Early childhood education – a strong foundation for learning

GPE works with governments to improve the quality and availability of early education, especially for children most often left behind

GPE results

With GPE’s support, developing country partners have achieved remarkable progress:

- **US$270 million** invested to support early education in more than 35 partner developing countries
- **Twice as many** children were enrolled in pre-primary education in GPE partner countries in 2016 compared to 2002.
- **Two thirds** of GPE grants to partner countries in 2018 included support for early childhood care and education

The challenge

- Only 1 in 5 young children in developing countries is enrolled in pre-primary education.
- The poorest children are **7 times less likely** than children from the wealthiest families to attend pre-primary school.
- **40% of countries** with data allocate less than 2% of their education budgets to early childhood education.
- Less than **1% of aid to education** is invested in pre-primary education.
Once known for its high educational standards, Sierra Leone has suffered great blows to its education system due to a brutal civil war and the Ebola crisis. In 2019, the government committed to ensuring all children receive free quality education to drive economic and social progress nationwide. This includes pre-primary education, which is essential to building a strong foundation for learning.

GPE is currently working with the government to get more children in the country’s most vulnerable communities early childhood education both through traditional pre-primary classrooms attached to primary schools as well as through community-based learning centers.

GPE funds will be used for more classrooms, teacher training, and establishing and equipping early childhood development community centers.

This support builds on the successes of a previous GPE grant, which supported the development of an ECCE curriculum as well as pre-primary classroom construction and teacher and caregiver training.

In 2013, 60% of children entering grade 1 in the remote hinterland regions of Guyana had not mastered the skills needed to learn how to read, and only 1 in 10 had any understanding of text at all.

To address the educational disadvantages faced by children in Guyana’s marginalized regions, GPE helped the government improve early education and reduce disparities in learning outcomes.

GPE support aimed to build capacity of teachers, improve the quality and supply of teaching and learning materials and train primary caregivers on how to ensure children are learning at home as well as in school.

Regular monitoring data was collected on teacher performance in the classroom and children’s learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy were evaluated on a yearly basis.

Thanks to these investments, children in hinterland areas improved their literacy skills by almost 140% and the government of Guyana has built a strong foundation for more equitable learning across the country.