Introduction

Good morning and thank you for inviting me here to the Family Office Forum.

Today, I want to speak to you about the most important goal of every family.

Right around the world, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, every parent wants their child to have the opportunity to lead a better life than the generations that have gone before.

I benefited from that impulse myself. I was born in South Wales in the United Kingdom to parents of very modest means. My father had to leave school at 14 to work, despite being a bright student who wanted to continue his studies.

He remained passionate about education and, after we emigrated to Australia, he and my mother ensured that my sister and I focused on our studies. Fortunately for us, our local community government schools were great schools and we had wonderful opportunities to learn.

My life’s journey can therefore be explained in one sentence: Learning was a priority in our home – and it took me to the highest office in my country.
Now, it has led me to chairing the Global Partnership for Education - GPE - the only multilateral body in our world solely dedicated to improving schooling in developing countries.

From my involvement with GPE, I hear from people everywhere that one of the most important things they want from their government is a good education for their children. I have heard these voices first hand and seen the despair of parents when their children are out of school and out of hope. I have also stood in classrooms watching an untrained teacher trying to educate a class of one hundred children, who are sharing fewer than a dozen books.

Yet these young people are no less creative, ambitious or hard working than children in Zurich. They just didn’t win that great lottery in life that determines whether we are born in a developed, stable country or a place with a paucity of opportunity and hope.

Let me introduce you to a few of them.

SLIDE  **WONGANI IN SCHOOL**

This is Wongani from Malawi. He is 14 years old and desperate to stay in school. I met him when I visited Malawi earlier this year with our Global Ambassador Rihanna. And yes – before you ask - the kids were very excited to meet Rihanna!
Wongani has big dreams – he wants to set up a business. But there is very little opportunity for students in his school to go beyond primary or lower secondary school. There are not enough qualified teachers, the system is not well-organized to scale up and grow, and learning outcomes are poor.

SLIDE MIATTA, LIBERIA – CLICK FOR PICTURE

This is Miatta – on the left - from Liberia - where the Ebola crisis of 2014-15 killed thousands of people, including Miatta’s mother.

The epidemic closed many schools for almost a year, severely disrupting the education system.

Miatta wants to keep learning, and lives with her aunt who is struggling to support Miatta and her two siblings by selling coal.

Being able to keep the children in school is a real challenge for her. The drop-out rates for teenage girls in Liberia are very high and only 32% complete lower secondary school. Even fewer complete a full course of secondary education.

SLIDE – PHOTO OF MALALA AT THE UN

The third person I want to introduce is a young woman whom I greatly admire and I think will be familiar to you – Malala Yousafzai.
Malala was 15 when she was shot in the head by the Taliban on her way home from school in Pakistan. She was targeted because she dared to stand up against the mullahs in her town, who banned girls from going to school.

Malala almost died from her injuries – but against the odds made a remarkable recovery. A year after the attack, she gave a speech at the UN that was a passionate plea for education not only as a right, but as a vital intervention against extremism.

Malala’s courage has made her one of the world’s most respected and effective advocates for education for all, especially girls. She is now at university, but is still contacting world leaders to urge them to review their policies and increase funding for education so that all girls and boys can go to school - and I am delighted to say - is working closely with GPE on that effort.

*Scale of the Challenge*

I have introduced you to just three young people for whom getting an education is or has been a struggle.

They are just 3 children out of millions who share the same plight.
Around the world today there are 264 million children – a quarter of a billion - who are not in school at all. If they formed a country, it would be bigger than Indonesia; bigger than Brazil. A quarter of a billion people who will grow up unable to decode instructions on a packet of medicine or understand documents they are asked to sign.

Yet, they are growing up at a time where the ability to process information, to use technology effectively and not simply be manipulated by it, are critical skills.

The very bad news is that on current trends, in low-income countries, by 2030, the vast majority – 9 out of 10 children – will barely complete primary school.

Without immediate and radical action to invest more in education, over half of the world’s upcoming youth generation – 825 million of the 1.6 billion young people– will simply not be equipped to work and thrive in this 21st century, an era in which jobs will require higher and higher skill levels, with 2 billion jobs expected to be lost to technology by 2050.

This may all seem an overwhelming challenge but I want to talk to you about how together we can get these children in school, how we can deliver quality education at scale – and make a real difference to just about every other social and economic indicator as well.
Benefits of education

You may have heard of the Sustainable Development Goals – a globally agreed agenda for development that all countries have signed up to.

The Goals are not driven by charity but pragmatism – a recognition that we all need to take action to secure the future wellbeing of humanity and this planet.

This diagram shows where education sits – at the core of better health, ending extreme hunger and poverty, clean energy, better cities, innovative industries and peace and security.

Education is also essential to reducing inequality and building more stable, resilient and inclusive societies. I want to emphasize equity in education because inequality and joblessness, especially among young people, are a top global risk factor – cited regularly by corporate leaders, the World Economic Forum and political analysts.
For example, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation has published a report called ‘Africa At a Tipping Point’, which analyses the implications of the continent’s rapidly growing youth population. Its warning is stark. Africa could reap a demographic dividend from the energy and talent of its young people or it could fail to educate them and see significant economic losses, a brain drain, and more social and political unrest.

Education is a significant determinant of the peace and stability of societies, which are essential to long term economic growth. But it is not just whether individuals reach higher levels of schooling that matter. To significantly cut the risk of conflict, the chance to learn must be equitably shared.

Leaders of both developed and developing countries are now alive to the urgent challenge of education and the huge benefits of investing in it.

They are driven by economic research which shows that in the poorest countries, a dollar invested in a child’s education generates more than $5 in additional gross earnings annually, even after taking costs into account and allowing for the variable quality of education. In lower-middle income countries, the rate of return is $2.50 for every dollar invested. If the quality of that education improves, the returns are even higher.

At an individual level, each additional year of schooling sees earnings rise by between 8 and 10 per cent.
Education contributes to better health outcomes because better educated populations make healthier choices. We know education is a preventive factor in the spread of HIV – especially for girls. Every additional year of secondary school significantly reduces a girl’s risk of contracting the virus.

The benefits of education do not stop there. The Brookings Institution in Washington DC makes the case that educating girls, along with family planning, is the best way to tackle climate change. That’s because evidence consistently shows that educated women choose to have smaller families, and reducing population growth is essential to slowing consumption and reducing emissions that contribute to global warming.

Apart from being more likely to marry later and have fewer children, an educated girl who becomes a mother is more likely to vaccinate her children, to have them sleep under mosquito nets to prevent malaria and to make sure they go to school.

There are also huge economic benefits to be gained from women entering the workforce and nations utilizing the talents and potential of the whole population. Indeed, education is the bedrock of women’s economic empowerment.

So how do we create a world in which every child gets to attend a quality school?
First, we need a plan in every country to deliver quality education to every child. Getting that plan right and helping fund its delivery is at the heart of the Global Partnership for Education, which is now one of the biggest funders of school education in developing countries. We focus on the lowest income countries, where out of school numbers are highest and where educational inequality is most acute.

We work with over 65 countries and have committed over $4.6 billion dollars to those country partners over the past 15 years. We have an active portfolio of more than $2.4 billion dollars in grants and by early next year, we will have disbursed a further half a billion dollars.

We are proud of the progress our partner countries have made:
- 72 million more children in primary school since 2002;
- 76 percent of children completing primary school, up from 63 percent; and
- 74 percent primary completion rates for girls, up from 57 percent.

To qualify for one of our major grants, our partner countries must show they are increasing their own investments in education. As a result, GPE countries are growing the resources for education at a much faster rate than countries outside the partnership.
To give you a practical sense of what all this means, let’s return to the lives of the children I introduced you to earlier.

In Malawi – where Wongani lives - GPE is working with the government to improve equity and quality in the education system.

Since joining GPE, Malawi has seen primary school completion rates increase to 80 per cent. New funding of just under $45 million over the four years to 2020 will be used to improve quality and retention rates, especially for girls. GPE funds have already helped train 23,000 teachers, build over 2,000 classrooms and distribute more than 20 million textbooks.

And in Liberia, thanks in part to GPE, Miatta is now back at school and learning. GPE stepped in to help more than 2,500 schools reopen after the Ebola crisis and has provided $40 million to help strengthen the country’s education system.

GPE’s grant includes provision for cash support to families like Miatta’s so that children can afford to go to school, as well as financing the building of hundreds of classrooms, training teachers and distributing millions of textbooks.

All of this is good - indeed life changing - work.
But we must do more if we are to address the huge gap between the low levels of learning and the skills required for developing countries to grow. We need to keep many more girls and boys in school beyond the primary years – and rapidly scale up access to quality education for the poorest and most vulnerable. If we do not, we risk perpetuating the inequality, instability and poverty that drives conflict, puts a drag on economic progress and provides fertile ground for disease.

*Solving the education challenge*

The case for education has never been stronger, and the best ways to make a difference have never been clearer.

With almost two decades’ experience and several years of reform behind us at GPE, we know what works. The foundation of success is a robust national plan to guide the development of the education system.

Deploying dollars for teachers or schools is not enough – it takes an overall plan, with accountability resting with government, and a focus on quality and results right through the education system.

Tunisia and Vietnam are instructive examples. Both countries spend a similar amount per pupil on primary and secondary education as a percentage of GDP. In fact Tunisia spends slightly more. But Vietnam scores considerably higher in international secondary education tests.
Vietnam’s achievements are due to several factors, including strong cultural support for education and for teachers. But key to driving change has been the fact that Vietnam developed and implemented a national education plan to improve quality as well as access, and held itself publicly accountable by publishing learning results.

GPE has fine-tuned its model of education funding and partnership so we can see more success stories like this. Our first step in working with a developing country partner is to analyze the existing education sector, to determine the scale of need and to bring everyone into a single planning process, including donors, local civil society and think tanks, teachers, the private sector and philanthropists. In doing so, we work against the overlap and waste that undermines so many well-meaning efforts for change.

This process leads to the generation of a transparent, high quality plan, but it must also meet other criteria: for a plan to be approved and then funded by GPE, our partner countries must include a financed proposal to systematically collect data and report learning results.

Not only is GPE funding linked to domestic spending requirements, it is also results-based. 30 per cent of GPE’s main education grant to a country is linked to the achievement of agreed results in equity, efficiency and learning.
The existence of a national education sector plan provides a framework for all investment, stops fragmentation and sends investments where they are needed most.

*Education finance – donors*

While the majority of funds for education in developing countries come from those countries themselves, donor funding from the foreign aid budgets of governments like the UK, Norway, Australia, Canada and Switzerland and many others are essential to catalyzing change.

But even though education is obviously a good investment and is the clearest pathway for nations to leave poverty and aid dependence behind, the global education sector is woefully under-resourced.

Despite greater awareness and evidence of the value of education, a new report from UNESCO shows that the share of aid allocated to education is lower now than it was in 2010, and aid to low income countries has fallen. Africa is being particularly hard hit, yet that is where the need is the greatest and populations are growing fastest.
To start to bridge the gap, GPE is campaigning right now to be able to increase its support to developing country partners to 2 billion US dollars a year by 2020. Our Financing Conference will be held in February next year. We are delighted that President Sall of Senegal together with President Macron of France, will co-host it in Dakar.

A full replenishment of GPE’s funds for the next three years – 2018-2020 – will enable us to support up to 89 countries, which are home to 870 million children and adolescents and 78 per cent of the world’s out-of-school children.

*The role of the private sector and philanthropy*

So, at this stage you may be thinking that this is all very interesting but it seems to be solely about governments donating big money. You may be wondering, is there any role for you?

The answer to that is a very definite yes.

Money from foreign aid is our main source of those funds, but at the same time we know that the old ways of giving aid, where a small number of governments write the lion’s share of the cheques, is just not enough.
So, we have tailored a financing and funding framework that has the flexibility to allow the business community and philanthropy to support key education priorities.

Our approach to partnership with philanthropists and the private sector is focused on shared opportunities, creativity and close collaboration. Your voices and expertise, as well as your financial contributions, are of critical importance.

*The data challenge*

For example, we are very excited about our discussions with technology companies on how to best address the lack of good quality education data. Without real time, good quality information it isn't possible for our developing country partners to fully identify challenges, target resources and monitor the impact of policy reforms.

So, if there are tech experts in the room who think big – we want to hear from you!

*Disaster Risk Reduction*

We are also at work with the private sector on how to better manage disaster risk for educational infrastructure.

Natural disasters are huge disruptors of education delivery. So too is conflict.
In 2015 alone, 75 million children in 35 GPE partner countries had their education substantially interrupted because of political and natural events.

GPE is exploring a strategy to embed education in disaster risk planning processes to promote resilience and to identify what risks can be insured against.

Pursuing this work to conclusion requires access to business skills and some dedicated funding. If this is an area of interest to you, our door is wide open.

*Knowledge and Innovation Exchange*

The private sector and foundations are also very welcome to be involved in GPE’s knowledge and innovation exchange, KIX, which is designed to foster information sharing and best practice between countries.

GPE is not and never will be a think tank or a research academy. But what we do want to succeed at is brokering new knowledge about best practices in education in real time into countries’ planning processes. We do not want to see new insights sitting in reports that are gathering dust on shelves. Instead we want that knowledge and innovation shared so it improves education systems and children’s life chances.
We are currently seeking to raise money to support each of our priority themes – learning assessments, early childhood care and education, data and gender equality. We are in discussion with a number of foundations but welcome new ideas and inquiries so please don't hesitate to ask if you are interested in finding out more.

**GPE Multiplier**

GPE also has a specific Multiplier Fund, which aims to unlock significant resources from private capital as well as multilateral development banks, regional development banks and bilateral government funds.

In brief, the GPE Multiplier Fund will give partner countries a dollar for every three dollars they raise for education from external sources. By leveraging additional sources the GPE Multiplier aims to galvanize significant new sources of funding for education in developing countries.

It is possible to contribute to the Multiplier Fund and access a way of making your money work harder for change.

**Momentum for change – this is education’s time**

Let me conclude with this: now is a critical time for global education. We can either rapidly scale up our ambition, investment and collaboration – or see generations left behind with all the consequences I have outlined.
I am optimistic. Partly, my optimism is based on seeing the huge wave of support from young people around the world, who want their governments to invest in education. They live in a much more globally connected world than the one I grew up in, and are among our strongest advocates for learning.

Partly my optimism is based on my confidence that GPE can deliver results and is ready to deliver more.

And partly it is because we are building bonds with people like you – individuals who care passionately about the world that future generations will live in, and in our collective prosperity and security.

We can make a difference for millions of girls like Malala who face huge barriers to education. We can help Wongani and Miatta to finish school and have a better chance of growing up in a safer, healthier and more prosperous world.

By working together, we can change the lives of millions, and map out a better future for our world.