



The Global Partnership for Education

The importance of Basic Education

Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development. ~ Kofi Annan, Former Secretary General of the United Nations

COVID-19 Update : In the developing world, the coronavirus pandemic launched a crisis of unseen proportions which has left 700 million children cut off from school. The Global Partnership for Education has offered grants to 55 countries, amounting to nearly half billion dollars. This should help sustain learning for approximately half of the at-risk children.

<https://www.globalpartnership.org/covid19?location=initial-view>

Every Fall, Canadian students are once again lining up in school yards and overtaking libraries and study halls. But as school bells ring across the country, the back-to-school routine means little for the millions of children around the world who will never receive an education. Sadly, without an education a child's ability to develop knowledge and social skills is thwarted, limiting their ability to prepare for the world of work and leaving them ill-equipped to cope with day-to-day challenges. Investing in education is the single most effective means of reducing poverty, and it is an undisputed fact that progress toward universal access to education is achievable.

Education is a critical element of any anti-poverty strategy. Countries that have deliberately given priority to education like South Korea are the ones who have left poverty the fastest. Conversely, there are no examples of countries who have moved out of poverty without educating their populations first.

In the last decade, the number of out-of-school primary school aged children has decreased from 102 million to 61 million, with support from mechanisms like the Global Partnership for Education (formerly the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative).

The Challenge of Basic Education

Despite decades of progress, according to the United Nations' specialized agency for education UNESCO, 61 million children of primary school age are not attending primary school, and 60 million children of

lower secondary school age are not attending lower secondary school. ¹ Together primary school and lower secondary school constitute what is called basic education, i.e. the bare minimum required to function in the economy of the 21st century.

Even more disheartening is the fact that according to the same data source, over 25 million primary-age children will never set foot in school at all, and girls are 50% more likely to suffer this extreme type of deprivation than boys.

The International Community's Solution: the Global Partnership for Education

The magnitude of the challenge makes it clear that concerted action is required to address these glaring education gaps. After all, in 2015, the international community agreed to universal access to primary and secondary education by 2030! ² This must start by universal completion of basic education in all countries.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) was created in 2002 to be the central fund dedicated to increasing basic education completion rates in the poorest developing countries.

GPE is a multi-stakeholder partnership in that it brings together governments of the North, governments of the South and civil social from the North and the South. It is devoted to ensuring that ALL children are enrolled and receiving a quality basic education. As more countries recognize the importance of basic education, there has been a widespread effort to reach every child and offer a meaningful learning opportunity which was accompanied by an unprecedented demand for education resources globally. In order to close the financing gap, many emerging countries are turning to the GPE for support to their own national education plans.

Through its pooled funding model, GPE provides over 70 development partner countries with incentives to develop and implement sound national education plans.

How GPE Works

-Eligible countries receive financial support based on a credible education sector plan endorsed by national and international partners, the commitment to collect and analyze data to better manage their education system. Countries can increase the financial support they receive by nearly half if they can demonstrate significant results in equity, efficiency, and learning outcomes.

- GPE works where the needs are greatest: half of GPE partner countries (i.e. countries which receive funding from GPE) have a fragile government or are affected by conflict.

-GPE has a leveraged effect on education results because all recipients of GPE support must increase their domestic spending on education up to at least 20% of the national budget, and report on their expenditures transparently.

¹ <http://uis.unesco.org/en/news/263-million-children-and-youth-are-out-school>

² https://www.campaignforeducation.org/en/who-we-are/the-international-education-framework-2/the-sustainable-development-goal-4/sdg4s-10-targets/?gclid=CjwKCAjwqgrmBRAAEiwAdpDXtMDRPUQV-78ogbK7acntpFOMDxswlijns76q6R1Zf6kNUpNffFhGvhoC6dMQAvD_BwE

- In addition, GPE encourages partner countries to allocate 45% of their education budget to primary education.

Achievements³

The results of the Global Partnership for Education speak for themselves:

- **19% of children of primary school age** were out of school in GPE partner countries in 2015 compared to 33% in 2002.
- **33% of adolescents of lower secondary school age** were out of school in GPE partner countries in 2015 compared to 40% in 2002
- The lower secondary completion rate of girls in GPE partner countries increased from **35% to 50%**, for boys it increased from **41% to 52%** between 2002 and 2016.
- Partner countries have consistently shown that they increase domestic budgets dedicated to education at a faster pace than other developing countries.
- Developing country partners were spending less than the average for low and middle income countries in 2002, and now are spending more, standing at 17% of their national budget.

Funding

Since 2003, The Global Partnership for Education has received US\$5.6 billion from 27 donors.

The largest donors are the United Kingdom (20% of total), the Netherlands (13%), Norway (10%), the European Community (9%), Denmark (8%), Australia (7%), Spain (6%), the United States (5%) and Canada (3.5%).

As of May 2019, Canada had contributed a cumulated \$US 194 million to GPE.

For a more complete perspective on Canada's financial contributions to global education, please refer to our analysis of Canadian Funding for Global Education

For information on the emerging financial facility focused on out-of-school children in lower-middle income countries please refer to our fact sheet on Education Facility.

³ Source: GPE Results Report 2018. p.3 and <https://www.globalpartnership.org/data-and-results/key-results> , based on UNESCO Institute of Statistics Data

Key Self-Directed Learning Questions

How many children are not attending Primary School and how many are not attending Lower Secondary?

What is the Global Partnership for Education, and what is its track record on addressing the situation?

How much does Canada contribute to the Global Partnership for Education?
