



**KIX Mid-Term Evaluation**  
**Evaluation Report**  
**May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022**

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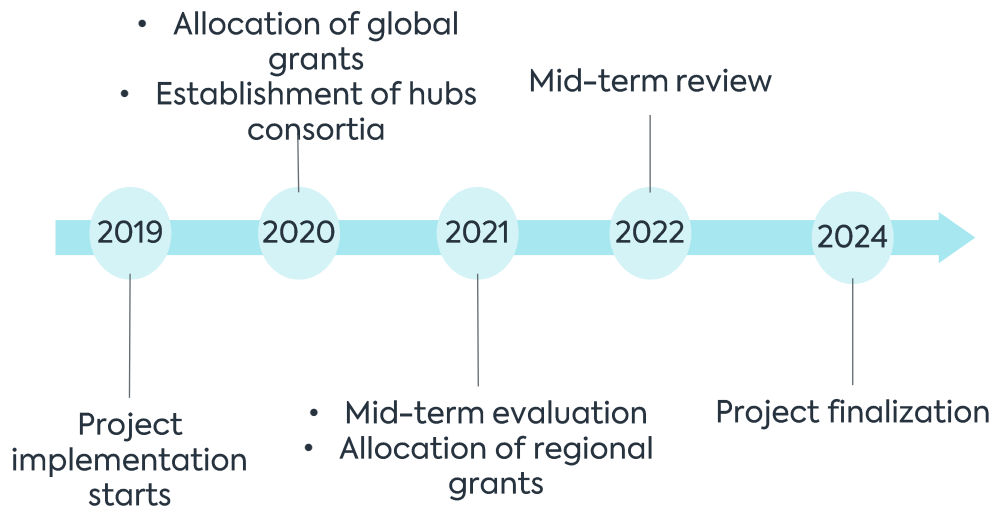
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# 1. CONTEXT

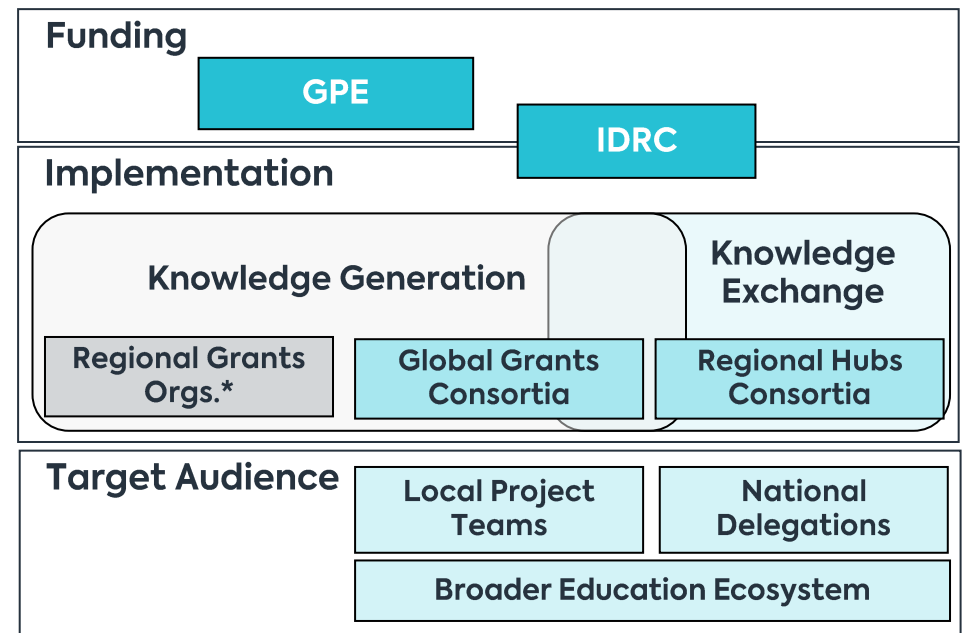
# KIX was launched in 2019 to enhance education systems of GPE country partners, using relevant evidence and actionable research

KIX goals	How KIX works
<p><b>Overall objective:</b> to strengthen national education systems and accelerate educational progress in GPE member countries by filling knowledge gaps, increasing access to evidence, and strengthening systems to support the generation and uptake of evidence and innovations in these countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mechanisms:</b> KIX is a <b>demand-driven program</b> that operates through: 1) knowledge creation – <a href="#">global and regional grants</a> (including <a href="#">Research on Scaling</a>) for applied research; and 2) knowledge dissemination – <a href="#">four regional hubs</a> (including the <a href="#">COVID-19 observatory</a>).</li> <li>• <b>Desired outcomes:</b> the program’s aims are that: a) evidence-based solutions reach national policymakers and directly influence policy dialogue and planning processes; and b) capacity is built to produce, integrate, and scale knowledge and innovation in partner countries.</li> </ul>

## KIX timeline



## Partners & stakeholders



Sources: gpekix.org, KIX program documentation including fact sheets and original application

\*Outside the scope of this evaluation given kick-off in July 2021



## KIX’s primary mechanisms are intentionally complementary

	Knowledge generation	Knowledge exchange
<b>Concept</b>	12 global projects and 22 regional projects conduct research in support of scaling the impact of innovations that address education priorities of GPE partner countries	Four regional hubs create a space for the 70 GPE countries, represented by national delegations, to share knowledge with respect to their needs and priorities
<b>Definition of success</b>	The generation and exchange of knowledge leads to research and uptake of innovative ideas that strengthen GPE countries’ educational systems	
<b>Organization</b>	Global and regional grants	Regional hubs and national delegations
<b>Countries served</b>	53 countries (directly*), GPE countries (indirectly)	70 countries
<b>Budget</b>	~\$50M	~\$9M
	Out of a total of \$78M (IDRC KIX, Program Mgmt., and Audit accounts for ~\$14M)	
<b>Timeline (first phase)</b>	Global grants: 2020–2024, Regional grants: 2021–2024	Regional hubs: 2020–2024
<b>State of implementation</b>	All 12 global grants and 22 regional grants** are fully operating	All 4 hubs are fully operating
<b>Main links across mechanisms</b>	i) Grantees disseminate knowledge through hubs; ii) Grantees engage with local education stakeholders to facilitate research, leveraging local knowledge; and iii) Grantees serve as the source of technical knowledge for hubs; iv) regional grant calls were informed by regional priorities identified by hubs	

\*Global grants conduct research in 44 countries and regional grants conduct research in 43 countries, adding up to a total of 53 different countries

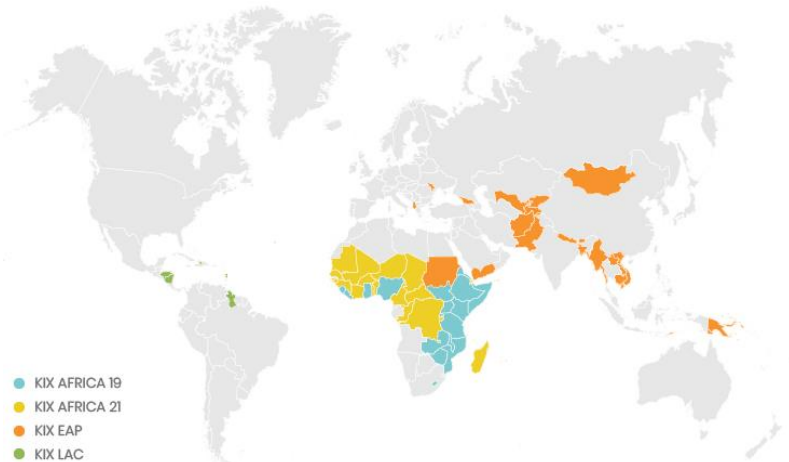
\*\*Regional grants are out of the scope of this evaluation

# Both mechanisms rely on different consortia of trusted partners to deliver knowledge generation and exchange efforts

## Knowledge Exchange

The KIX hubs, comprised of government representatives and other education stakeholders, surface policy challenges and responses. In addition, they support knowledge exchange through webinars and online meeting tools; online and in person communities of practice; e-learning modules; adaptive learning; after action reviews; international benchmarking tours; and expert peer review.

Four regional hubs (Africa-19, Africa-21, LAC, and EAP) are managed by regional learning partners and act as knowledge brokering units for KIX:



Each hub represents a cluster of GPE partner countries and functions as a regional forum to facilitate 1) cross-country knowledge exchange and mobilization, and 2) collaboration among key national education stakeholders

Source: <https://www.gpekix.org/>

Delivery Associates

## Knowledge Generation

KIX research projects surface and scale proven solutions to address education system challenges in GPE partner countries. The program funds knowledge generation and exchange in six thematic areas: learning assessment systems, data systems, early childhood care and education, gender equality, teaching and learning, and equity and inclusion.

Thirty-four global and regional KIX grants are operated by trusted research organizations and partners in consortia around the world:



Projects feed solutions into education sector policy and planning in country partners; fill research gaps to generate innovative approaches to education challenges; and explore successfully scaled solutions to improve education systems.

# We focused on answering 9 evaluation questions

## Evaluation objectives



Assess the program's progress under the 2 lines of inquiry, identifying what has worked well and what can be improved



Provide recommendations to refine design and improve implementation

## Evaluation questions

### Positioning for impact

1. To what extent, and in what ways, do country partners find KIX useful?
2. How aligned are KIX efforts with country partners' priorities?
3. How aligned are KIX efforts with GPE and IDRC's newly approved strategies?
4. To what extent, and in what ways, has KIX contributed to its intended immediate outcomes?
5. Is KIX being run in an efficient manner? If yes, in what ways? If no, what areas need improvement?
6. To what extent has KIX research developed strategies to adapt, test, and assess the scalability of chosen innovations and to mobilize the generated evidence?
7. To what extent have stakeholders incorporated Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations into their efforts?

### Lessons learned from implementation to date

8. What are the drivers and barriers to achieving immediate outcomes?
9. How well has KIX adapted its operations, particularly in response to the pandemic?

# We leveraged program data and support it with additional sources for triangulation purposes on a mixed methods approach

## Evaluation approach

### Mixed methods evaluation:

**Methodological triangulation:** multiple data-gathering methods allow us to answer each evaluation question (e.g., documents, interviews, and surveys)

**Source triangulation:** data from different sources enhances the robustness of findings

### Data-gathering methods\*

- **Documentary analysis:** monitoring data and 80+ documents provided by KIX team
- **Online surveys:** answered by 120 stakeholders
  - 11 (out of 12) responses from global grantees
  - 109 (out of ~340) responses from national delegations from 46 countries (out of 70)
- **In-depth interviews:** interviews with 26 stakeholders (4 with GPE/IDRC senior leadership, 4 with regional hubs, 4 with the KIX implementation team, 7 with global grantees, and 7 with national delegations)
- **Early success story:** Findings and conclusions are complemented by an early success story exemplifying KIX operating at its best

## Main limitations & acknowledgements

### Main limitations:

**Self-reported data:** Most surveys and interviews asked stakeholders to report on their own outcomes or perceptions of their work. While this is useful to understand participants' real experiences and perceptions, it also generates biases

**Diversity:** The program has a varied set of participating countries, research projects, and grantees, making it difficult to find consistent patterns

**Comparable benchmarks:** It is challenging to benchmark KIX against other knowledge/capacity development programs given its design

### Acknowledgements:

**COVID-19:** The pandemic has significantly disrupted education systems and the organizations supporting them, including KIX. While the project has adapted, this is an extra component to consider

**Early stages:** Because hubs and global grants were launched recently (April 2020), many outcomes may occur even beyond the program's conclusion (2024)

\* For further methodological explanation of the evaluation approach, please refer to the Evaluation Annexes

## 2. FINDINGS

## To what extent do country partners find KIX useful?

Most country partners **find KIX activities and resources useful**. Almost all have engaged at least once, though levels of engagement vary. There are opportunities to address factors that hinder engagement such as connectivity issues, lack of in-person engagement, and language barriers.

### Strengths

- **All hub activities are highly rated** by country participants, with training and webinars considered useful by over 95% of survey respondents
- Over 65% of countries **scored at least moderate engagement** in the KIX country engagement rubric\*
- Both the number of events and the number of participants **have increased steadily** since Q1 2020
- Surveyed country representatives highlighted learning from experts (~69%) and peers (66%) as key motivations to engage with hub activities. Most participants use all hub resources consistently, with webinar recordings being **the most-used resource**
- Interviewed participants are **knowledgeable of the resources** that the hub produces
- There is already **uptake of global grant research** by policymakers in at least 8 countries (out of 44)
- **There are clear success stories** in terms of participation: Some participants have engaged considerably with activities and resources, are attending many events, score high in the engagement rubric, and have taken up research results and used them in their countries

*"[KIX activities are] really useful and relevant to our context. [As part of a national alliance], I know what we want and what is needed in our education system."*

Interviewee from national delegation

### Room for improvement

- Although a voluntary 100% participation rate was never expected, some national delegations **have limited voluntary participation**: 11 countries have joined 2 events on average, and 3 countries have not participated in any events to date and do not seem to be engaging with KIX.
- Connectivity issues, challenging timing of activities, and a general lack of time due other responsibilities are shown as **barriers for over 90% of respondents**
- **Language barriers are very relevant** to some countries, making them feel excluded from engaging in activities and using resources
- Multiple interviewees identified a disconnection between global grantees and hubs as a limitation; this could be slowing down the uptake of research results by country
- 1 in 3 national delegation survey respondents indicated that they have not participated in one-on-one meetings with their hub staff, which can be an impediment for better aligning hub activities with country priorities
- Some interviewed participants who have engaged in activities indicated that they would prefer in-person engagement and more practical case studies of best practices centered on their priorities

\* The KIX engagement rubric levels are: no engagement, low engagement, moderate engagement, high engagement and high engagement with high ownership. Sources: National Delegations Mid Term Evaluation Survey, National Delegations Mid Term Evaluation Interviews, Global Grantees Mid Term Evaluation Interviews, KIX country engagement and ownership rubric, KIX MEL data (1. Events and 4. Uptake sheets), Hubs Annual Interim Reports.



# To what extent do country partners find KIX useful?

## Rationale and evidence

To assess the usefulness of KIX efforts, we analyzed the knowledge generation and mobilization components in terms of relevance and accessibility

**Knowledge mobilization** includes *activities*, which are live events, and *resources*, which are static assets. To gauge usefulness, we used 2 key parameters: reported usefulness (country representatives *said* they were useful) and incidence of use (country representatives attended activities or engaged with resources)

- **Activities:** 95% of 100+ survey participants *perceived* webinars and trainings as useful; in practice, webinars are the most used activity, at 47%. Participants reported “Learn from experts what works to improve education in my country” (69%) and “Know what my peers in other countries are doing” (66%) as the main drivers of engagement with KIX activities.
  - Both the number of events and the number of participants have risen steadily since Q1 2020
  - Barriers to participation were connectivity (34%), timing of events (33%), lack of bandwidth (28%), and language (from interviews)
- **Resources:** Over 94% of survey participants who engaged with resources *perceived* the peer learning and exchange portal, webinar recordings, and applied research products as useful; over 85% of participants considered all other resources useful
  - Webinar recordings are the resource most participants engage with: 91% of those surveyed reported engaging at least once, and 38% reported engaging at least frequently
- **From attendance to engagement:** While attendance is an indicator that helps us understand some aspects of engagement, it lacks nuances. We used multiple sources to ask participants how they are connecting with the program
  - Participants we interviewed are knowledgeable about the resources their hub produces
  - Country participants (54% of survey respondents) indicate that they have a better understanding of evidence-based solutions to education challenges in their country and feel more equipped to propose improvements (51% of survey respondents)

**Knowledge generation** includes 12 projects in 44 countries, where global consortia leverage local staff to lead engagements with country representatives – usually in ministries of education – who don’t necessarily engage with KIX hubs

- **Value:** Interviewed global grantees expressed that their projects were designed in consultation with the countries where they are undertaking research
- **Uptake:** There is already uptake of global grant research by policymakers in at least 8 countries
- **Integration:** Interviewees mentioned that uptake of global grant research is still limited, due, among other factors, to siloed activity between global grantees and hubs

*“The KIX demand-driven approach ensures that the content, activities, and resources are relevant and engaging, tuned to the needs of countries”*

–Senior leadership interviewee

## How aligned are KIX efforts with country partners' priorities?

Knowledge generation and mobilization activities are **thematically aligned with countries' identified priorities** at a high level. Adaptations to COVID are noted successes. Moving forward, putting knowledge into practice will require more specificity and ongoing national-level feedback.

### Strengths

- Processes to identify regional priorities informed KIX hubs' programming and the development of regional research grants, increasing knowledge exchange and research strategies' alignment with countries' demands. **This was well-received by country representatives** as suggested by interviews with national delegations
- Capacity strengthening** of education national experts and stakeholders was reported as **the most effective type of support** by surveyed country representatives, followed by direct financial resources
- Adopting COVID-19 adaptations for education systems as a topic for activities, as well as launching the COVID-19 observatory, **helped KIX adapt to an unforeseen shift in priorities**, as suggested by the steadily growing engagement with KIX activities during the pandemic
- Interviews with global research grantees suggest that long-standing relationships with government officials and other local stakeholders was **critical in securing buy-in** for their projects – at least 2 innovations have been incorporated in national education sector plans

*"The governments where we currently work have asked us to be there, so we are definitely aligned with the government's education agenda"*

–Global grant interviewee

### Room for improvement

- The national-level priorities survey is currently **not standardized** (e.g., theme categories and topics), and a **process for continuous learning would be beneficial** to ensure an evolving understanding of priorities
- The **lack of members of ministries of education and senior leadership from government** in hub activities may affect both how much mobilized knowledge is put into practice and how much the government's education agenda is reflected in identified national priorities
- The **connection between knowledge generation and exchange** is not clearly defined and affects how **aligned country representatives are** on what they want from KIX
- There is a **lack of awareness of channels for country representatives** to propose their own activities or agendas to KIX hubs; as KIX moves towards having countries take more ownership of knowledge mobilization, providing a clearer space for building strategies to achieve this collaboratively could be a potential way to achieve this

*"We recommend empowering countries to have the autonomy to propose and implement KIX activities"*  
*"The program was useful and we wish for more practices to be offered on the areas of country priorities"*

–Country representative survey responses



# How aligned are KIX efforts with country partners' priorities?

## Rationale and evidence

### KIX activities and country priorities are thematically well-aligned

- The two most broadly identified priorities across KIX-participating countries were “teaching and learning” and “equity and inclusion.” These were also **the two most important areas** for the hub knowledge exchange activities and the main research topics for global grants
- This alignment was possible because during the first year, the 4 hubs focused on **developing relationships with country representatives** and **investigating their priorities – which directly informed the calls for regional research grants**
- Long-standing relationships between GPE and member countries also **informed the original design of KIX**, focusing on supporting national education systems in 6 thematic priorities that guided the development of calls for the global research projects and the establishment of the 4 regional hubs
- Global research consortia’s previous relationships with governments in their countries of interest also **helped ensure their project’s alignment with countries’ agendas** – 100% of consortia have country offices or operate with local partners for implementation
- The steady increase in engagement with hub activities and early demonstrations of research uptake in 8 countries (see question 1) despite the pandemic suggest that **country representatives have prioritized KIX engagements** over other competing demands

### In practice, KIX priorities can be broad with overlap among them, and would benefit from narrowing their focus and better connecting mechanisms to increase engagement

- Interviews with national delegations suggest there are more specific national-level needs (e.g., how to develop a specific learning assessment tool) that may not be reflected in broader regional priorities or may fall under multiple categories
- The priority identification could benefit from a standardized (and potentially decentralized) approach that identifies needs in a structured way (see illustrative example in the annex, slide 46)
- The different audiences that engage with different components of KIX (see question 1) can also affect the perception of alignment and what the priorities should be, particularly between members representing different institutions – 1/4 of surveyed country representatives were not aware of KIX’s global grants projects

6 KIX thematic priorities	Country partner priorities*			
	LAC	AFR 21	AFR 19	EAP
Teaching and learning	✓	✓	✓	✓
Equity and inclusion	✓	✓	✓	
Inadequate Education Management and Information Systems (EMIS)				✓
Learning assessments			✓	
Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)			✓	
Gender inequality	✓			

“When you try to address too many topics and do too many things, you end up not focusing on anything in the appropriate depth”

–Interviewee from a global grant consortia

## How aligned are KIX efforts with GPE and IDRC's strategies?

KIX innovation research and knowledge exchange efforts are **aligned to GPE and IDRC's newly approved strategies**, and there are opportunities for the partnership to achieve more by formalizing how KIX's can inform GPE's systems transformation efforts.

### Strengths

- Even though KIX was designed before the development of GPE and IDRC's newly approved strategies, the **program's activities and goals align well** with IDRC and GPE's strategies and objectives
- KIX **supports GPE** by generating evidence on scaling innovations that work in improving education systems, and building capacity in GPE country partners
- KIX **helps IDRC amplify its impact** in the global education policy arena through innovation research and knowledge exchange
- Consistent communication between GPE and IDRC and adaptative management allows for **effective governance**

*"KIX is the operating and intellectual engine of GPE, so [GPE 2025 strategy] is fully aligned"*  
-Senior leadership interviewee

*"We do need to better articulate how other IDRC programs can inform KIX in how to deal with country-level challenges"*  
-Senior leadership interviewee

### Room for improvement

- **KIX is a relatively small program inside GPE**, meant to help meet global public goods gaps in education by developing and sharing innovative solutions to help developing countries build stronger education systems. Yet, there is no mechanism or connection between what KIX is doing and how GPE develops its systems transformation strategies or uses the rest of its funds. **KIX's leverage and impact can be expanded** by designing a strategy to embed its results and activities into GPE's transformation agenda
- Interviews with senior leadership and documents reviewed identified that IDRC and GPE's strong networks in country partners could be leveraged to help national delegations increase their impact. This would **help national delegations improve their networks**, increase their **influence**, and better **overcome local challenges**
- There is an opportunity to **engage other non-traditional actors** to further expand KIX's influence and reach in national education systems, in alignment with KIX design principles and IDRC objectives.

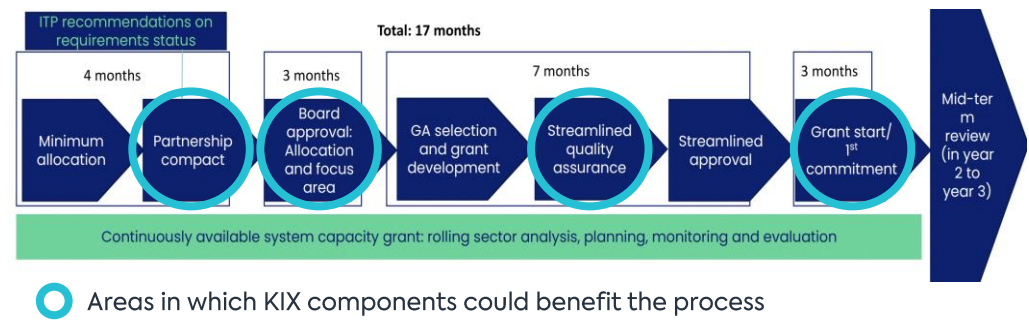
## How aligned are KIX efforts with GPE and IDRC's strategies?

### Rationale and evidence

KIX effectively implements the strategies of both organizations while adding value as a source of evidence and insight at the country level. A broader network – within parent organizations, among country partners, and potentially with private sector actors – could further expand and deepen KIX's impact.

- **GPE** is a multibillion-dollar partnership. At \$75M, KIX represents a relatively small and intentionally niche role:
  - **KIX is attuned to country members' needs** through its demand-driven approach; this, in turn, informs how GPE approaches its model moving forward, thus potentially increasing the alignment between GPE and country priorities (as discussed in the previous question)
  - **KIX serves as an evidence-gathering arm** to provide GPE with more insight on what works well with country partners
  - The perspective of all senior leaders interviewed is that the **KIX work is very much in line with the GPE's new operating model**
  - However, there are areas in **GPE's current operating model that would benefit from knowledge generated in KIX**. System transformation grants are the biggest funding mechanism that GPE has with country partners, and there are clear ways in which KIX could be embedded explicitly into its approval process
- From document review and interviews, we find that **KIX aligns well with IDRC's 2030 strategy**, both in its general core objectives and in its specified intended contributions to education and science
- Document reviews and interviews suggest that **KIX is a useful way for IDRC to amplify its impact in global education policy** by focusing on proven and promising strategies at scale
- **Co-governance** is working well, due to **consistent communication** between GPE and IDRC, as well as **adaptive management** from both parties

### GPE system transformation grants approval process



## To what extent, and in what ways, has KIX contributed to its intended immediate outcomes?

Even in the early stages of implementation, and during the pandemic, KIX is **producing outputs and achieving immediate outcomes**. There is room for increasing alignment around definitions of success and for improving the process of planning milestones, which would both help with accountability.

### Strengths

- KIX has **made progress in its 3 pathways for outcomes**: 80% of knowledge mobilization and 85% of knowledge generation milestones were reached, and over 50% of the 47 reported outcome cases are related to capacity-building and increasing awareness of country representatives and local education stakeholders
- While there were delays in many milestones during Year 1, **hubs and global grantees have picked up the pace during Year 2** both in knowledge generation and knowledge mobilization. The African hubs, which were lagging in terms of outputs in Year 1, picked up the pace considerably in Year 2
- When surveyed, **over 80% of global grantees value the resources that KIX offers as compared to other funding opportunities**
- **There is interest from country partners in using the tools that KIX provides. Research related to “teaching and learning” is the most highly valued** by country representatives, followed by learning assessment and data systems
- Surveyed country representatives indicate that they have a **better understanding of evidence-based solutions** to education challenges in their countries and feel more equipped to propose improvements – early demonstrations of capacity-building in practice

### Room for improvement

- **Almost all surveyed global grantees (91%) consider their projects delayed**, and there is no clear strategy for adjusting timelines, fieldwork strategies, or for how KIX’s overall work will adapt
- **Global grantees point out that there is no communication between the different projects teams**, making it hard for teams to learn what is working well and how to anticipate and mitigate challenges
- **Outputs and immediate outcomes do not have a definition that is clearly understood by KIX grantees** (hubs and researchers), which could be a barrier in understanding what is expected from them, as well as challenging to report on their progress
- While there is **progress towards capacity building efforts, the effects are not yet clear**, and can take time to come to fruition. Defining how to measure this at an individual level can be an effective strategy for communicating this desired outcome of the program
- While **KIX has a framework with milestones for outputs and immediate and intermediate outcomes** that can be assessed against MEL data, **it is unclear if it is used for accountability**. This makes it difficult to assess whether the program is at risk of not delivering intended results in a key area



# To what extent, and in what ways, has KIX contributed to its intended immediate outcomes?

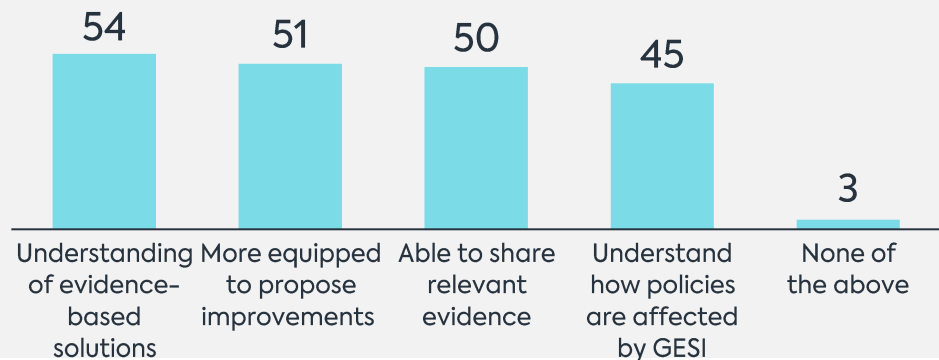
## Rationale and evidence

KIX is 2 years into a 5-year program – and those 2 years have been defined by a global pandemic. Despite the odds, **KIX has generated outputs and immediate outcomes**, even if with some delays.

- **Function and intent: Hubs have led the way in knowledge mobilization**, reaching 80% of output milestones, and **global grants have led the way in knowledge generation**, reaching 85% of output milestones despite the pandemic. KIX hubs and grantees have **47 reported outcome cases** – over 50% of which are **related to capacity-building** and increasing awareness of country representatives and local education stakeholders, in line with what would be expected by this stage of program implementation
- **Success factors:** The following conditions were associated with achieving immediate outcomes: country representatives are **highly engaged**, they **occupy relevant positions for decision-making** (or are close to those with decision-making power), and the research presented is **directly relevant to their area of work/expertise**; research projects and hubs benefit from long-standing relationships with government officials and local champions for increased buy-in with program activities
- **COVID-19 barriers:** Nearly all surveyed global grantees (91%) consider their projects delayed
- **Regional variation:** The Eastern Europe, Middle East and North Africa, Central Asia, Asia-Pacific (EAP) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) hubs led the way in terms of secondary knowledge products in Year 1, but Africa 21 has picked up the pace in Year 2, leading with 16 secondary knowledge products. The hubs overall achieved 75% of its targets regarding the number of secondary knowledge products in Year 1, but they are already at 75% for the Year 2 milestones with over two months left in the year.
- **From output to outcome:** Outputs center on KIX putting tools in place for country partners to be able to use them, while immediate outcomes focus on partners finding these tools useful, engaging with them voluntarily, and finding ways to use them in their context. Below are early indicators that KIX is on the path to achieve both goals:

- Country participants we interviewed are **knowledgeable about the resources their hub produces**
- 97 % of country participants surveyed indicate that they view KIX knowledge dissemination useful in some way: for example, 54% indicate that they **have a better understanding of evidence-based solutions to education challenges** in their country, and 51% feel more equipped to propose improvements
- However, the relationship between outputs and immediate outcomes **is not currently clear** for KIX grantees, both hubs and research projects

**How has knowledge dissemination generated change?**  
(% of national delegations survey responses)



## Is KIX being run in an efficient manner? If yes, in what ways? If no, what areas need improvement?

KIX is a trusted and responsible steward of resources; the **program runs efficiently** from both time and money standpoints.

### Strengths

- **All components of KIX** (hubs, global grants, regional grants, ROSIE, and observatory) **were rolled out successfully** with minor delays (due to COVID-19) and were within budget
- The operational efficiency of KIX in rolling out its grant processes is **recognized by global grantees**
- **All the first set of milestones were achieved**, and in some cases were greatly surpassed
- **In general, global grantees have effectively adapted to COVID-19**, using the first year of implementation to build relationships and transitioning to virtual activities whenever possible. Projects also used creative ways to continue implementation; for example, using virtual data collection strategies which allowed them to continue when in-person data collection was not possible
- **Online connectivity tools** enabled hubs to conduct more activities and reach more people

*“IDRC was able to develop the full program and roll it out almost without gaps and in record time, finding partners and establishing the structure we see today. It was very efficient”*

-Interviewee from KIX Implementation Team

### Room for improvement

- Potential differences in impact between activities are currently not captured - understand which **activities lead to greater impact** could help hubs focus their efforts
- Global grants did not have **sufficiently developed milestones for the entire grant period**, making it difficult to measure their real progress. Facilitating the reporting of **milestones for the complete duration** of regional hubs and grantees' work (beyond the implementation phases) would support accountability and provide critical information on the program's overall progress for decision-making
- Given the continuous nature of the pandemic, understanding what works well in online engagements could lead to greater focus on **improved virtual engagement strategies**
- **Thinking creatively about additional support to global and regional grantees**, both with external experts and leveraging peer-learning could surface new ideas and allow KIX to act fast to course-correct when needed

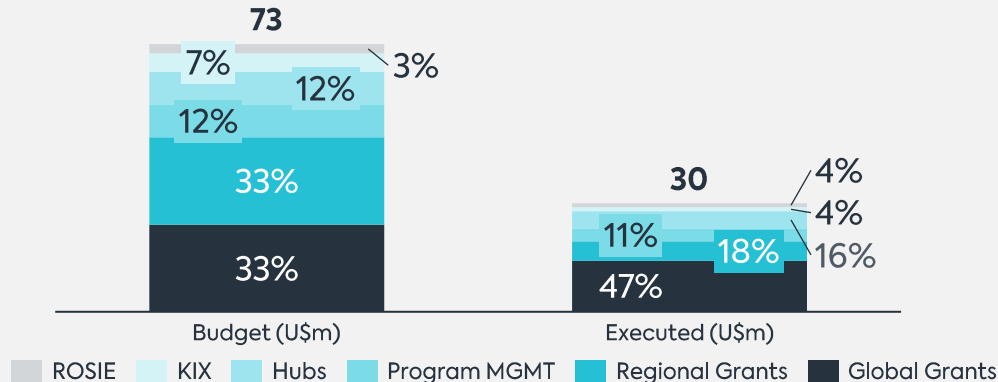
# Is KIX being run in an efficient manner? If yes, in what ways? If no, what areas need improvement?

## Rationale and evidence

Our analysis looks at both *implementation efficiency* and *financial efficiency* to examine whether KIX is on time and on budget.

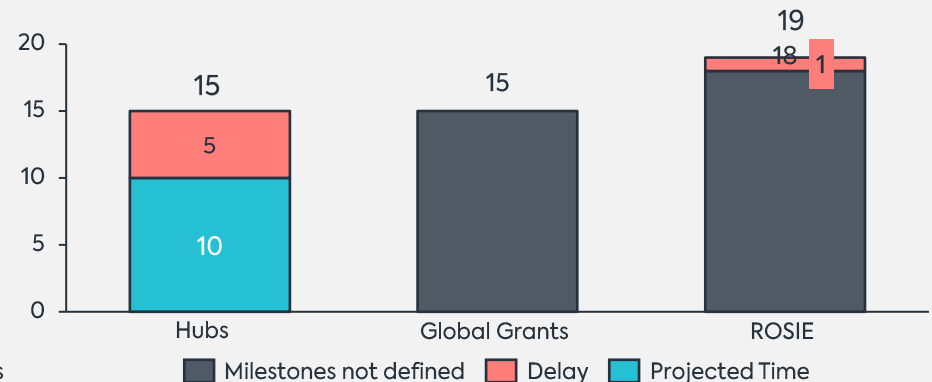
- Implementation efficiency: All major planned activities for the first 2 years have been completed with only minor delays caused by COVID-19**
  - Senior stakeholders agree this has been an efficient program, especially considering the groundwork required to launch efforts and the significant challenges presented by the global pandemic
  - The pandemic delayed the launch of regional hubs by 5 months (and ROSIE by 1 month)**, and planned inception meetings had to be conducted virtually; this slowed relationship building between hub staff and country representatives
  - Over **90% of global research grantees reported having delays** in scoping and fieldwork activities, but only 2 projects are significantly behind on implementation: 10/12 reported they will be able to implement all activities within the updated timeline
- Financial efficiency\*: KIX has made efficient use of its funding**
  - Under \$30M (40% of KIX's budget) has already been executed by the end of 2021**, with global grants accounting for half of the spending
  - All KIX components are producing outputs and organizing meetings in line with their budget:** the number of events organized, and knowledge products created are correlated with the budget of the component
  - KIX's administrative overhead is low at 11% of the program's budget.** This is substantially below similar research organization such as Universities, which are legally required to have administrative overheads below 26% in the USA.\*\*

KIX budget, total planned vs executed to date (Dec 2021)



Source: KIX Annual Report 2020-2021

Implementation time and delays (months)



Source: KIX Annual Report 2020-2021, KIX proposal

\*This analysis does not consider the value/money. \*\* In 1991, a 26 percent cap on administrative cost reimbursement was imposed on research universities after an investigation by Congress into how their indirect cost reimbursement was administered.

## To what extent has KIX developed strategies to adapt and test the scalability of innovations and to mobilize the generated evidence?

KIX research projects **focused on developing strategies for scaling impact**, but significant delays occurred because of COVID, which also affected the development of knowledge mobilization strategies. Resuming focus on knowledge mobilization is expected once projects further progress.

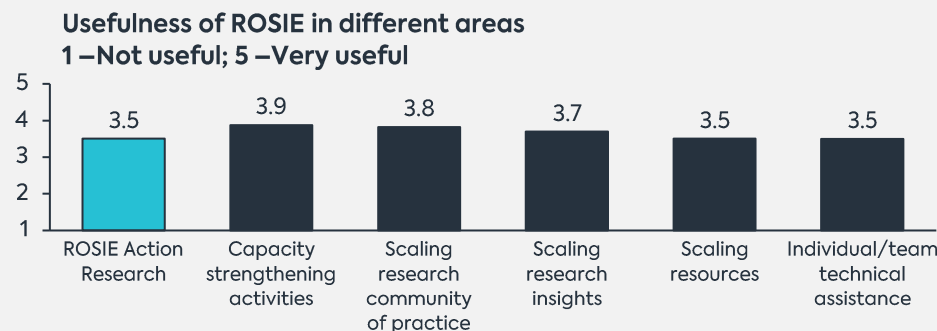
### Strengths

- **Most global grantees participated in ROSIE's Action Research** and have found it useful overall in supporting them to develop scaling strategies
- **ROSIE has developed multiple knowledge products:** 5 blog posts, 5 webinars, 3 workshops, and 2 meetings to build research teams' capacity for designing scaling strategies
- **Creative strategies for fieldwork could be replicated** to make up for the pandemic's effects on timelines
- Already established research **communities of practice have been places for organic knowledge exchange**
- **Grantees' knowledge mobilizing efforts have not been limited to hub activities**, as they have made progress in building communities of practice to exchange knowledge and lessons learned as they progress. Nevertheless, there are several positive demonstrations of mobilizing efforts through hubs.

*"There is a lot in KIX that is thematically-aligned, so there is potential for KIX to facilitate more knowledge sharing among thematically-aligned projects and activities"*  
– Interviewee from global grant

### Room for improvement

- **Research projects have faced challenges in developing strategies for scaling and mobilizing knowledge**, as well as remote fieldwork, given the ongoing pandemic, and would benefit from increased, targeted support
- Research projects teams **expressed uncertainty around what their role should be** in the KIX exchange mechanism (e.g., how should they engage with hubs as the main knowledge mobilization actor?)
- **ROSIE's strategy with research projects lacks structure and specificity.** Not all global grantees are part of it, and it currently does not offer focused solutions for challenges coming from the pandemic (e.g., remote fieldwork, relationship building and buy-in strategies)
- **Scaling and mobilizing indicators are a bit complex and process-oriented**



Source: DA Survey with KIX global grantees



## To what extent has KIX developed strategies to adapt and test the scalability of innovations and to mobilize the generated evidence?

### Rationale and evidence

All global research projects focus on scaling a proven innovation in the education field, but COVID-19 has significantly affected scaling and knowledge mobilization efforts, with over 90% of projects reporting delays

- Research fieldwork was significantly affected by the pandemic, having either to be paused or conducted remotely; this slowed the development of relationships with local teams and other stakeholders
- Nevertheless, global grantees have reported stakeholder mapping and facilitating engagement of key stakeholders as the most developed strategies so far; this is in line with the trajectory expected in IDRC's Scaling Science best practices
- **60% of projects are involved in ROSIE** – which has developed practical frameworks, tools, and best practices to support the scaling process – and 2/3 of participating projects consider it useful in that capacity

Global grantees scaling strategies development progress



**Due to the early stage of the research projects, developing strategies for mobilization has not been a priority for global grantees, and the central KIX team could play a larger role in developing structures to support this activity at the right time**

- Interviewed grantees consider it **too early to start thinking about knowledge mobilization**: “We need to focus on developing the content to have anything worth sharing” (–Global grant consortia interviewee)
- At least **2 projects have developed communities of practice** that engage researchers and other education stakeholders in the countries where they are present to share best practices in developing similar projects; this strategy could be used by other research grantees
- Global grantees have typically found regional hubs to be between **somewhat useful** and **very useful** at mobilizing knowledge, but have expressed uncertainty around the roles and responsibilities of each party in knowledge sharing
- The current set of milestones being tracked are specific and focused on processes (e.g., # of new primary research outputs presenting new knowledge). Evaluating the progress made in scaling impact and mobilizing knowledge would benefit from simpler and more outcome-oriented milestones

## To what extent have stakeholders incorporated Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) considerations into their efforts?

Both KIX mechanisms have **incorporated GESI as a theme** and recognized its importance. Expanding GESI's scope to include other aspects of inclusion in activities and refining success indicators can ensure the program thrives in this area.

### Strengths

- **The EAP hub's approach** to identifying what countries consider inclusion and adapting activities to support participation **increased engagement**
- **KIX mechanisms have increased the share of women participating in events**, but it remains below parity. While most KIX components are close to parity, Africa 21 and the COVID observatory are lagging
- **Female participation in output creation was high**. However, there were also large differences between KIX components
- **All interviewees from countries and research projects expressed gender balance** as a consistent theme in KIX efforts

*"A big part of having an engaging webinar is having interpreters who can translate it to local languages. It creates a safe space for people to voice their ideas and actually participate, instead of it being a monologue - and not a lot of people want to only be spoken at, they want to dialogue"*

–Interviewee from a National Delegation

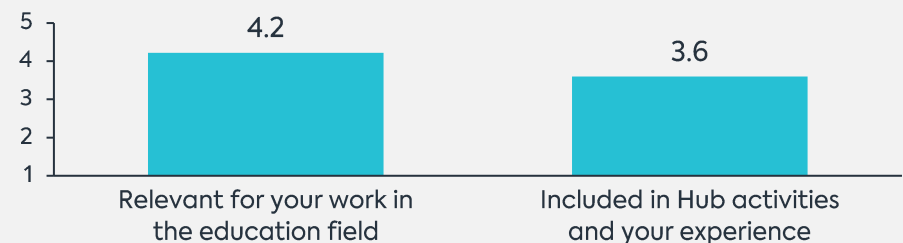
Method note: This is not a GESI-focused evaluation, it did not employ a Gender Transformative or Feminist methodology. It examined secondary data and elicited stakeholder perspectives on GESI in relation to evaluation questions

### Room for improvement

- **The current working definition of GESI tends to focus on gender equality** over the social inclusion components.
- **Pathways to connect GESI considerations with regional priorities are not clearly articulated** in GESI-related documents (e.g., concept note).
- **GESI indicators lack specificity**, which makes it difficult to measure the progress in achieving GESI-related goals.
- **The GESI-related data collected** (e.g., % female attendants or % GESI-related events) is **focused on processes rather than outcomes**.
- Despite already having strong internal capacities and resources, there is an **opportunity to provide research grantees with more support to include GESI as a cross-cutting theme**. >90% of research grantees ranked the support given to ensure their project is focused on GESI as "moderate"

#### Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Considerations

1 – Not relevant, 5 – Extremely relevant



Survey with global grantees

# To what extent have stakeholders incorporated GESI considerations into their efforts?

## Rationale and evidence

**KIX hubs and global grants recognize the importance of GESI considerations as a cross-cutting issue and have made progress at incorporating GESI considerations into their activities**

- >80% of global grantees consider that GESI is “very relevant” or “extremely relevant” to their work, and **have increasingly incorporated GESI as a theme** in knowledge products and events
- 50% of KIX events were somewhat or strongly related to GESI, but there are significant differences in the share of GESI-related outputs among stakeholders, particularly among regional hubs
- Female participation has increased 6 percentage points since the beginning of KIX, from 18% in March 2021 to 24% in December 2021. Female participation almost achieved parity in August 2021, with a female participation rate of 48%
- In terms of representation, the average female participation in KIX events was 28%, going as high as 31% for global grantee events and as low as 7% for observatory events

*“The project conducted a GESI workshop for the field research teams to ensure they have a common understanding of key gender concepts related to GESI in education, and to ensure that researchers use a GESI lens throughout all research processes”*  
–KIX team, Program Officer (RQ+ form)

**Country representatives recognize that GESI is an important aspect of KIX efforts and have suggested there are other aspects of inclusion that also need consideration, such as disabilities and inequality**

- >55% of surveyed national delegation members felt that GESI considerations have been either “considerably” or “completely included” in KIX events. Interviews with country representatives and grantees have suggested that other aspects of inclusion are as relevant as gender and might be missing from the conversation, such as educating children with disabilities and how to bridge the rural-urban divide
- Grantees on average have adequately considered gender inclusion in most phases of the research cycle as reported in the RQ+ forms. Grantees highlighted different strategies such as disaggregating the data collected by gender or workshops for field research team to ensure their research includes a gender lens. The results of these efforts are in line with high number of project outputs with female participation and including GESI considerations (as reported in the output log).
- Participants also value GESI not only as a topic but also as a practice: *“Inclusion is not only about addressing the topic but making activities themselves inclusive. The EAP hub has ensured we felt included by offering events in more languages and raising subjects that matter to different regions”* – Interviewee from national delegation

**Regional hubs and global grants partners could benefit from having greater expert support to inform how gender and other aspects of inclusion can be incorporated in their activities**

## What are the drivers and barriers to achieving immediate outcomes? 8

The level of engagement with KIX activities and network value of national delegations are **clear factors driving KIX's earlier documented outcomes**. Barriers seem to arise when national delegation members do not feel knowledge shared through KIX can be applied to their countries, either because activities and resources are not connected to their areas, or because they do not see the potential impact due to their position in the education systems.

### Strengths

- **All policy-oriented outcome cases** (such as development of policies or sharing of policy ideas) had at least **one policymaker involved**
- When a country's national delegation **representative** has **decision-making power** or is close to those with it, there is **greater likelihood of a successful outcome case**
- **>65%** of surveyed country participants consider that their **hub adapted very well or extremely well to COVID-19**, which has allowed for outcomes to materialize in a very challenging context
- The **COVID-19 observatory seems to have been a great adaptation** based on country demands. Around 57% of African country representatives reported that they have benefitted a considerable amount from it, and there are already over 20 outputs and relevant events.
- Expanding the scope of activities to include **adaptations to COVID-19 in education** systems in global research projects allowed at least **5 projects** to adapt to changing country priorities and continue pursuing research that will be relevant until pandemic effects have dissipated
- **Adjusting data collection strategies** (operating remotely in the case of JPAL) **helped research** grants navigate the suspension of travel to continue pursuing research

### Room for improvement

- **National delegation representatives**, especially those from government, **do not come from the same areas in each country**. Interviews highlighted this as an issue that could impact engagement, as some of their priorities are not being addressed by hub activities. A more targeted approach to creating "knowledge groups" inside (and even across) hubs could help increase engagement
- **Getting national delegation representatives closer to the decision-making** stakeholders in relevant KIX areas would likely increase KIX's impact considerably. This could be done through targeted outreach leveraging GPE and IDRC networks, and a more embedded system between GPE funding and KIX results
- In interviews, **national delegation representatives indicated** that an important aspect missing for their success is **workshops directed at other education stakeholders in their countries**. KIX's impact would increase if hubs have an active mandate to create such spaces for knowledge sharing inside countries



# What are the drivers and barriers to achieving immediate outcomes? 8

## Rationale and evidence

While KIX is still in its earlier stages, **analyzing common factors associated with the generation of outputs and outcomes indicates what is working to drive success**. At the same time, by looking at pain points and cases where markers of progress are not being reached, stakeholders have identified aspects that are making it harder for them to achieve success.

For example, the following elements are associated with positive outcome cases:

- Some national delegation representatives mention they (and other members of their countries' education systems) engage more with hub activities when the subject is relevant to their expertise or current work
- National delegations where **representatives have power** or proximity to decision-making, or have a member who acts as a connecting point with policy dialogue within local government, and are engaging heavily, are more **likely to be a successful outcome case**
- The **program's fast adaptation to COVID-19 was helpful** for engagement with hubs and increasing their impact through an online model. Grantees valued the ability to change priorities and to adjust data collection strategies
- **Leveraging long-standing relationships with government officials and local champions** was reported by all interviewed research grantees as an effective way to ensure buy-in and connect research outputs with the ongoing policy dialogue in countries

On the other hand, the following elements have been identified as barriers:

- For some countries in the Africa-21 hub, the **formal process of naming national delegations delayed the start** of their participation, and this process does not seem to lead to an increase in results (outputs or outcomes) associated with those countries. This suggests a less prescriptive approach, more focused on roles and less on formal positions, could be more effective
- **Heterogeneity among national delegation participants makes it difficult to maintain engagement** as not all subjects relate to their areas
- **National delegation participants are sometimes too far away from decision-making** (e.g., while all countries have a government representative in some countries only non-government representatives are engaging). Academics can strengthen and promote the narrative around policy improvements, but only policymakers can put it into practice
- **Political unrest** – exemplified by the pause in engagement of Afghanistan's delegation, and the need to shift pilots in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia – can stall participation and progress, as mentioned by several interviewed stakeholders from the KIX implementation team, research grantees, hub staff, and national delegations

# How well has KIX adapted its operations, particularly in response to the pandemic?

KIX leveraged its adaptive management strategy to identify and directly respond to the pandemic's effects. Moving forward, it could expand and refine practices like the observatory and online activities.

## Strengths

- **The adaptive strategy allowed the KIX team to respond to country partner concerns and their most pressing needs** - over 60% of country representatives and 50% of global grantees believe the hubs adapted very well or extremely well to the pandemic
- **The Opportunities & Adaptive Management Support fund enabled the creation of a one-stop-shop for over 40 countries in 2 Africa hubs** with strategies to meet education needs during the COVID-19 pandemic and inform future crisis preparedness. ~60% of surveyed countries report having benefitted, benefitted a lot, or benefitted extensively from this initiative
- **Despite shifting priorities** and the suspension of in-person meetings, **hubs and global grantees** have conducted over 250 events, **engaging over 11,000 participants** by shifting to virtual settings
- **All grantees have replaced in-person meetings with virtual alternatives**, and over 40% have expanded their research scope to include pandemic-related topics to better align their work with the needs of target countries

## Room for improvement

- Despite its strengths, **~40% of eligible countries reported in surveys having benefitted a little or not at all from the COVID-19 observatory**, suggesting increased outreach and more customized products could increase its effectiveness
- **All interviewed global grantees mentioned that greater clarity around no-cost extensions** for research projects would support planning and ensure effective evidence from scalable research could be achieved
- **Interviews with country representatives suggest increased support for online events** (e.g., translations in more languages, events offered at different times, and more focused online activities) would increase engagement and satisfaction with activities

*“The learning cycles were extremely engaging and showed us what is possible to achieve in online learning – not only as learners, but also as educators having to do that in our daily jobs”*

–Interviewee from national delegation

# How well has KIX adapted its operations, particularly in response to the pandemic?

## Rationale and evidence

### The pandemic affected the program in 3 main ways:

- **A shift in country partner priorities** that affected country representatives' engagement levels and shifted the needs of education systems
- **Suspension of in-person activities** that prevented essential inception meetings and slowed down relationship building between country representatives and hubs and researchers
- **Impact on research fieldwork:** global grants' scoping and data collection had to be delayed (7/12 projects) or become completely virtual (5/12 projects)

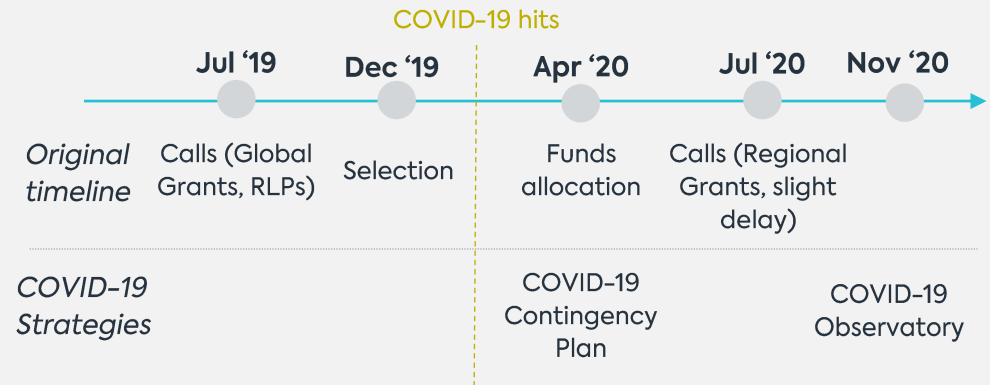
### KIX stakeholders adjusted operations to address these effects:

- **The implementation of a COVID-19 contingency plan** moved all activities online and supported the reallocation of hub funds towards online translations
- **Increased flexibility and support for grantees** accommodated global grant adjustments in strategy, and focused on making hub activities more effective by reducing the number of participants and including COVID-19 as a topic
- **The COVID-19 observatory launched** as a repository of best practices in adapting education systems to the pandemic for countries in both Africa hubs; it was funded by the Opportunities & Adaptive Management Support Fund
- **Global grantees** shifted to virtual activities, adjusted research plans to focus on relationship building with local stakeholders and mapping conditions for adapting innovations locally, and expanded project scopes to include COVID-19 modifications
- **Regional hubs** shifted from long conferences to short meetings, reallocated travel budgets to online event translations to reach more countries, and adopted COVID-19 impact and mitigation strategies as a key theme

### KIX participants perceive that the program has adapted well and could benefit from resuming in-person activities as soon as allowed, making virtual activities more engaging, and having greater clarity around potential no-cost extensions for research projects

- Over 60% of country representatives and 50% of global grantees believe KIX adapted very or extremely well to the pandemic
- Interviews with country representatives suggest that increased support for online events (e.g., translations in more languages, events offered at different times, and more focused online activities) would increase engagement and satisfaction with activities
- All interviewed global grantees mentioned greater clarity around no-cost extensions for research projects would support planning and ensure that effective evidence from scalable research could be achieved

COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic when global research projects and regional hubs were set to launch



# Early Success Story: The Maldives





# The Maldives has been engaging with the EAP hub since Mar '20, looking for peer-learning opportunities and best practices

## Context

The Maldives



- The Republic of Maldives is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean with 550K residents, predominantly Muslim
- With high enrollment ratios for both men and women in primary education,<sup>1</sup> the country has seen a decline in pre-primary education enrollment, particularly for boys<sup>2</sup>
- The Ministry of Education recently found that 40% percent of students in both fourth and seventh grades failed to pass their exams,<sup>3</sup> growing concern around quality of education
- In-depth, disaggregated education system data is largely unavailable,<sup>4</sup> and the country faces challenges with internal capacity to use data for decision-making

To address these challenges, the country has identified the following priorities for strengthening its education system:

- Develop internal capacity and infrastructure to use Data Systems for improved education
- Invest in the Early Childhood Care and Education system, including infrastructure
- Improve teaching quality, particularly teacher capacity building and better education facilities

Country representatives established a KIX steering committee, led by members of national universities, which has been engaging with different EAP hub activities since its launch in March 2020

<sup>1</sup>97 and 99%, respectively. <sup>2</sup>From 97% in 2016 to under 83% in 2019. <sup>3</sup>[World Bank, 2019](http://www.worldbank.org). <sup>4</sup>Country priorities assessment report by NORRAG (EAP hub lead).

## Why KIX?

Representatives were motivated to engage with KIX in order to:

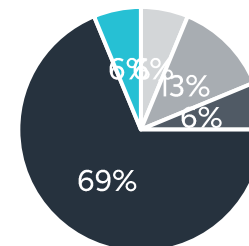
- Inform their own work as academics in building the national narrative around what works in improving education
- Learn from peers in other countries with similar challenges, and from experts in the field
- Share their learnings and research with peers, as well as with other national experts and stakeholders (the broader national education ecosystem)

## How representatives have engaged

- Local KIX leaders have mobilized over 1,800 participants to engage in 16 different activities based on their interest and need, with 22% of them being women
- A core team participated in 2 professional development courses (learning cycles) on using geospatial data and developing 21st-century skills, in which participants engaged in practical activities under the mentoring of a local field expert
- A member was featured on a [podcast](#) about teacher training and the importance of persevering local language instruction

**Preferred activities have been focused on capacity building;** >90% of surveyed representatives consider the activities very or extremely useful

- Meeting
- Professional Development Course
- Training
- Webinar
- Workshop



Maldives is considered “highly engaged” under KIX’s engagement rubric

# KIX has built capacity of country representatives and enabled them to innovate in equity strategies for primary education

## What happened: positioning for impact

- The national delegation structured participation based on relevance of subjects, and has made an effort to increase the participation of policymakers in different activities
- Access to multiple levels of live and static resources that complement each other allowed participants to engage in different levels, depending on their need and availability
  - Live activities like learning cycles increased awareness and built participants' capacity on evidence-based solutions, enabling them to generate new ideas, as highlighted below
  - Static resources like videos and podcasts allowed different members to engage with content asynchronously and brought members to the same page in terms of content
  - Being speakers in podcasts enabled participants to contribute to the narrative around what education improvements are needed in their country
- Participants also highly valued access to a broader network of peers, which allowed them to learn from others' experiences and share their own ideas

### Outcome-level highlight

The ongoing engagement led country representatives to collaborate with 10 other countries in their region and put forward a grant proposal on investigating how English as a medium of instruction affects female economic development in the region – a locally-led innovation highly relevant to countries with multiple official languages

## The road ahead: maximizing impact

1. **Clarity around roles and responsibilities of key national delegation members**
  - While still encouraging ad-hoc participation of different stakeholders, clarifying roles and expectations of lead participants can help them better perform in their roles
  - Providing direct support to KIX coordinators and allowing for peer learning can help surface best practices and new ideas on increasing KIX impact
2. **Engaging the right level of stakeholders**
  - Leveraging GPE's long-standing relationships with governments to ensure decision-makers are more engaged can help move knowledge and capacity building closer to policy practice
  - Identifying points for engaging frontline stakeholders (e.g., teachers) could gather valuable input and build capacity
3. **Bridging the gap between knowledge and practice**
  - Supporting representatives through more targeted technical assistance for select countries could help them use and adapt evidence-based ideas shared in hub activities to their local contexts
  - Supporting the development of locally-led research through funding opportunities could surface emerging expertise and enable knowledge to be generated locally

“Knowledge only has value when it's spread out, and that's what KIX is about. Countries like us need a lot of conversations for people to start thinking about [ideas for improving education]. We've been waiting for an opportunity like KIX for a long time”



–Dr. Aminath Shafiya Adam, Assistant Professor at Maldives National University and KIX National Steering Committee member

# 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

## **We identified six opportunities for implementation that can strengthen KIX and expand its impact**

### **Leverage and target efforts to maximize potential impact**

- 1 Leverage GPE's system transformations work in partner countries** by establishing ways in which the KIX program informs its designs
- 2 Strengthen links between the main components of the program**, so there is a clearer path for applying learnings from research
- 3 Provide differentiated support to countries according to engagement levels** in the hubs to better support highly committed delegations
- 4 Identify key roles to participate in the regional hubs** from each country

### **Streamline some aspects of the program to increase effectiveness**

- 5 Simplify communication to motivate, engage, and align different stakeholders**; state KIX's vision, purpose, and value proposition in simpler ways that can help program stakeholders understand, share, and prioritize
- 6 Refine the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) model** to maximize its use for meaningful buy-in and continuous improvement

# Leverage GPE's system transformations work in partner countries

1

## Rationale behind the recommendation

- **GPE has tremendous leverage to create positive change** in focus countries' education systems. For the 2021-2025 period, it aims to invest at least \$5B (with \$4B already secured)
- **GPE is committed to evidence-based policies and change at the systems-level. KIX works in the same spirit and could help to inform how those transformations can look like. KIX can become “the intellectual engine of GPE\*”** by informing, advising, and supporting policy/implementation changes through innovation and evidence. As a relatively small program within GPE (\$78M of a \$5B investment, or ~1.5% of the total GPE investment), KIX can find ways to amplify its influence and increase the levers it has for change
- **The new Operating Model, and more specifically, the system transformation and system capacity efforts, provide a great opportunity for creating that leverage.** Both follow the same demand-driven approach as KIX: system transformation efforts support the implementation of reforms that countries are pursuing, and system capacity efforts provide technical assistance to ensure their success. Both are leveraged by the national funding systems and loans from multilateral organizations (e.g., World Bank)

*“KIX is a part of GPE, and it feels like a separate (entity). We don't see how we can be a part of the strategic local plans that GPE is supporting”*

-Global grantee

## The recommendation in practice

- **Put formal mechanisms in place** to help ensure an effective implementation of the practice
- **There are at least three entry points in the system transformation and system capacity grants process:**
  1. Country representatives can provide formal feedback to the **partnership compact**
  2. Country representatives (with support of the KIX team) can review the system transformation/capacity grants and **suggest measures for them**, aligning the objectives of both programs. Demands from regional hubs and findings from KIX research may also inform the strategic capability modality of the secretariat
  3. It may make sense to highlight potential links to discussions at the regional hubs or to findings from KIX research in the context of countries' Joint Sector Reviews, which evaluate progress on country plans. These KIX assets may help provide insights and actions that should then happen at the country level

## Potential benefits from the recommendation

- **KIX will increase its influence by having formal ways to input in GPE's system transformation/capacity agenda.** Discussions on the hubs and evidence generated in regional and global grants will have a clearer path to accelerate impact
- **KIX and the system transformation/capacity efforts will be programmatically aligned by similar measures,** reinforcing and incentivizing cooperation
- **The country representative role will gain more importance and** can encourage senior public servants closer to the design and operationalization of education policies to participate in KIX. More influential public servants in KIX will increase the likelihood of affecting policy change, acting as a virtuous cycle for the program and the countries

\*Quote from an interviewee on the Leadership Team

# Strengthen links between the main components of the program

2

## Rationale behind the recommendation

- KIX is composed of the knowledge generation and exchange mechanisms. **The connections between these two mechanisms are not clear for all implementing partners**
- **There are no formal links between the two mechanisms.** We have not come across any strategies that explicitly describe how the learning exchange should leverage the research grants and vice versa
- **Both global grantees and hubs expressed that the connections among them are not clear.** Out of 7 interviewed global grantees, 1 mentioned that hubs are confusing and 3 indicated that their engagement with the hub was limited or null

*“Hubs can be a bit confusing. We don’t really understand all parts of KIX and who is doing what”*

- Interviewee from global grant

*“Regional grants have a greater bottom-up approach than global grants, as they engage more with local stakeholders, and are more aligned with the KIX spirit ”*

-Regional hub representative

## The recommendation in practice

- **Clarify collaboration between hubs and grantees.** Define explicit links, touching points, and clear responsibilities, and align incentives by including some common indicators of success. Examples of collaboration include: i) knowledge dissemination from grantees through hubs; ii) engagement of grantees with national delegations to facilitate research and leverage local knowledge; and iii) using grantees to serve as the source of technical knowledge for hubs
- **Describe the processes through which such collaborations should take place,** e.g., through meetings, webinars, and communication products
- **Validate the initial proposal with grantees** and continue refining the strategy by bringing together KIX participants

## Potential benefits from the recommendation

- **Fostering a demand-driven approach** will allow global and regional grantees to better tailor their research projects to local needs, leading to more relevant products for national delegations
- **Facilitating synergies** and regularly bringing together grantees may result in unexpected synergies
- **Leveraging local knowledge** could be achieved by giving local experts visibility and a platform to collaborate on what it would take to scale locally produced content



# Provide differentiated support to countries according to engagement levels

3

## Rationale behind the recommendation

- **Participation in the KIX program varies across countries.** There is a natural division of two main cohorts: 7 countries are highly committed (participating in over 20 events) and 11 countries are mildly committed (participating in an average of 2 events). Remaining countries lie somewhere in between (or lower).
- **KIX could maximize the potential of highly engaged countries by providing additional support,** differentiating its offering according to demand. While the objective to generate and disseminate knowledge to enhance education systems remains, deep dives to committed countries will leverage their enthusiasm and buy-in to create success cases that will prove the concept, build a clearer path for impact, and create momentum.
- There is **already demand for more tailored support** to help countries putting ideas and knowledge into practice, focusing on adapting innovations to local realities and helping officials overcome challenges in implementation

*“KIX needs to start thinking about the next step in the learning process - how to help countries apply the knowledge they are receiving; we have already received requests for technical assistance to support countries in adopting shared policies”*

–Regional hub representative

## The recommendation in practice

- **Define additional support for countries with high levels of participation,** including advising on how to adopt the research and/or hub ideas, while **targeting the most valued and impactful activities for those who prefer lighter engagement.** Consider a modular program with different offerings (e.g., planning, comms, stakeholder management) that would help translate one specific idea to action in the context of a specific country. The purpose is to accompany the country delegation and provide the tools they need to move forward. The intensity level and duration of the model can be piloted and refined
- **Highlight that each country is eligible for every kind of support if they reach a participation threshold.** This way, the model is inclusive, with countries self-selecting by their desired level of engagement
- **Regularly assess and refine the strategies of engagement** using demand for the different kinds of support, evidence of progress, and path to impact as the criteria

## Potential benefits from the recommendation

- **Increased participation.** Tailored strategies might help convince countries that have shown little interest in the past and to see a more compelling value proposition
- **Increased likelihood of success.** Providing additional support to highly enthusiastic countries will give them a stronger case and leverage their engagement
- **Develop lessons learned.** By moving to the latter stages of adoption in certain countries first, KIX can gain understanding about how to support knowledge dissemination and policy implementation
- **Create momentum.** Having strong cases of adoption among early adopter or high-engagement countries will help generate impact stories, which can increase visibility and momentum

# Identify key roles to participate in the regional hubs

4

## Rationale behind the recommendation

- **KIX follows a demand-driven approach.** This enables the program to generate and disseminate knowledge that is relevant for national delegations engaged with the program
- **The closer the national delegations are to system centers and the stronger their influence, the more likely the ideas will be adopted.** Identifying key characteristics, including links with policy dialogue and decision-making, as well as the conditions of success for her/his engagement, can help 1) target who the ideal members of the delegations should be, and 2) refine outreach and engagement efforts
- **Cooperation frameworks might have helped to engage specific countries.** Interviewees stated that having countries sign formal procedures regulating engagement led to more stable participation in some Africa 21 countries

*“The formal procedures with AFR21 countries delayed initial participation but prove to be very effective to make participation higher and more stable”*

-KIX implementation team member

## The recommendation in practice

- **Map stakeholders and define institutional roles to target.** This could be done through a mix of online research and a validation process with national delegations, executed through a single, quick digital survey
- **Develop a strategy to reach the selected people.** Leverage the contact network of national delegations to define how to reach these stakeholders; use the communications strategy (see following slide) to lead with the right value proposition
- **Create voluntary cooperation frameworks with country governments.** By engaging key government functionaries and offering voluntary cooperation frameworks, KIX could try to replicate the success in other countries without adding burden
- Understanding that participation in KIX is voluntary, we see an opportunity for **defining a champion within government** that could act not only as a liaison between participants and decision-makers, but also as an ambassador to drive engagement

## Potential benefits from the recommendation

- **Streamline ongoing efforts and increase the likelihood of achieving actual research uptake.** Targeting stakeholders with greater influence over the education system may help accomplish this.
- **Achieve greater stability.** Cooperation frameworks could make KIX’s efforts more sustainable, especially when navigating political transitions
- **Deepen the demand-driven approach.** Including the right people enhances the possibility of accurately aligning with countries’ education needs



# Simplify communication to motivate, engage, and align different stakeholders

## Rationale behind the recommendation

- **The program has a broad scope and complex dynamics.** It involves knowledge generation and dissemination as well as capacity strengthening activities. It engages 70 countries through 4 regional hubs, and 34 global and regional grants
- **Acknowledging this complexity, the communication strategy could be refined to transmit a clearer and more straightforward message overall, as well as a clear value proposition for different user segments.** Three interviewees stated one of their main concerns for the mid-term evaluation was a lack of understanding of the program by the evaluators; the assumption that an external evaluator may have difficulty fully understanding the program suggests policymakers and other stakeholders might, too
- **Individual touchpoints are strong, but the connections between touchpoints and users are unclear.** Any given user may have a positive and valuable experience at any given KIX touchpoint; however, maximizing impact means connecting the dots – moving individuals along the user journey, and connecting users within an ecosystem to move the whole thing forward

*“Country reps in general don’t really understand KIX and all of its parts”*

–Regional hub representative

## The recommendation in practice

- **Clearly define who are the program’s end-users**, broken out by persona (early, mid, and late adopters); role (decision-makers, influencers, implementers); where they are relative to uptake; and objective in participating;
- **Develop a clear value proposition for each stakeholder segment**, connected to their place in the ToC and overall user journey
- **Define clear audience insights and messages**, understanding how best to meet stakeholders where they are, and linking users’ needs to systemic demands
- **Refine a common “elevator speech” to be disseminated within and outside the organization**, building on the value proposition for each stakeholder and driving buy-in for increased engagement
- **Integrate communications and MEL in a 2-way loop**, ensuring stakeholders understand the connection between MEL indicators and the shared purpose of the program, while also elevating stories of success, lessons learned, and other output from MEL work in a clear and compelling story of progress

## Potential benefits from the recommendation

- **A shared narrative** builds cohesion and clarity within a wide network of actors, users, and beneficiaries so they can successfully navigate the complexity of the program while returning to the shared values and goals
- **Enthusiasm and momentum**, building on early wins to bring in new champions and expand reach and impact

# Refine the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) model

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## Rationale behind the recommendation

- **The newly approved IDRC and GEP strategies** underline the importance of MEL as a key tool for program governance. The KIX MEL strategy has made great progress in this regard; including a) collecting comprehensive information from across implementation; b) encouraging participation of different stakeholders; and c) incorporating GESI values. As the program progresses, **there is room to build on these successes by:**
  - **Reducing administrative burden:** The current strategy includes 10+ documents and 40+ indicators. This exceeds grantees' capacity to thoughtfully collect and report data, introducing the risk of "box checking" – especially when grantees are already strapped for time. Recognizing the diminishing return of too many indicators, the MEL strategy could prioritize those that the grantees can thoughtfully collect, report, and reflect upon, while giving KIX, GPE, and IDRC the information they need to govern the program effectively.
  - **Supporting collective sense-making:** The current MEL strategy generates a wealth of information, but has room to: (a) invite a wider audience to make sense of the information; and (b) translate findings into a narrative that supports reflection, adaptation, and momentum
  - **Mitigating bias:** Over 75% of indicators are reported by KIX grantees, potentially leading to a self-reporting bias
  - **Shifting to outcomes:** Ultimate outcomes have yet to be defined, and work to develop more meaningful outcome measures will add value for KIX and its participants

*"The MEL update is a very challenging and burdensome tool; it's not clear how this can be useful for us and help their (KIX team) own project management"*

–Interviewee, global grant

## The recommendation in practice

- **Prioritize the most meaningful indicators**, moving from 40+ indicators to fewer than 20, and selecting the top 5 indicators for different audiences across the program components. Focus on the indicators that are most meaningful for those users and are intuitively connected to the purpose of the program
- **Standardize a set of indicators** to support benchmarking within the program, and help direct support where it's needed most
- **Identify new audiences and use cases for MEL data.** Discuss with leadership, grantees, and hubs how the MEL system can be helpful for them – e.g., a simple standardized one-pager to track project's main progress, two-way data sharing processes with grantees/hubs
- **Define outcomes indicators:** Even if this will be assessed in the final evaluation, it is good practice to define at least some success indicators ex-ante to avoid choosing indicators with good performance (i.e., cherry-picking) and galvanize efforts towards a shared goal
- **Include more externally validated indicators**, such as website statistics for the COVID-19 live tracker; explore ways of including outcome indicators and counterfactuals/benchmarks

## Potential benefits from the recommendation

- **Less "busy work,"** generating more thoughtful collection, reporting, and reflection from regional hubs and global and other grantees
- **More precise and practical evaluations**, focusing on outcomes and objective output indicators
- **Stronger fit-for-purpose**, translating data and insights into shared opportunities for sense-making among different stakeholders. This way, MEL can better support decision-making and continuous improvement, and can potentially generate more opportunities to elevate achievements, accelerate learning, and generate a shared sense of purpose across the KIX diaspora

