



Global Partnership for Education

<https://www.globalpartnership.org/>

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As the only global partnership and fund dedicated entirely to helping children in lower-income countries receive a quality education with a nearly US \$3 billion active grant portfolio, GPE is well versed in the challenges of financing, including the challenge to investing more international and domestic financing, and the need to spend more equitably and more efficiently. Over the past nearly 20 years GPE has helped almost 90 countries to transform their education systems to help the most vulnerable girls and boys to attend school, improve teaching and learning, and build equitable, inclusive and resilient education systems fit for the 21st century.

Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development

*The Summit of the Future and the Pact of the Future should call for increasing and improving domestic and international financing and use of innovative financing to transform education systems to ensure the achievement of SDG 4.*

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda committed the world to investing in quality education for all, including through initiatives like the Global Partnership for Education. Yet today, the financing gap to reach SDG4 is \$100 billion dollars per year. The SDG Political Declaration stressed the need to reform the international financial architecture. Member States committed to “continue increasing investment in inclusive and equitable quality education” (paragraph 38.d), which was reiterated in the recent GA Resolution on Education for Sustainable Development (A/C.2/78/L.41). Limited financial resources, coupled with ongoing gender-based discrimination, also continues to limit girls’ access to education, particularly those in vulnerable situations as recognized in GA Resolution A/C.2/78/L.41 (paragraphs 10 and 16).

Increased international financing can be a key investment in education, especially in the lowest income countries. When aligned with countries' national education priorities, international financing can support coordinated action and increase lower income countries’ ability to invest more in their education systems, while still receiving direct support for education. This approach was supported by 86 Ministers of Education from lower income countries in the GPE Ministerial Communique (2023) calling for education aid financing reform.

GPE uses this approach to bring together governments, teachers, civil society, donors, United Nations agencies, Development Banks, businesses, and private foundations to prioritize areas for reform in a country, and then targets funding and coordinated action towards these reform areas. Innovative financing can mobilize more resources for education and promote efficiency. An example of this is the GPE Multiplier. Since 2018, US\$458 million in GPE Multiplier grants to 39 countries have unlocked more than US\$2 billion in additional co-financing from partners ranging

from foundations to multilateral development banks.

- GPE's Girls' Education Accelerator is a \$250 million fund to support projects in 30 GPE partner countries where girls are lagging furthest behind boys in access to school, have the highest rates of early marriage, or both.
- The Arab Coordination Group Smart Education Initiative (ACG-SmartEd) is an innovative financing instrument to dramatically scale up financing in the Islamic Development Bank's (IsDB) 37 member countries. The ACG SmartEd leverages US\$4 from the ACG and IsDB for every US\$1 from the GPE Multiplier. SmartEd aims to deploy a blended financing portfolio of US\$500 million.
- GPE's Debt2Ed positions donors and partner countries to use debt treatments, such as debt swaps and loan buydowns to access the GPE Multiplier. The first GPE Debt2Ed transaction through a Debt Swap between France and Cote D'Ivoire was recently agreed unlocking EUR 72.1million that Cote D'Ivoire can now invest in education.

This approach to international financing encourages and supports domestic financing, which is the most significant and sustainable form of funding for education. Currently, volume, equity, and efficiency are major challenges to better domestic financing. Increased social sector spending as a whole can also drive improvements in education. Even prior to the COVID pandemic, crisis in Ukraine, and related global economic downturn which have driven debt distress, factors such as management of the teacher workforce, poor quality of inputs like textbooks, leakage of funds, and internal efficiency issues like high rates of repetition and dropout were driving inefficiency (World Bank 2019). GPE uses incentives and results-based financing to support governments to increase domestic spending and ensure that it is equitably and efficiently spent.

## Chapter II. International peace and security

*The Summit of the Future and the Pact of the Future should:*

- *Promote both international and domestic investment in education for fragile and crisis affected countries, understanding that many countries may need to set longer term goals to increase domestic investment that may be contingent upon external conditions such as international investment and debt forgiveness, and Support mechanisms that can provide rapid assistance, which can ensure that children's schooling continues during crises.*
- *Strengthen and accelerate existing global frameworks, networks, and initiatives for education in crisis contexts at local, national, regional, and global levels, including the Safe to Learn Alliance, comprised of UN Agencies, Member States, and other funds and partnerships, including GPE, with a view to sharing and scaling good practices.*
- *Support and incentivize national education systems to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from conflicts and crises. GPE works closely with Education Cannot Wait (ECW), UNHCR, national education clusters and other partners to ensure that education can be delivered effectively during conflict and crisis and that national education systems become more inclusive of refugee children and resilient to future crises and conflict, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees, by providing financing and technical support.*
- *Promote alignment between humanitarian, development, and peace actors and planning approaches by supporting the inclusion of emergency actors in national planning processes and local education groups.*
- *Promote a rights-based approach to education and take concrete action to ensure girls can access quality, inclusive education to decrease their risk of early, child, and forced marriage and enable them to fully, equally, and meaningfully participate in leadership and decision making and access economic opportunities and decent work.*

Education is both a human right and a critical tool to foster peace and security. Ensuring that children and youth have access to education during conflict and crises protects girls' and boys' rights, instills a sense of normalcy, and fosters resilience, inclusion, and tolerance, which supports the long-term processes of recovery, development, and peacebuilding. A more coordinated and coherent approach to education across the humanitarian, development and peace nexus will leverage education's ability to promote social cohesion, decrease risk of conflict, and promote peacebuilding and development.

The Secretary-General's 2022 Report on Youth, Peace, and Security noted, "Education remains crucial in shaping opportunities for young people and serving as a powerful engine for peace and resilience." A forthcoming paper by GPE and the Institute for Economics and Peace (Martinez and Collins, 2023), finds that countries that spend more on education experience higher levels of peace. Education also fosters peace, security, and development at the individual level. Schooling builds resilience and critical thinking skills. It also provides a protective mechanism. Boys not in school are at greater risk of child labor and being recruited into armed groups. Girls are at greater risk than boys of dropping out of school in crises, and when they do, girls are at greater risk of not returning due to financial concerns and domestic responsibilities (UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and OECD, 2022). Girls' risk of early and forced marriage, early childbearing, and undertaking unpaid caregiving and domestic work all increase during crises. Girls who remain in or return to school also will be better equipped to access decent work and increase their lifetime earnings and to fully participate in decision making and take on leadership roles, including peace processes.

Yet education is one of the least funded humanitarian areas, receiving just 3% of global humanitarian financing in 2021 (Geneva Global Hub for EiE, 2022). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Political Declaration emphasized the need to continue increased investment in education, including in emergencies (paragraph 38.d) The General Assembly Resolution on Education for Sustainable Development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/C.2/78/L.41 ) expresses deep concern about the disruptions and underfunding of education during emergencies and the need to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all" particularly given education's ability to promote young peoples' "hopes for the future, fosters inclusion and non-discrimination and act(s) as a catalyst for the recovery and rebuilding of post-conflict countries" (paragraph 24). The resolution also highlights how gender-based discrimination continues to limit girls' access to education, particularly those in vulnerable situations (paragraphs 10 and 16).

#### Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

On November 20, 2023, GPE Youth Leaders launched a 10-point plan aimed at global leaders to ensure a rights-based approach to sustainable development. A condensed version follows:

1. *Ensure sustainable domestic funding and international support for quality. Youth leaders called for a "fundamental change" in education financing. Education "is a non-negotiable investment into our collective prosperity and futures. National education budgets must be safeguarded and increased during and after domestic and global crises. Financing for education should be sustainable, flexible, accessible, data-driven, innovative, domestic, and multi-sectoral. Donors must protect ODA financing, spend it where the need is greatest, and increase the proportion allocated to education to between 10-15% of ODA."*
2. *End childhood hunger. The international community must address "the food crisis and prioritize school meals and comprehensive nutrition education in school curricula. We urge that you sign and define your national commitments to ensure universal access to nutritious school meals for all children."*
3. *Promote climate justice through education systems "As Youth, we recognize that our future is*

*inextricably linked to the health of our planet.” Together, we must create “climate smart education systems that can adapt to the realities of climate change and ensure uninterrupted access to quality learning despite climate events such as droughts and floods.” Further, education systems (must) “incorporate indigenous knowledge and climate education resources that promote green skills and resilience for young people.”*

4. *Make education inclusive and accessible for all. Education systems must “prioritize the inclusion of people with disabilities” and “create accessible schools and learning resources and establish inclusive practices within classrooms from the early years of schooling to celebrate diversity and certify teachers as inclusive education professionals.”*
5. *Center gender equity in education. Education systems must be “safe, resilient, and ensure the full and inclusive participation of girls and boys—in all (their) diversity”. End violence, including gender-based violence in schools, and provide comprehensive sexuality education to all.*
6. *Guarantee education during emergencies. Recognizing the disproportionate burden that the Global South carries as host to the majority of the world’s refugees, youth leaders called for the international community to “ensure that refugee hosting and fragile countries have clear pathways for continuous learning for refugees and internally displaced youth.” Given the protracted nature of modern displacement, displaced children and youth are at high risk of not completing their education.*
7. *Prioritize mental health and psycho-social support for children and youth people. Youth leaders called for “the mainstreaming of mental health services into education” so that students and teachers can identify support services. Support children and young people at risk of never attending or dropping out of school, especially the most marginalized including: girls and young women, refugee and displaced youth, young persons with disabilities, indigenous youth, at-risk boys, and gender minorities.*
8. *Decolonize education. “We demand that you decolonize education. Education systems should reflect the views, history and essence of indigenous populations in curriculum development, teaching practices and community engagement”.*
9. *Prepare us for the digital future of work. “We want our schools to prepare us to think critically, communicate effectively, collaborate with diverse peers, solve complex problems, adopt a sustainable and global mindset, and engage with information and communications technologies”.*
10. *Ensure meaningful youth participation and engagement. “We unite with a shared voice and unwavering determination as Youth to demand the prioritization and involvement of youth in the policies and initiatives taken by decision-makers. We call for youth representation in governance systems, mentorship opportunities, flexible funding of youth initiatives, and financial resources to support youth participation in decision-making”.*