

Students work together to prepare for a “bush cook” (cooking outside) as part of the Mashramani national holiday celebrations at a primary school, Region 9, Guyana.
GPE/Kelley Lynch

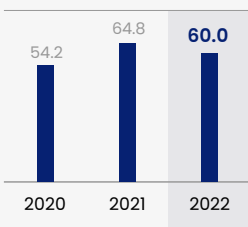
CHAPTER 2

STRENGTHENING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM: GENDER-RESPONSIVE PLANNING AND COORDINATED ACTION AND FINANCING

RESULTS AT A GLANCE*

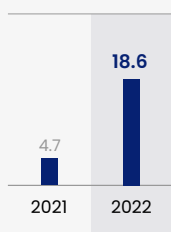
4.i.

60% of partner countries increased their government expenditure on education or their government expenditure reached 20% or above.



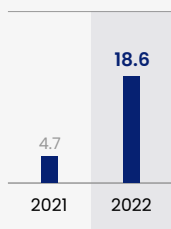
4.ii.

4.ii.a. 18.6% of partner countries assessed equity, efficiency and volume of domestic finance for education.



5.ii.

5.ii.a. 18.6% of partner countries assessed gender-responsive planning and monitoring.



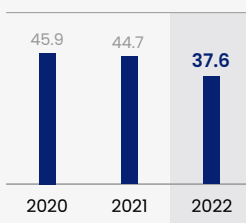
5.ii.

5.ii.c. 100% of partner countries where gender-responsive planning and monitoring was assessed had a legislative framework assuring the right to education for all children.



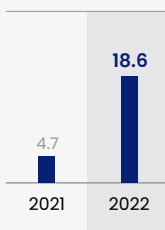
8.i.

8.i.a. 37.6% of partner countries reported at least 10 out of 12 key international education indicators to UIS.

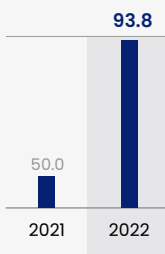


8.ii.

8.ii.a. 18.6% of partner countries assessed the availability and use of data and evidence.

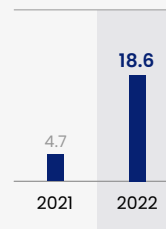


8.ii.c. Among partner countries that assessed the availability and use of data and evidence, 93.8% reported key education statistics disaggregated by children with disabilities.

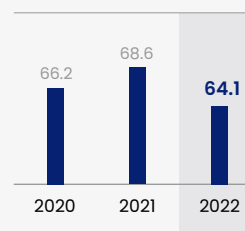


8.iii.

8.iii.a. 18.6% of partner countries assessed sector coordination.

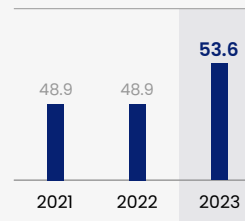


8.iii.c. 64.1% of local education groups included civil society organizations and teacher associations.



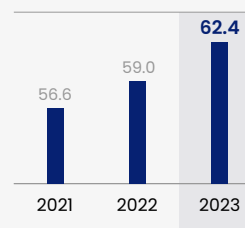
12.i.

53.6% of partner countries aligned GPE grant funding to national systems.



12.ii.

62.4% of GPE grant funding used harmonized funding modalities.



Notes

*Indicators with no data for the current reporting year are not shown here. Indicators 9ii, 10ii and 13ii are also not shown because this is the first reporting year.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- As of December 2022, 16 out of 86 GPE partner countries and states, following the enabling factor analysis by the local education group, had their status regarding the enabling factors independently assessed by the Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP). An additional 37 countries and states completed the ITAP assessment by mid-November 2023.
- The ITAP assessment of the enabling factors reveals that domestic financing is among the most pressing challenges facing the education sector in partner countries. For 12 out of 16 partner countries, the ITAP assessments assigned a high priority to equity, efficiency and volume of domestic financing. Five countries suggested domestic financing-related triggers for the system transformation grant top-up in their partnership compacts.
- The ITAP assessment assigned a high-priority rating to the data and evidence enabling factor in seven partner countries, and to the gender-responsive planning and monitoring enabling factor in four partner countries. It assigned a high priority to sector coordination in only three countries. Overall, the ITAP flagged gender inequality as one of the cross-cutting issues in all enabling factor areas.
- All 16 partner countries where gender-responsive planning and monitoring were assessed have a legislative framework guaranteeing the right to education for all children.
- Data reporting to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) continued to decline. In 2022, 37.6 percent (32 out of 85) of partner countries reported at least 10 out of 12 key outcomes, down from 44.7 percent in 2021. Key educational data on children with disabilities were collected in 15 out of the 16 partner countries that completed an ITAP assessment by December 2022.
- While the number of local education groups that included a civil society or teacher organization remained stable, the proportion of local education groups with both civil society and teacher organization representation decreased from 68.6 percent in 2021 to 64.1 percent in 2022, mainly because six new partner countries joined the partnership. Some of the new partner countries did not have civil society and/or teacher organizations represented in their local education groups. Among local education groups, 96.2 percent included a civil society organization, and 65.4 percent included a teachers association.
- The proportion of partner countries that achieved the 20 percent benchmark or increased their education expenditure declined by 7 percentage points in 2022 to 60 percent. This decline can be partly attributed to the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on government finance.

INTRODUCTION

GPE's strategy states that transforming education systems is crucial to accelerating progress in access to education and learning outcomes. Gender-responsive sector planning, data availability and use, effective sector coordination and domestic education financing are among the key enablers of education system transformation. GPE 2025 aims to support transformation in education by strengthening gender-responsive planning and policy development (country-level objective 1), mobilizing coordinated action and financing (country-level objective 2) and strengthening partner countries' capacity to adapt, learn, implement and drive results at scale (country-level objective 3). This chapter discusses GPE's work and performance with respect to country-level objectives 1 and 2. Chapter 3 reports on the performance with respect to the third country-level objective.

This chapter discusses partner countries' overall progress in data availability and reporting to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), sector coordination and domestic financing. The GPE 2025 operating model requires countries to undertake an analysis of the four interlinked enabling factors as one of the steps to access some of the GPE grants. An Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP) assesses this analysis to help partner countries identify the key barriers to education system transformation. The chapter presents a summary of the findings from the ITAP assessment in the partner countries that have gone through the enabling factor analysis. It also discusses the countries' plans to address some of the high-priority issues identified in the partnership compacts, with support from GPE 2025 grants. Gender equality is considered a cross-cutting area throughout the analysis of all four enabling factors.

As of December 2022, 16 partner countries and states had undertaken enabling factor analyses and are included in the results framework sample: Burkina Faso, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guyana, Kenya, Nepal, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Tanzania (Mainland), Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda and Zimbabwe. [Table 2.1](#) shows the priority levels assigned for each of the enabling factors for these countries. Thirty-seven additional countries and states completed their enabling factor analysis by mid-November 2023, while 33 countries have finalized their compacts.

2.1. GENDER-RESPONSIVE SECTOR PLANNING, POLICY AND MONITORING

(Indicators 5ii and 9ii)

A key objective of the GPE 2025 strategic plan is to support partner countries in strengthening their gender-responsive planning and policy development (country-level objective 1). This support entails helping countries systematically identify and address the barriers to education for all through the design and implementation of gender-responsive sector plans and policies, including their monitoring. The GPE 2025 results framework monitors the extent to which partner countries leverage the GPE 2025 operating model to strengthen gender-responsive sector planning and policy. Indicator 5iia measures the proportion of partner countries where gender-responsive planning and monitoring are assessed as part of the compact development process.

Gender-responsive sector planning and monitoring were assessed in all 16 partner countries (including seven partner countries affected by fragility and conflict, or PCFCs) that went through the ITAP assessment by December 2022. These assessments show that gender-responsive sector planning and monitoring is a high-priority area in four countries, a medium-priority area in 11 countries and a low-priority area in one country.²⁷

²⁷ Priority levels: "Low: The enabling factor area could benefit from minor tweaks to accelerate progress in one or more of the country's top policy outcomes. Medium: Achieving progress in one or more of the country's policy outcomes will be significantly delayed unless issues in the enabling factor area are addressed. High: Achieving progress in one or more of the country's policy outcomes is deemed impossible or extremely unlikely unless significant reforms are undertaken in the enabling factor area. The ministry(ies) of education and/or development partners are either not actively working in this enabling factor area, or engagement is insufficient to make meaningful improvements." Global Partnership for Education (GPE), *Independent Technical Advisory Panel (ITAP) Guidelines and Report Template*, (Washington, DC: GPE, 2022), <https://assets.globalpartnership.org/s3fs-public/document/file/2022-08-GPE-ITAP-guidelines.pdf?VersionId=Ln23Vowb8Xn0d2elzpl8fRiaja3flnG6>.

TABLE 2.1.**Enabling factors analysis with priority levels**

Enabling factors	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority
Gender-responsive sector planning and monitoring	Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Tanzania (Mainland)	Cambodia, Ethiopia, Guyana, Kenya, Nepal, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda, Zimbabwe	Senegal
Data and evidence	Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Uganda	Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Guyana, Rwanda, Tanzania (Mainland), Tanzania (Zanzibar)	
Sector coordination	Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Kenya	Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Nepal, Rwanda, Senegal, Tajikistan, Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda	Nepal, Senegal, Zimbabwe
Volume, equity and efficiency of domestic public expenditure on education	Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Tanzania (Mainland), Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uganda, Zimbabwe	El Salvador, Guyana, Kenya, Nepal	Cambodia, Guyana, Sierra Leone, Tanzania (Mainland), Zimbabwe

A review of the ITAP assessments reveals that, despite strong commitments, partner countries continue to face challenges that prevent them from turning ambitious and well-intentioned educational aspirations into reality. These challenges include issues of coordination in planning between central and local government entities, limited gender-responsive monitoring mechanisms and incoherence between the governments' ambitions and their efforts to finance the implementation of education sector plans.

Several partner countries struggle to establish clear and coherent systems for coordination across relevant actors, such as provincial and local education agencies and other government ministries, to carry out national goals. Many of these regional and local actors lack the capacity to plan and monitor education program progress. For example, in El Salvador, weak institutional capacity over time has led to a lack of coordination at the school level; many initiatives collide and create saturation without translating ambitious national policies into concrete outcomes. In Somalia, weak sector coordination across many partners, including communities, negatively affects operationalization of the sector plan. In Zimbabwe, the nature and extent of interministerial cooperation and coordination between the Ministry's Head Office and its decentralized structures continue to pose challenges in an institutional setting already faced with constraints.

In terms of monitoring practices, many of the partner countries analyzed have embarked on establishing and executing regular, in-depth and inclusive monitoring processes for the education sector. Nevertheless, barriers still prevent these countries from ensuring sufficient tracking of the progress of education plans and from taking those plans forward. A recurrent challenge for effective monitoring is the lack of timely access to reliable data. For instance, in Kenya, the limited data published beyond the 2018 education sector analysis make it impossible to assess progress against key performance indicators. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Zanzibar, the availability of a sound administrative system capable of delivering timely and reliable data is a major challenge for sector monitoring. Data are not always disaggregated by gender, which poses a barrier to gender-responsive monitoring of the education sector plan. Even fewer disaggregate by both gender and disability or other characteristics such as refugee status.

The lack of collaborative and inclusive forums for openly discussing and critiquing progress, such as midsector or joint sector reviews, poses a common roadblock to effective course correction. Senegal did not conduct a joint sector review in recent years in part because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as concerns about the timeliness and accessibility of data and evidence. The ITAP noted that Guyana has not yet conducted a joint sector review. In some countries where

such forums exist, such as in Rwanda, resulting recommendations are not further considered or implemented.²⁸

Nearly all 16 countries have gaps in funding for their education plans. For example, in Sierra Leone, even the most optimistic scenario in the simulation model predicts a funding gap of 37 percent for its education plan. The education sector plan in Rwanda offers three scenarios, each of which projects a funding gap of 24 percent, 16 percent or 13 percent. Uganda's education sector plan displays a modest financing gap of 9 percent, which may be an underestimation. Some countries struggle to align their planning and budgeting processes, leading to budget allocations that do not match the needs of the education sector. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo has a highly centralized and top-down budgeting process, and education planning does not significantly inform budget preparation.

Despite the recent efforts to close the gender gap in education, gender disparities persist in many countries. The ITAP assessments note that social, economic and cultural barriers to inclusive education—such as household poverty, disability, abuse and long distances to school—remain a challenge for girls. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, school distance and girls' household responsibilities negatively affect their school performance. In Sierra Leone, the interaction of region, gender and socioeconomic status results in poor girls from rural areas being the most disadvantaged. Lack of appropriate school infrastructure for girls also presents a major barrier affecting their educational outcomes. In Tajikistan, girls' inadequate access to sanitation facilities and water supply leads to lower attendance. The ITAP assessments noted a lack of focus on the barriers that disproportionately affect males.

Partner countries have proposed various interventions in their partnership compacts to improve gender-responsive sector planning. Some countries plan to establish more effective mechanisms to improve the coordination between local and central government entities in planning and monitoring. In Burkina Faso, activities would be developed to strengthen the capacity of local entities to adapt the planning and monitoring tools to their contexts. Tajikistan plans to support the planning and analytical capacities at subnational and

school levels by establishing and supporting a new coordination unit, developing a midterm education action plan and conducting annual joint sector reviews to improve sector planning.

Producing and using gender-disaggregated data and strengthening the systems in place to monitor the implementation of education sector plans are other interventions proposed in partnership compacts to address the barriers to gender-responsive sector planning and monitoring. El Salvador aims to revise its education management information system (EMIS) modules to guarantee that the system incorporates data reflecting a gender perspective. The Democratic Republic of Congo aims to support the strategic and operational planning and regular sector monitoring in support of teacher policy by developing, disseminating and implementing in 2024 a teacher policy that integrates gender. Kenya plans to put in place a framework for joint monitoring of policy implementation at the national, county and school levels.

To help close the learning gap between girls and boys, some partner countries plan to design targeted interventions for girls. Kenya plans for enhanced use of gender-responsive pedagogy, effective implementation of policies that address gender inequality and strategies to address gender-based violence due to COVID-19 disruptions. Sierra Leone is developing the Radical Inclusion Policy to create an inclusive learning environment for girls—especially pregnant girls.

Having a legislative framework guaranteeing access to education for all children can promote inclusion and help reduce gender inequality in partner countries.²⁹ Indicator 5iic tracks the proportion of countries with a legislative framework assuring the right to education for all children in partner countries where gender-responsive planning and monitoring are assessed. All 16 partner countries (seven of which are PCFCs) where gender-responsive planning and monitoring were assessed have a legislative framework guaranteeing the right to education for children of all genders.

GPE also continues to expand its work on gender equality and has undertaken several initiatives to promote gender equality in partner countries (box 2.1).

28 Joint sector reviews can provide education stakeholders with an effective platform to improve sector dialogue and coordination. For instance, the joint sector reviews in Nepal allowed the partners to coordinate their actions to address the challenges emerging as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (see *GPE Results Report 2021*, page 71 <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/docs/results-report-2021/en/2021-10-GPE-Results-Report-2021-v2.pdf>).

29 E. Unterhalter et al., "Interventions to Enhance Girls' Education and Gender Equality," *Education Rigorous Literature Review* (London: Department for International Development, 2014), [https://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Portals/0/PDF%20reviews%20and%20summaries/Girls%20education%202014%20Unterhalter%20report.pdf?ver=2015-12-08-165815-117#:~:text=Effective%20interventions%20are%20associated%20with,pedagogical%20practices%20for%20schools%20and;UNESCO,Global Education Monitoring Report – Gender Report: A New Generation: 25 Years of Efforts for Gender Equality in Education \(Paris: UNESCO, 2020\), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374514/PDF/374514eng.pdf.multi](https://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Portals/0/PDF%20reviews%20and%20summaries/Girls%20education%202014%20Unterhalter%20report.pdf?ver=2015-12-08-165815-117#:~:text=Effective%20interventions%20are%20associated%20with,pedagogical%20practices%20for%20schools%20and;UNESCO,Global Education Monitoring Report – Gender Report: A New Generation: 25 Years of Efforts for Gender Equality in Education (Paris: UNESCO, 2020), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374514/PDF/374514eng.pdf.multi)

BOX 2.1. An update on gender equality in GPE 2025

Gender equality is a central feature of the extension of both Education out Loud and the GPE Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) initiatives. KIX's key priorities include developing and sharing evidence on gender equality in education, to ground GPE's work in evidence and learning. Within the GPE Secretariat, a Gender Hub has been established to ensure a cross-cutting approach to gender equality. The hub brings together members of all the teams across the GPE Secretariat to ensure that gender is integrated across all teams' work.

Following consultations across the partnership, a new paper—"Going Further Together: A Partnership Approach to Gender Equality"—was published.^a The paper aims to clarify how GPE plans to meet the high-level commitment to gender equality set out in GPE 2025. This includes identifying key entry points at country and global levels and roles and responsibilities of all actors/agencies in the partnership. The paper clarifies GPE's use of the term "gender hardwiring" as an intentional, accountable approach to embedding gender equality across all GPE systems and processes.

a. Global Partnership for Education (GPE), "Going Further Together: A Partnership Approach to Gender Equality," (Washington, DC: GPE, September 2023), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/going-further-together-partnership-approach-gender-equality>.

One objective of GPE's system capacity grants is to strengthen partner countries' capacity for gender-responsive planning and monitoring. Indicator 9ii measures the proportion of system capacity grants where activities under the gender-responsive planning and monitoring financing window (first financing window) are on track. A total of nine system capacity grants using this financing window have submitted progress reports as of June 30, 2023.³⁰ Of these nine grants, eight (or nearly 88.9 percent) were on track in 2023. In PCFCs, four out of five grants (or 80 percent) were on track.

GPE also continues to support partner countries to deliver on their commitments to gender equality and girls' education through its implementation grants, discussed in detail in chapter 3. Out of 84 active implementation grants in 2023, 66 grants included a component on

gender equality. Overall, GPE allocated \$185.8 million in grant financing (10 percent of grant financing³¹) to gender equality. Grant activities that mainstreamed gender equality included education facilities and infrastructure that improve access for boys and girls (\$42.5 million); gender-responsive curriculum and teaching (\$41.7 million); activities that addressed issues of early marriage, pregnancy and gender-responsive health and hygiene (\$23.5 million); monetary and nonmonetary incentives to attract and retain boys and girls in school (\$18.6 million); building organizational capacity to enhance gender responsiveness (\$15.4 million); activities addressing school-related gender-based violence (\$13.4 million); community engagement for gender-responsive education (\$7.5 million) and empowerment and life skills for women (\$3.2 million).

30 All grants due to submit either a progress or a completion report (if applicable) by June 30, 2023, did so.

31 The amount and the proportion allocated to gender equality does not fully encompass the grant support to gender equality because one activity can benefit multiple priority areas, in which case the cost of the activity is split across those priority areas, as per the methodology for this data (see appendix D). Please also see chapter 3 for the number and the proportion of the grants mainstreaming gender equality in one or more activities.

2.2. DATA AND EVIDENCE

(Indicators 8 and 13)

Transforming the education system requires the design and implementation of evidence-based policies informed by quality data. Supporting data availability is thus a core aspect of GPE's strategy. Indicator 8i monitors the availability of key education data in partner countries and whether these data are reported to UIS.

Partner countries consistently face challenges with data availability and reporting to UIS. Indicator 8i shows a decline since 2019 in the proportion of partner countries reporting to UIS at least 10 out of 12 key outcomes, service delivery and financing indicators (figure 2.1). In 2022, 37.6 percent (32 out of 85) of GPE partner countries and 22.2 percent of PCFCs (8 out of 36) reported key data to UIS. This proportion reflects an overall 8.3-percentage-point decline (8.4 percentage points in PCFCs) from 2020. The lack of available data may be one reason for limited data reporting to UIS; however, in many cases, country-level data may exist but not be timely reported to UIS for various reasons.³² Overall, fewer countries report data on service delivery indicators (teacher-related data), financing indicators (particularly the share of education

in government spending) and indicators derived from household surveys than on the other indicators.³³

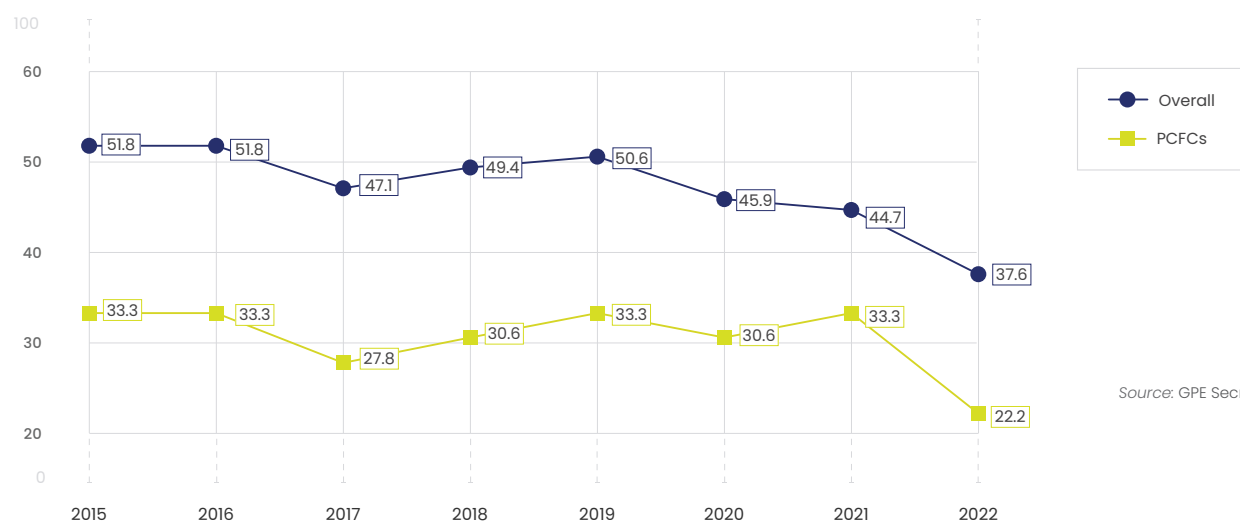
The enabling factors analysis allows partner countries to investigate the key barriers to data availability and use. Indicator 8iia monitors the proportion of partner countries where local education groups analyzed, and the ITAP assessed, the availability and use of data. The data and evidence enabling factor was assessed in all 16 partner countries that initiated the development of a partnership compact by December 2022. It was assigned a high priority in seven countries, a medium priority in six countries and a low priority in three countries (see table 2.1).

The analysis reveals that a root cause of the lack of quality data is the weakness of statistical systems—illustrated by their limited capacity to collect, process and analyze data at the national and subnational levels (box 2.2). The staff involved in data collection lack the necessary training, skills and experience to undertake effective data collection and analysis. For example, in Somalia, the staff in charge of data collection have limited capacity to apply data-gathering procedures at the school level and to ensure quality supervision of data collection at the district and state levels.

FIGURE 2.1.

Partner countries face challenges in reporting key data to UIS.

Proportion of partner countries reporting at least 10 out 12 key indicators to UIS (percent)



Source: GPE Secretariat.

³² An upcoming blog post by GPE and UIS will discuss the reasons countries may not report existent data.

³³ Delays in data reporting may have also contributed to the decline in the proportion of countries reporting key data to UIS. For instance, according to the March 2022 UIS data release, 38.2 percent of GPE partner countries reported key data to UIS in 2021. The March 2023 UIS release, however, has the proportion of countries reporting key data to UIS in 2021 as 41.2 percent. Thus, some countries had a two-year delay in reporting their 2021 data.

The lack of quality population data, poor coordination among institutions involved in data collection and management, and political instability and insecurity in some regions are other challenges facing education data systems. In El Salvador, population data are estimates based on the 2007 census that did account for recent migration and forced mobility patterns. In Burkina Faso, insecurity prevents data collection in certain regions leading to gaps in education data. Overall, the ITAP findings concur with UNESCO analyses that found several key weaknesses in the data systems of developing countries: outdated EMIS technologies and inadequate scope and low levels of capacity for data use and analysis.³⁴

Partner countries have suggested various initiatives in their partnership compacts to face these data challenges. Whereas many of these initiatives aim at strengthening the capacity of partner countries to collect and analyze EMIS data, others target learning assessment systems. Zimbabwe's \$15 million system transformation grant top-up is tied to a successful redevelopment of a functional EMIS. Kenya intends to establish an integrated data management system and a culture of data utilization at all levels of the education system for effective decision-making. Tajikistan aims to modernize its EMIS, enhance the quality of statistical reporting and generate quality evidence to support the implementation of the priority reform proposed by the compact. Uganda proposes providing equipment and training to key stakeholders to implement a new EMIS policy that is expected to deliver comprehensive, timely and reliable data. Nepal would further strengthen its EMIS to inform planning and budgeting exercises at the local government level and would incorporate modules to collect learning data. El Salvador would implement a learning assessment framework in elementary and middle school for the areas of language, mathematics and socioemotional development.

Despite the challenges facing their statistical systems, 15 out of the partner countries that conducted the enabling factors analysis have data available on children with disabilities, including six out of seven PCFCs. The EMIS in the Democratic Republic of Congo does not currently collect data on children with disabilities but has a plan to revise the statistical questionnaires to collect such data in the future.

The third financing window of the system capacity grant aims to strengthen partner countries' capacity to adapt, learn, implement and drive results at scale by improving data availability and use.³⁵ Three system capacity grants approved through this financing window submitted progress reports. An examination of the progress reports from these grants shows that, in 2023, activities aiming to improve data availability and use were on track in Mauritania and Tanzania but were delayed in Papua New Guinea (Indicator 13ii). The system capacity grant in Papua New Guinea finances activities that mainly support the development of the partnership compact, including the production of statistical yearbooks and education sector analyses. Many of these activities were delayed for various reasons including changes in personnel at the Ministry of Education and difficulties updating EMIS and domestic financing data.

GPE active implementation grants allocated a total of \$80.05 million to activities aiming to improve data availability and use in 54 partner countries. These activities include EMIS strengthening (\$45.2 million), information technology equipment (\$12.6 million), school report cards (\$5.1 million), data disaggregation initiatives (\$4.1 million), data system decentralization (\$3.3 million), integration of various data sources (\$1 million) and other data-related activities (\$8.8 million). Chapter 3 discusses the effectiveness of GPE implementation grants.

³⁴ S. Yano et al., "Modernizing Education Management with EMIS: Building Back Stronger from the COVID-19 Pandemic," (IIEP UNESCO, Buenos Aires, 2022), https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000382825_eng.

³⁵ For more detailed information see Global Partnership for Education (GPE), "Guidelines: System Capacity Grant," (Washington, DC: GPE, August 2023), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/guidelines-system-capacity-grant>.



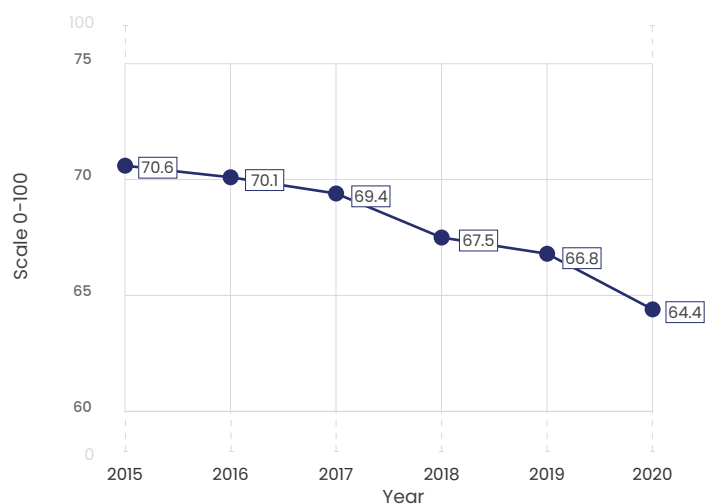
BOX 2.2. The overall capacity of the statistical systems in partner countries is declining

The overall quality of the statistical systems in partner countries has been declining since 2015. The World Bank's statistical capacity indicator assesses the strength of the statistical systems in countries. It is based on a diagnostic framework assessing three key dimensions of national statistical systems: data sources, methodology and periodicity and timeliness. The 6.2-percentage-point decline in the average value of this indicator for GPE partner countries between 2015 and 2020 indicates a general weakening of statistical systems.

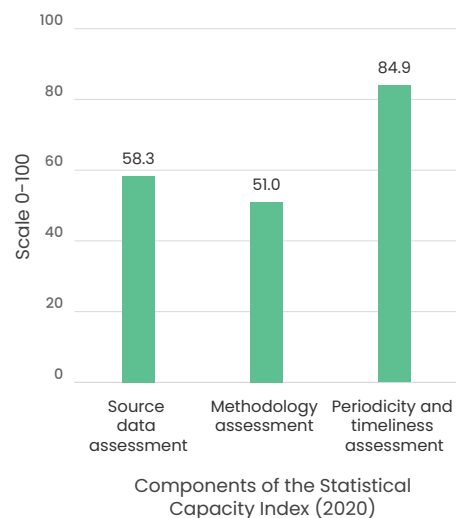
A breakdown of the statistical capacity indicator components shows that the methodology assessment component is associated with the lowest score, whereas the source data assessment component experienced the highest decline since 2015. These results indicate that partner countries mostly face challenges in adhering to internationally recommended standards and methods. In addition, their capacity to conduct data collection activities in line with internationally recommended periodicity has decreased since 2015. Building the capacity of administrative systems to conduct data collection activities that meet international standards is key to improving the availability of quality data in partner countries. A study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development found that statistical systems in developing countries are often under-resourced and understaffed, that traditional support to statistical capacity building is not fit for purpose and that country-led interventions appear to be more effective in strengthening data systems.^a

Statistical capacity has been declining in partner countries since 2015.

a) Overall statistical capacity assessment



b) Breakdown of the statistical capacity assessment by component



Source: World Development Indicators.

a. S. Badiie et al., "Rethinking Donor Support for Statistical Capacity Building," chapter 4 in *Development Co-operation Report 2017. Data for Development*, (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2017), <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/dcr-2017-9-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/dcr-2017-9-en>.

2.3. SECTOR COORDINATION AND TRANSFORMATIVE POLICY REFORMS

(Indicators 8iii, 10 and 12)

Another key objective of GPE 2025 is to support partner countries in strengthening their sector coordination (country-level objective 2). Strategies aimed at improving learning outcomes for all often involve a broad range of actors with diverse perspectives, priorities, approaches and needs. Coordinated action can help ensure that programming, resources and expertise align with country policy directives, reform efforts and priorities, and that they are used efficiently. Coordination can also focus on equity, gender equality and inclusion, such as through close engagement of representatives from underserved vulnerable and marginalized groups, because these actors dynamically contribute to education transformation processes.³⁶

The enabling factor analysis allows partner countries to critically examine their coordination practices at different levels, in different forms and across sectors to understand how mechanisms can best support and accelerate change in a priority reform area.³⁷

Indicator 8iiia measures the proportion of countries with ITAP assessment of the sector coordination enabling factor. As of December 2022, sector coordination was assessed in 16 out of the 86 partner countries (and in seven out of 36 PCFCs). Sector coordination was assessed as a high-priority area in three partner countries, as a medium-priority area in eight countries and as a low-priority area in five countries.

The ITAP assessments showed various challenges facing sector coordination in partner countries. One of the main challenges highlighted in countries is ineffective sector dialogue. This challenge exists—despite formal coordination mechanisms—because of the high number of partners operating on the ground, the irregularity of local education group meetings and the poor representation and engagement of certain local actors, among other issues.

In Ethiopia and Zanzibar, the ITAP assessment noted limited participation of local stakeholders—such as local

civil society organizations and teachers and parents associations—in coordination mechanisms. In Rwanda, despite the maintained frequency of local education group meetings, the deployment of aid remains fragmented because of the high number of partners and projects on the ground. In Sierra Leone, the interreligious council, which has significant responsibility for a substantial number of primary mission schools, does not have representation in the local education group. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Zanzibar, the irregularity of local education group meetings has been one of the main challenges to concerted meaningful dialogue. In Cambodia and Senegal, high transition costs emerge because of the large number of active partners.

Partner countries suggested interventions in their partnership compacts to address sector coordination, mainly by promoting coordinated financing and sector dialogue. Tajikistan plans on strengthening its coordinated financing mechanism by taking stock of the various sources of education sector financing and developing a resource mobilization plan. El Salvador plans for improved coordination of financing through the identification of clear roles among education stakeholders. Nepal plans to adapt its current approach to inclusive sector dialogue to remain fully aligned with the emerging federal structure, while also supporting continuous engagement and strengthening subnational mechanisms to allow stakeholders and responsible entities to engage in processes in a systematic way. Kenya plans on improving sector dialogue and coordination processes by strengthening interdependence between state departments, development partners and nonstate actors.

Inclusive Sector Dialogue

The GPE charter defines a local education group as “a collaborative forum for education sector policy dialogue under government leadership, where the primary consultation on education sector development takes place between a government and its partners.”³⁸ Local education groups help facilitate inclusive policy dialogue at the country level. They are led by the government and composed of many stakeholders including civil society organizations and coalitions, multilateral and

36 J. Perrier, M. Ramos, and C. Salzano, *Coordinated Action to Transform Education – What’s in It for Different Education Actors and Partners?* (Washington, DC: GPE, July 2023), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/coordinated-action-transform-education-whats-it-different-education-actors-and-partners>.

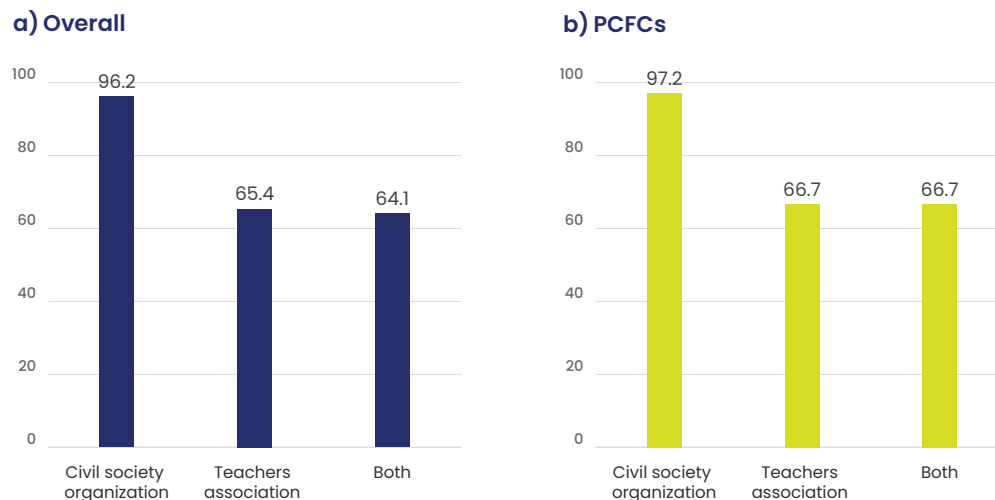
37 J. Perrier, M. Ramos, and C. Salzano, *Coordinated Action to Transform Education*

38 Global Partnership for Education (GPE), *Charter of the Global Partnership for Education*, (Washington, DC: GPE, January 2023), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2023-02-charter-global-partnership-education.pdf>. See also GPE, *Principles toward Effective Local Education Groups*, (Washington, DC: GPE, October 2019), https://assets.globalpartnership.org/s3fs-public/document/file/2019-10-GPE-principles-effective-local-education-groups.pdf?VersionId=otebl6Dgwz6LmuziBoXTMRWR7k7r_2DK.

FIGURE 2.2.

The proportion of local education groups with civil society representation is higher than that of groups with teachers association representation.

Proportion of local education groups with civil society and teacher representation (percent)



Source: GPE Secretariat data, calendar years 2020–22.

Note: Myanmar and Ukraine have been omitted for calendar year 2022 because of expected difficulties in collecting data from the ground due to country conflict. The Pacific Islands regional local education group consists of representatives from Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu regional organizations; the Caribbean regional local education group consists of representatives from Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines regional organizations.

bilateral partners, teacher representatives, the private sector, foundations and education sector professionals. Inclusion of civil society organizations and teachers associations in local education groups is intended to ensure that citizens' and educators' voices are heard. Indicator 8iic measures the proportion of local education groups that include civil society organizations and teachers associations.

The proportion of local education groups that included both civil society organizations and teachers associations in 2022 was 64.1 percent (66.7 percent in PCFCs); 96.2 percent included civil society organizations, and 65.4 percent included teachers associations (figure 2.2). Of the six countries that joined the partnership in 2022 (El Salvador, Eswatini, Fiji, Guatemala, Indonesia and the Philippines) and the one that reported data for the first time (Federated States of Micronesia), only Eswatini reported representation by teachers associations in the local education group.³⁹ The Federated States of Micronesia, a partner country since 2020, reported data for the first time, noting nonrepresentation of civil society organizations and teachers associations in the local education group. Two countries improved in 2022: Haiti

added both a civil society organization and a teachers association to its local education group, and Uzbekistan added a teachers association to the existing civil society organization. In Sudan, however, the teachers association lost representation in the local education group.

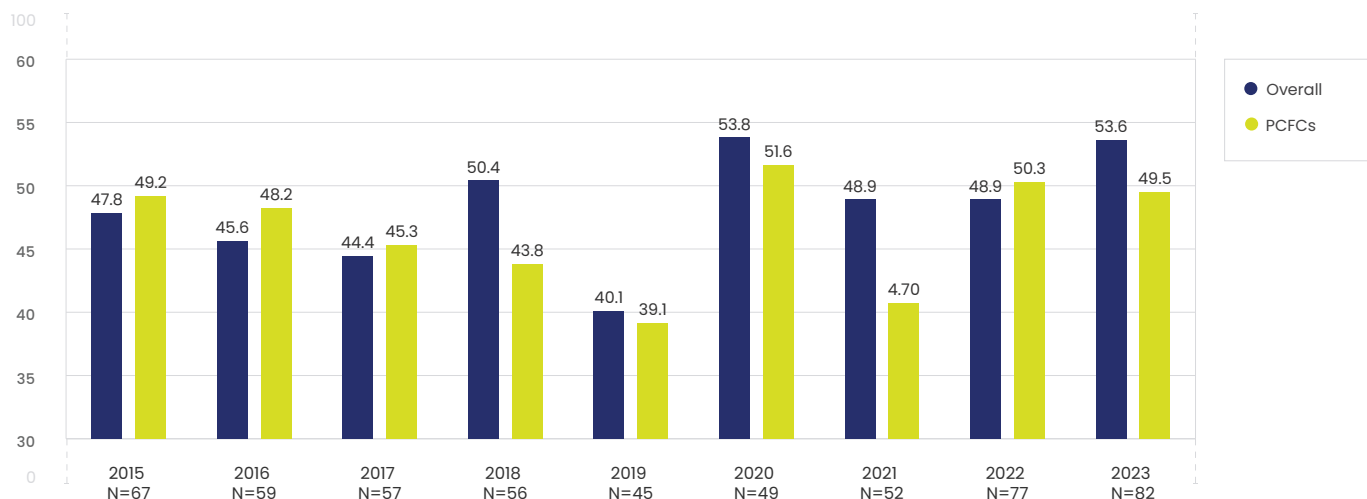
Coordinated Financing and Funding

Coordinated financing and funding covers two aspects: (i) the alignment of external aid with country systems and (ii) the harmonization or pooling of external resources under unified implementation modalities. They are both important means to improve not only sector coordination but also system transformation.

Alignment of external financing suggests the use of the national institutions, human resources, procedures and tools for the delivery of education aid, although there is considerable scope to tailor fiduciary risk management protocols to country contexts. This type of financing can considerably reduce transaction costs and inefficiencies in coordination and implementation, as well as provide a more sustainable approach to capacity development.⁴⁰

³⁹ Eswatini reported representation by both civil society organizations and teachers associations, the Federated States of Micronesia reported neither and the other new partner countries all reported representation by civil society organizations.

⁴⁰ Alignment allows the partners to focus on national institutions and systems rather than on ad hoc project implementation units and procedures, for example.

FIGURE 2.3.**Alignment of grant funding saw a sustained improvement in FY2023.***Proportion of GPE grant funding aligned to national systems (percent)*

Source: GPE Secretariat data, fiscal years 2015–23.

Note: Values for 2022 have been updated to correct earlier technical errors. Myanmar has been excluded from the sample because of current suspension of activities in the program due to the political crisis in the country.

It can also improve the absorption of external funding using the full bandwidth of national budgets and country systems for funding at scale.

Indicator 12i measures the proportion of core GPE grant funding⁴¹ that is aligned with national systems.⁴² A grant is considered aligned when it meets at least seven of the 10 criteria of alignment, across seven dimensions.⁴³

The overall value for indicator 12i in 2023 was 53.6 percent, an increase of about 4 percentage points from 2022. For PCFCs, the value was 49.5 percent in 2023, a slight decrease from 50.3 percent in 2022 (figure 2.3).⁴⁴ But annual fluctuations (as grants close in any given year and new ones become active) are expected and therefore not particularly significant. Longer-term trends are more relevant.

A longer-term look at the data reveals that the proportion of aligned grant funding in 2023 is higher than the historical average (figure 2.3), which stands at 48 percent over the period 2015–23 (46 percent for PCFCs). On average, 45.7 percent of grant funding was aligned in the period 2015–19, compared to 51.4 percent in 2020–23. Despite this significant increase over the past four years, alignment remains a challenge.

GPE continues to promote alignment of aid with partner countries' systems as part of its commitment to mobilize more and better financing. This promotion is being adapted through the new operating model, with the identification of external financing as an "enabling factor" for system transformation of alignment and harmonization to encourage partner countries and grant agents to progress toward more aligned forms of aid.⁴⁵

41 Core GPE funding includes education sector program implementation grants, education sector program implementation grants Multiplier (system transformation grants/Multiplier) and system transformation grants/Girls Education Accelerator. It excludes education sector program development grants, system capacity grants, program development grants and any other alternative grants (Knowledge and Innovation Exchange, and so on).

42 GPE funding includes education sector program implementation grants or system transformation grants. Global Partnership for Education (GPE), *GPE Results Framework 2025: Methodological Technical Guidelines*, (Washington, DC: GPE, 2022), 45, <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/gpe-results-framework-2025-methodological-technical-guidelines>.

43 For details about the alignment criteria see GPE, *GPE Results Framework 2025: Methodological Technical Guidelines*, 45 and Global Partnership for Education (GPE), "Aligning Aid for Education with National Systems: Supporting System Transformation and Better Education Outcomes." Washington, DC: GPE, 2021 <https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2021-10-aligning-aid-education-national-systems.pdf>.

44 Indicator 12i has limitations because it considers only implementation grants active in a given fiscal year (between July 1 of one year and June 30 of the following year). Results can be influenced by the amount of active grants in a given fiscal year, especially when grants vary in volume. Longer-term trends are more relevant than annual changes.

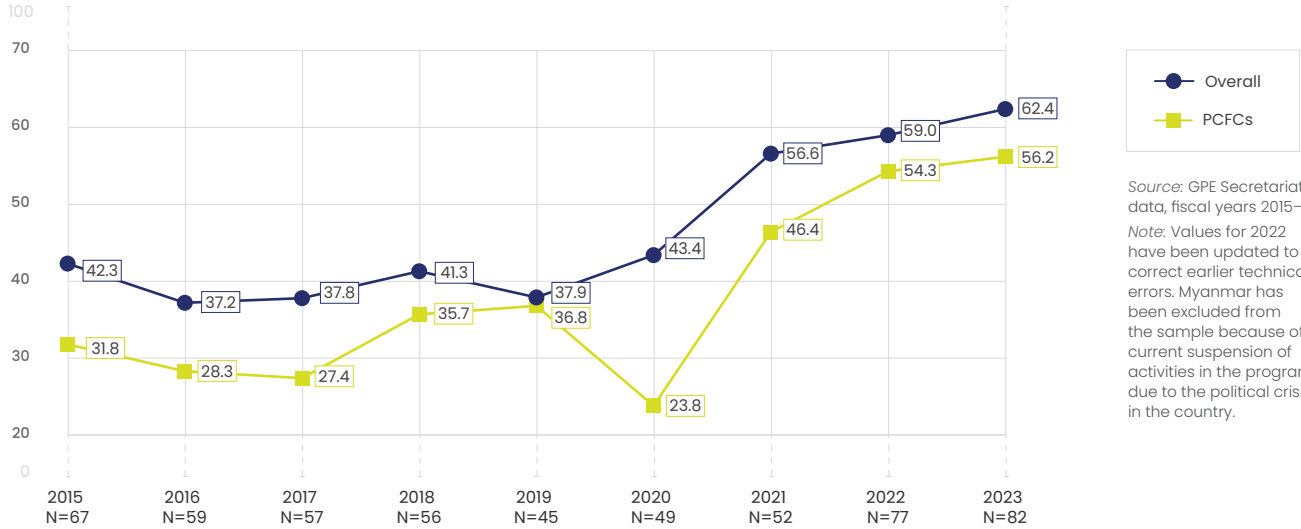
45 Global Partnership for Education (GPE), "Aligning Funding with National Systems," (Washington, DC: GPE, August 2021), <https://assets.globalpartnership.org/s3fs-public/document/file/2021-08-gpe-factsheet-aligning-funding-national-systems.pdf?VersionId=MTqT6v4Q4XICP.y2DirUf9L9B6AxiK>.

FIGURE 2.4.

More than 62 percent of grant funding was through harmonized modalities in 2023, a significant improvement since 2015.

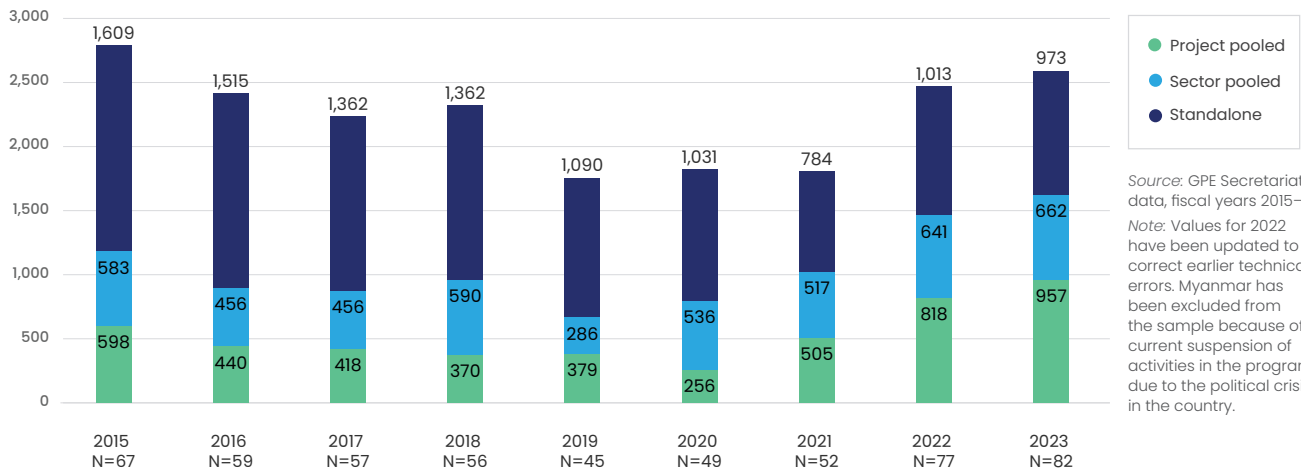
Proportion of GPE grant funding using harmonized funding modalities and volume of grants by funding modality

a) Proportion of grants (percent)



Source: GPE Secretariat data, fiscal years 2015–23. Note: Values for 2022 have been updated to correct earlier technical errors. Myanmar has been excluded from the sample because of current suspension of activities in the program due to the political crisis in the country.

b) Volume of grants (US\$, millions)



Source: GPE Secretariat data, fiscal years 2015–23. Note: Values for 2022 have been updated to correct earlier technical errors. Myanmar has been excluded from the sample because of current suspension of activities in the program due to the political crisis in the country.

Harmonizing external financing through cofinanced or pooled implementation modalities can help improve aid effectiveness by reducing aid fragmentation and duplication among partners, and GPE 2025 continues to encourage the use of harmonized modalities.⁴⁶ Indicator 12ii measures the proportion of GPE grant funding using project and sector pooled mechanisms. *Project pooled*

funding comes from more than one partner to support a common project. *Sector pooled funding* comes from multiple partners (at least three) delivering funds through an aligned funding modality to support implementation at scale (broad eligible expenditure supporting parts of or the entire education sector plan).⁴⁷

46 GPE, *GPE Results Framework 2025: Methodological Technical Guidelines*.

47 GPE, *GPE Results Framework 2025: Methodological Technical Guidelines*.

The proportion of GPE grants using harmonized modalities increased in 2023. The overall value for indicator 12ii was 62.4 percent in 2023, an increase from 59.0 percent in 2022. PCFCs also experienced an increase from 54.3 percent in 2022 to 56.2 percent in 2023 (figure 2.4). Harmonized funding increased by approximately \$159 million between 2022 and 2023.

The share of implementation grant funding using harmonized modalities increased steadily between 2015 and 2019. Since 2020, that proportion has increased dramatically and continuously every year. PCFCs have followed a similar trend, with the proportion of harmonized grant funding continuously increasing since 2020. This increase has been in large part due to the growth of GPE's Multiplier, which is always cofinanced.

The positive news on the growing share of harmonized modalities unfortunately does not rule out continued fragmentation of the overall aid environment. For example, in its June 2023 compact, Niger indicated that, despite having a successful sector pooled fund with eight participating partners (including GPE), it had mapped a total of 120 different modalities and projects financed by 34 development partners in the education sector in 2023. Promoting the use of harmonized modalities to deliver external financing can help prevent such fragmentation of education aid.

GPE supports partner countries in their efforts toward more efficient and inclusive sector coordination through the system capacity grant. The second window of the system capacity grant aims to mobilize coordinated action and financing to support better education budget processes, improved sector coordination and pooled funding mechanisms, and cross-sectoral convening. In FY2023, six countries (the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritania, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Zimbabwe) that used this financing window also submitted progress reports. Those reports indicate that activities are on track in five of the six countries (Indicator 10ii). Out of the five grants that are on track, two were rated moderately satisfactory and three satisfactory.⁴⁸ Papua New Guinea faced delays in implementation, including activities under the mobilize coordinated finance and action monitoring window.

2.4. DOMESTIC FINANCING

(Indicator 4)

Government expenditure is the most important source of funds for the education sector in GPE partner countries.⁴⁹ Indicator 4i measures the proportion of partner countries that increased education spending or that met or exceeded the 20 percent benchmark for domestic spending on education. In 2022, 60 percent (42 out of 70) of partner countries did so (figure 2.5).⁵⁰ PCFCs recorded a similar performance in domestic financing, with 59.3 percent (16 out of 27) spending at least 20 percent on education in 2022 or increasing the share of education expenditure from 2020. The value of indicator 4i declined by 4.8 percentage points (8.4 percentage points in PCFCs) between 2021 and 2022, showing a decrease in the proportion of partner countries making progress in domestic financing, although it stayed above the 2020 value.⁵¹

The average share of education expenditure has been on a declining trend since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic (figure 2.6). Average education spending as a share of total government expenditure decreased by 1.3 percentage points between 2019 and 2022, illustrating the pandemic's continued impact on education financing. An estimated 40 percent of low-income and lower-middle-income countries reduced their spending on education with the onset of the pandemic in 2020, with an average decline in real spending of 13.5 percent.⁵² The pandemic led to a decrease in the level and prioritization of education in government expenditure and a decline in the execution rate of the education budget. Figure 2.6 shows that the share of education spending in 2022 remained below its prepandemic level. Estimations based on UIS data show, however, that the total volume of education spending in partner countries increased by \$23.8 billion from 2015 to 2021 with differences across countries. Average annual spending per school-age child increased from \$175 in 2015 to \$212 in 2021 in real terms.

48 The mobilize coordinated finance and action monitoring window is on track if rated moderately satisfactory or better in terms of implementation of activities in the system capacity grant annual monitoring report. GPE may change the rating evidence exists to support the change (for example, mission report, aide-memoires, email exchanges). GPE, "Guidelines for System Capacity Grants."

49 See UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2019 – Migration, Displacement and Education: Building Bridges, Not Walls*, (Paris: UNESCO, 2019), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265866>.

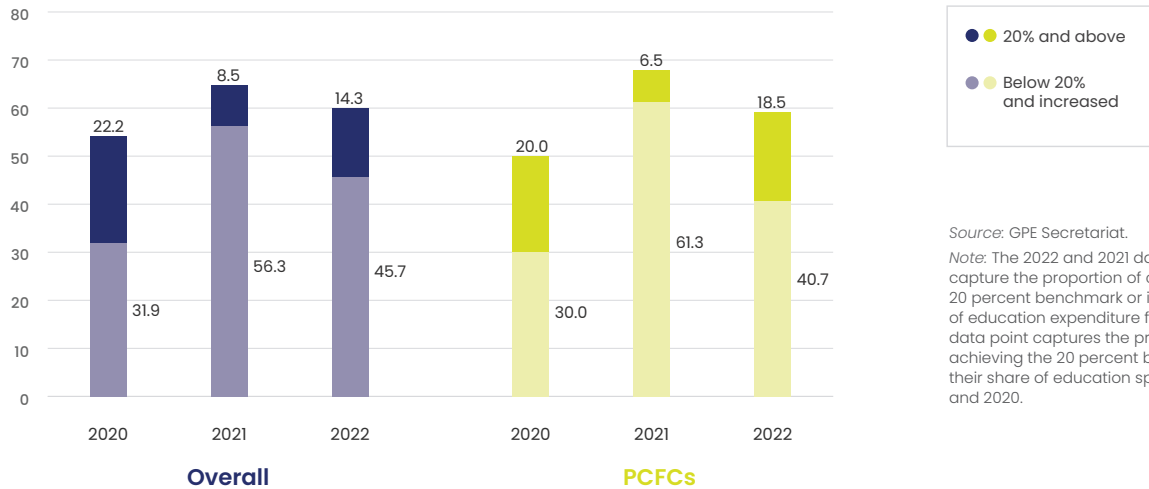
50 Data for indicator 4i are compiled by the GPE Secretariat using publicly available budget documents. Only 70 partner countries had data in 2020 and 2022 to measure progress in the share of education spending.

51 In 2022, the share of education spending increased from 2021 but fell below the 2020 level in nine partner countries.

52 World Bank and UNESCO, *Education Finance Watch 2022*, (Washington, DC, and Paris: World Bank and UNESCO, 2022), <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/5c5cdd4c96799335e263023fa96db454-0200022022/related/EFW-2022-Dec21.pdf>.

FIGURE 2.5.**Progress in domestic education financing slowed down in 2022.**

Proportion of partner countries that achieved the 20 percent benchmark or increased their share of education spending (percent)

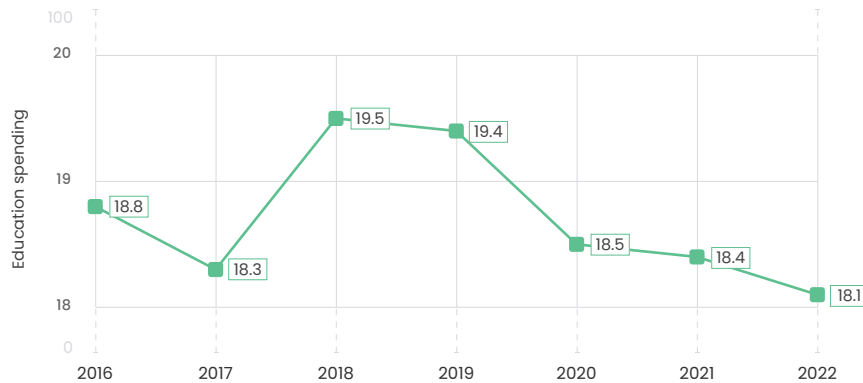


Source: GPE Secretariat.

Note: The 2022 and 2021 data for Indicator 4i capture the proportion of countries achieving the 20 percent benchmark or increasing their share of education expenditure from 2020. The 2020 data point captures the proportion of countries achieving the 20 percent benchmark or increasing their share of education spending between 2019 and 2020.

FIGURE 2.6.**The share of education spending has been declining since 2020.**

Average share of government expenditure on education excluding debt services in 62 partner countries with data available, 2016–22 (percent)



Source: GPE Secretariat.

Note: To better capture all countries' efforts toward the 20 percent benchmark, no matter their size, the average share of education expenditure is not weighted.

Partner countries' ability to commit more resources to the education sector is challenged by the global economic slowdown. The World Bank's Global Economic Prospects show that developing economies face a challenging economic environment marked by declining economic growth and high interest rates.⁵³ Because improvements in government expenditure on education have historically been driven by the availability of resources,⁵⁴ a slowing economy poses a significant barrier to education

financing. High interest rates translate into an increased debt service burden and pressures on public finance (box 2.3). Declining economic growth rates combined with high interest rates are likely to shrink the volume of resources available to finance education. A study by UNESCO shows that, even if the budget share dedicated to education remains stable, the volume of spending is likely to drop because of governments' resource constraints.⁵⁵

53 World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects*, June 2023, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2023), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/global-economic-prospects>.

54 S. Al Samarrai, P. Cerdan-Infantes, and J. D. Lehe, "Mobilizing Resources for Education and Improving Spending Effectiveness: Establishing Realistic Benchmarks Based on Past Trends," Policy Research Working Paper, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2019), <https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/epdf/10.1596/1813-9450-8773>.

55 UNESCO, "Why the World Must Urgently Strengthen Learning and Protect Finance for Education," (UNESCO, October 16, 2020), <https://en.unesco.org/news/why-world-must-urgently-strengthen-learning-and-protect-finance-education>.

BOX 2.3. The rising debt level poses a threat to education financing

COVID-19-related lockdowns in several countries resulted in various challenges, including economic slowdowns and higher debt levels. To face these economic setbacks, developing countries sought financial assistance from international partners, which contributed to higher external debt levels. High public debt could lead to fiscal consolidation (that is, government policy intended to reduce the fiscal deficit and the accumulation of debt), with implications for government expenditure.

A recent study shows that fiscal consolidation due to high external debt could hinder education spending. A 1 percent increase in external debt is associated with a 2.9 percent decline in education spending per school-age child. Education spending is disproportionately sensitive to changes in the volume of debt and could be a target for governments to adjust fiscal deficits. Therefore, external debt poses a significant threat to education financing, especially in the current context of rising debt levels caused by the pandemic.

Given the rising debt levels fueled by COVID-19 response policies, a decline in education expenditure should be expected in the postpandemic era. For instance, in low- and middle-income countries, a 5 percent increase in external debt could lead to a \$12.8 billion decline in the volume of education expenditure, all things being equal. This decline is almost equivalent to the volume of official development assistance to the education sector in 2021. Therefore, implementing mitigating measures that would protect education budgets is crucial.

Source: E. W. Miningou, "External Debt, Fiscal Consolidation, and Government Expenditure on Education," Policy Research Working Papers, (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2023), <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099748506072325934/pdf/IDU09d7e7fa50bf046e00a8a80e07ac5341e5b.pdf>.

Facing the education financing crisis will require strong political commitment and protecting the education budget from cuts. Government expenditure is the most important source of funds for the education sector, so ensuring that the government budget prioritizes education is key to system transformation. Addressing the barriers to efficient use of the resources dedicated to the education sector is also an important step to system transformation (box 2.4). GPE is committed to working with partner countries to advocate for more and better domestic education financing (box 2.5).

As part of the enabling factors analysis, GPE partner countries are identifying challenges with volume, equity and efficiency of domestic financing. Indicator 4iia tracks the proportion of countries where the domestic financing enabling factor is assessed by the ITAP. As of December 2022, domestic financing was assessed as a high-priority area in 12 countries and a medium-priority area in four countries, showing that education finance is among the most pressing challenges faced by partner countries (see table 2.1).

The enabling factor analyses report that partner countries face several challenges related to volume, equity and efficiency. Overall commitments to finance education often do not translate into more financing for the sector. Unrealistic budget projections, low execution rates of the education budget, unsustainable increases in government expenditures and weak capacity to mobilize revenue are some of the problems partner countries are facing. For instance, education expenditure increased in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but this improvement may not be sustainable because it is financed by greater debt rather than by additional tax revenue. Rwanda's commitment to finance education is based on an overestimation of the availability of government resources. In Senegal, the significant budget deficit poses a concern for education financing.

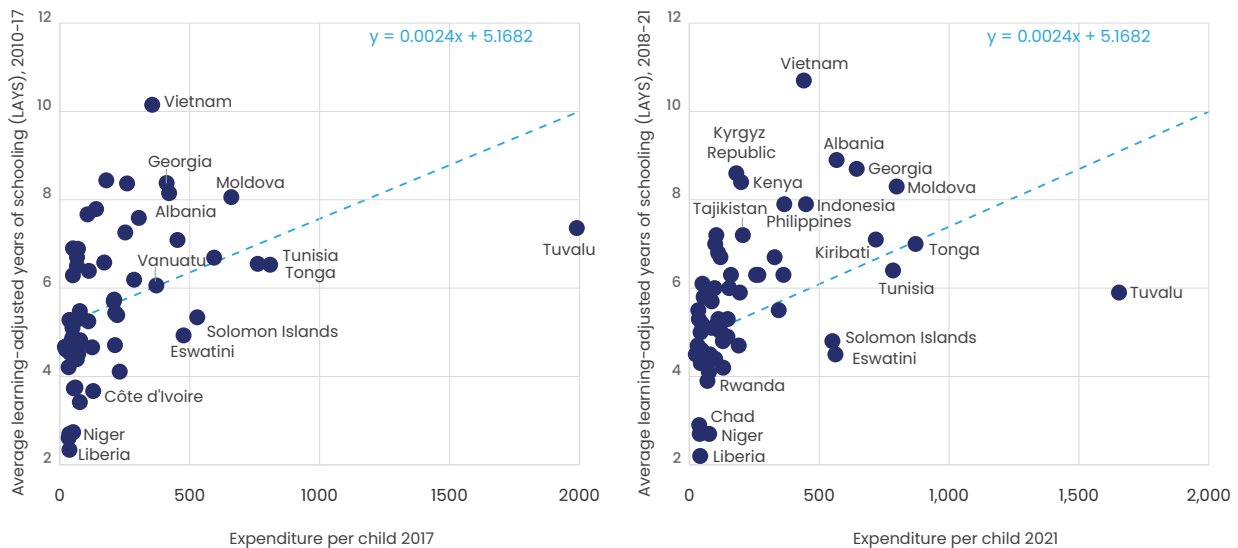
Insufficient government expenditure on education increases the financing burden on households, thus creating equity issues. Children from the poorest households are either not enrolling in school or dropping out once enrolled. For instance, in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Nepal, the

BOX 2.4. Partner countries have made some modest progress in the efficiency of education spending

The figure in this box illustrates changes in partner countries' efficiency in translating education spending into access to quality education. It shows the relationship between education spending per school-age child and the learning-adjusted years of schooling (LAYS) in 2017 (using data available in the period 2010–17) and 2021 (data from 2018–21) for 62 partner countries with data available. The trend line shows the expected years of schooling for different levels of spending. Partner countries below the trend line are achieving lower-than-expected levels of LAYS, given their spending levels. That is, they are “relatively inefficient” in translating education spending into access to quality education. Countries above the trend line are “relatively efficient” because they are achieving higher-than-expected LAYS with their spending per school-age child.

GPE partner countries seem to be making modest progress in the efficiency of education spending. In 2017, 43.5 percent (27 out of 62 countries) of the partner countries with data available were in the group of “relatively efficient” countries. The proportion of countries in this group slightly increased to 45 percent (28 out of 62 partner countries) in 2021, showing overall modest progress in the efficiency of education spending. Four countries moved from the “relatively inefficient” group in 2017 to the “relatively efficient” group in 2021, whereas three countries moved in the opposite direction. Nine out of the 12 countries where domestic education financing was assessed as a high-priority area were in the “relatively inefficient” group in 2017 and 2021. Further investigation may be needed to fully understand the efficiency drivers in countries' specific contexts and how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the efficiency of government expenditure on education.

The efficiency of education expenditure slightly improved between 2017 and 2021.



Source: GPE Secretariat calculations based on data from the Human Capital Project, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, World Development Indicators, and GPE results framework.

Note: Data collection processes for metrics such as the LAYS and education expenditure might not occur on an annual basis. There have been gaps in data availability, leading to the chosen time intervals. Additionally, data might be more readily available for these specific years, making them suitable for analysis.

BOX 2.5. Advocacy for domestic financing

In September 2022, during the Transforming Education Summit in New York, GPE called on world leaders to urgently commit more and better financing to address the learning crisis. GPE welcomed President Nana Akufo-Addo of Ghana as a champion for domestic financing to continue the work started by former President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya who initiated the Heads of State Declaration on Education Financing. The declaration commits leaders from more than 20 partner countries to commit \$200 billion over five years to help girls and boys have access to quality education. Through advocacy, GPE has also been working with partners to change the narrative on domestic financing—from an expense to an investment—and to integrate it into dialogues on creating fiscal space. To further engage political actors at the country level, GPE is also developing a parliamentary toolkit on domestic finance. The toolkit seeks to support parliamentarians to improve legislation around education financing, make a strong case for investment for education in national budget discussions and improve budget oversight.

cost of schooling prompts children from the poorest households to work, which creates challenges related to child labor and causes dropouts.

In countries where the government seems to prioritize education expenditure, inefficiencies may prevent resources from being translated into education outcomes. In Burkina Faso, despite a generous allocation of public resources to education, high rates of dropout and repetition cause significant wastage of those resources. In Zanzibar, inequalities in student-teacher ratios across districts, teachers' absenteeism, low morale and limited English competency are major barriers to the efficient use of education resources. In Niger, the insufficient teaching and learning time is an important source of inefficiency.

Overall, the ITAP notes that improving education sector governance, strengthening teachers' capacity (including in gender-responsive pedagogy and teaching in local languages), introducing equity-based formulas for resource allocation and designing more efficient teacher deployment policies could help ensure a more equitable distribution of scarce resources that achieve expected outcomes.

In response to the enabling factors analyses, partner countries have proposed various interventions in their partnership compacts to improve the volume, equity and efficiency of domestic financing for education. Most countries committed to either increasing or maintaining the volume of education spending. A few partner countries included the volume of spending as a trigger to access the system transformation grant top-up.

For instance, in Cambodia, 20 percent of the system transformation grant allocation is linked to an increase in the volume of funding channeled to schools (school operating funds). In Sierra Leone, the disbursement of half of the top-up is conditioned on an increase in the execution rate of the education budget from the actual 78 percent to 85 percent by 2024. The disbursement of \$25 million of Uganda's system transformation grant allocation is tied to an increase in the share of education spending from the current 17 percent of total government expenditure to 19 percent by 2024. The disbursement of Zimbabwe's \$2.5 million top-up is tied to the implementation of a school financing policy that is expected to reach the poorest and most marginalized communities.

Teachers represent the largest expense in the education budget, and partner countries aim to implement better teacher training and deployment policies to improve the efficiency and equity of domestic financing. For instance, in Burkina Faso, reforming pre-service teacher training and providing teachers with proper teaching materials are expected to reduce repetition and dropout. Kenya aims to reform the pre-service teacher curriculum, provide teachers with relevant pedagogical support and adopt appropriate models to ensure equity in the distribution and optimal use of teachers. The Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Zanzibar intend to design and implement more effective teacher deployment strategies. In Tanzania, the successful implementation of the Teacher Allocation Protocol for the deployment of new teachers would trigger the disbursement of a \$9 million system transformation grant top-up.

Implementing equity-based formulas for resource allocation is another type of intervention included in countries' partnership compacts to improve the equity of education financing. In Tajikistan, the implementation of a per capita funding formula would help ensure that the most disadvantaged groups, across regions and districts, benefit from government expenditure on education. Uganda plans to develop and implement a capitation grant formula for primary education.

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IS NEEDED IN DOMESTIC FINANCING AND DATA SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

This chapter discusses the partnership's status with respect to country-level objectives 1 and 2. Analysis of the four enabling factors in the 16 partner countries identifies countries' priority areas, and a review of the analyses reveals several challenges countries face in each enabling factor. All four enabling factor areas have been analyzed in all 16 partner countries that went through the ITAP assessment. Equity, efficiency and volume of domestic financing were assigned a high priority in 12 out of the 16 partner countries. Gender-responsive planning and monitoring were assigned a high priority in four partner countries. Data and evidence and sector coordination were assigned a high priority respectively in seven and three partner countries. Work is commencing on these areas, and countries' progress against the identified challenges in the four enabling factors will be reported next year.

Progress remained slow in many areas in 2022. Data reporting to UIS remains an issue for partner countries. The proportion of partner countries reporting at least 10 of 12 key outcomes declined further in 2022, continuing a falling trend since 2019. This decline could be due to lack of available data at the country level or to countries not reporting available data to UIS on time. Inclusiveness of local education groups also decreased in 2022, after a slight increase between 2020 and 2021, because several new partner countries did not have a fully representative local education group. The proportion of partner countries that achieved the 20 percent benchmark or increased their education expenditure declined in 2022 after a significant increase between 2020 and 2021. The average share of education expenditure has been declining since 2020, partly because of the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education financing.

By contrast, alignment and harmonization showed an improvement in 2023. The proportion of GPE core grant funding aligned to national systems increased from 48.9 percent in 2022 to 53.6 percent in 2023. Similarly, the proportion of GPE grant funding using project and sector pooled mechanisms increased from 59 percent in 2022 to 62.4 percent in 2023.

As the GPE 2025 operating model continues to be implemented, additional data will become available. In 2022, a few system capacity grants submitted progress reports, making this the first year with available data for indicators assessing whether system capacity grant activities are on track. It is expected that more data will become available for next year's results report, as the compacts and the system transformation grants begin implementation.

