international support. Finally, to accommodate the recent strong increase of enrollment in secondary education, these countries are quickly shifting their budget allocations from primary education to secondary education, which could compromise the progress that many of them have achieved in improving enrollment in basic education.

The Global Partnership has significantly increased its support to FCACs in the past two years, and will continue to be able to maintain a certain level of support due to funds secured at the recent replenishment round. However, an additional effort on the part of the international

community in terms of resource mobilization for FCACs is needed, and the Global Partnership could lead this effort.

Humanitarian funding, which represents 23 percent of total official development assistance but dedicates less than two percent to education, is another important dimension of the support to education in FCACs. The Global Partnership needs to address this question of support to education in emergencies, as it is a critical component to reach the excluded in many FCACs.

Primary education is a decreasing priority, even in countries that are still far from universal primary education. It reflects the key policy issue of resource allocation between education subsectors in the context of rapid growth in enrollment. As the unit cost of lower secondary education is often on average twice as high as that for primary education, many countries have started to shift some of their resources from primary to secondary education. These choices put at risk progress in both primary and secondary education.

Last year's report showed that the learning crisis continues to undermine education outcomes across most developing country partners. The Global Partnership has been working closely with the Learning Metrics Task Force to support the development of more robust systems for assessing learning outcomes. In particular, a promising proposal for an international platform dedicated to learning assessment is under development.

Finally, the extensive use of project modality for GPE grants reflects the current situation of aid in the education sector. The need for more harmonization between donors and more alignment with national systems needs to be addressed early on and at a strategic level in the Global Partnership's dialogue with countries and partners.

