

Students receive their lunch at Booldid Primary School, 40 kilometres from the city of Hargeisa in Somaliland. The GPE-funded program, which includes a school feeding project, supports 300 schools to help ensure children in drought-affected areas return to and remain in school.

GPE/AP

## CHAPTER 3

# STRENGTHEN CAPACITY, ADAPT AND LEARN TO IMPLEMENT AND DRIVE RESULTS AT SCALE



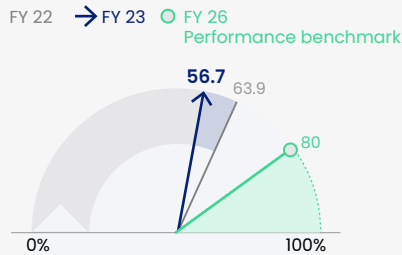
# RESULTS AT A GLANCE

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### 14.i.

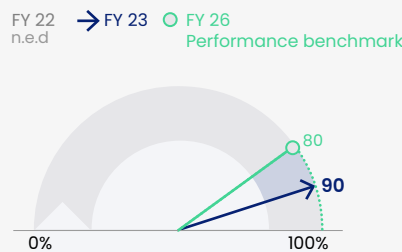
14.i.a. Proportion of system transformation grants meeting overall objectives during implementation.

in percent



14.i.b. Proportion of system transformation grant met overall objectives at completion.

in percent



➤ The rollout of system transformation grants has been slower than expected because the pre-grant processes have taken longer than anticipated in most countries. However, it is expected to accelerate in fiscal year 2024, mainly because of the progress made thus far on the grants in the pipeline and the adaptations implemented to the operating model.

➤ As of the end of July 2023, eight countries have secured their Girls' Education Accelerator allocations. The total commitment amounts to \$140 million, reaching 79 percent of the \$177 million raised to date for this funding window. One country (El Salvador) has an active Girls' Education Accelerator grant.

➤ In fiscal year 2023, of the 84 active implementation grants, 66 (79 percent) mainstreamed gender equality in one or more activities. Most of these grants were approved during the implementation of GPE 2020.

➤ Of the 67 grants with implementation ratings available for fiscal year 2023, 38 (or 57 percent) are on track to meet their objectives. The proportion of on-track grants is 23 percentage points below the results framework benchmark of 80 percent and remains at the levels observed during the pandemic. However, because most of the off-track grants have either taken or are working on measures to address the implementation bottleneck, they are expected to pick up the pace in the coming years.

➤ GPE's implementation grants distributed 48 million textbooks, trained 481,000 teachers and constructed 6,664 classrooms in fiscal year 2023. The numbers achieved since fiscal year 2021 either exceed or are close to the levels achieved in five years under GPE 2020, in part because of the large numbers achieved by COVID-19 accelerated funding grants.

➤ Since the start of GPE 2025, GPE has reached 227 million children, representing 35 percent of all school-age children in the 68 countries with grants that reported this figure.

# INTRODUCTION

To support partner countries in achieving education transformation, GPE introduced new grant mechanisms as part of the GPE 2025 operating model. This chapter reports on the progress made in rolling out these new grant mechanisms, particularly the system capacity grants, system transformation grants and the Girls' Education Accelerator. It also provides an overview of GPE's grant portfolio, and it reports on the performance of the implementation grants, GPE's largest grant mechanism. Because the rollout of the GPE 2025 operating model continues, the grant portfolio and the performance discussed in this chapter reflect the mix of grants approved under the GPE 2020 and GPE 2025 operating models.

## 3.1. GRANT PORTFOLIO

### Overview of GPE Grants

GPE offers different types of grants to support education in partner countries and globally. The GPE 2025 operating model, approved by the GPE Board in December 2020, introduced five mechanisms to support partner countries in achieving system transformation: (1) the system transformation grant, (2) the system capacity grant, (3) the Girls' Education Accelerator, (4) strategic capabilities and (5) innovative financing mechanisms (see chapter 4 for the progress of these mechanisms).

Progress on rolling out new grant mechanisms introduced by the 2025 operating model has been uneven. As of June 2023, two system transformation grants, one Multiplier and system transformation grant, one Multiplier and Girls' Education Accelerator, six Multiplier grants<sup>56</sup> and 56 system capacity grants have been approved.<sup>57</sup> This means that 48<sup>58</sup> out of 91 eligible countries (or 53 percent) already have an approved system capacity grant, whereas only three out of 69<sup>59</sup> eligible countries (or 4 percent) have an approved system transformation grant. Although the rollout of system transformation grants has been slower than expected (see next section for details), it is expected that the system capacity grants will facilitate the approval of system transformation

grants, because most of the latter support the development of compacts, which is required before applying for a system transformation grant. As of June 2023, 59 percent (41) of the 69 countries eligible for system transformation grants have an approved system capacity grant. As a result of slower-than-expected progress in rolling out some grant mechanisms, grants approved under the GPE 2025 operating model and active as of June 2023 account for only 9 percent<sup>60</sup> of the total portfolio of all active grants (table 3.1).

Based on lessons learned since the rollout of the new operating model began, the Board made decisions in July 2023 to adapt the model and grants, to further optimize GPE country-level operations and reduce transaction costs. These decisions include phasing out the variable part in implementation grants, increasing flexibility in how top-up funds are programmed and setting aside \$2 million in system capacity funding specifically for partnership compact development, which countries can now access easily and quickly. These measures, along with other actions already taken by the Secretariat,<sup>61</sup> are expected to further accelerate the progress in implementing the 2025 operating model. Further adaptations to the GPE 2025 operating model are ongoing, based on various learning and evidence pieces collected across the partnership. As of mid-November 2023, five additional system transformation grants have been approved.

56 One of the six is an accelerated Multiplier.

57 The figures in this sentence are cumulative and include approvals before fiscal year 2023. In addition, four of the system capacity grant approvals mentioned were top-ups to existing system capacity grants.

58 The discrepancy between the number of countries with system capacity grants and the number of approved system capacity grants occurs because (1) some countries (especially those with subnational entities) have multiple grants and some grants are regional, so they apply to multiple grants; and (2) top-ups are counted as separate approvals from the parent grant.

59 Although 70 countries are eligible for system transformation grants, this count excludes the Syrian Arab Republic because that country converted its entire system transformation grant allocation into accelerated funding. Furthermore, the three system transformation grant approvals were for Kenya, Nepal, and Tanzania (Mainland); a grant for Tanzania (Zanzibar) is yet to be approved but will still be considered part of the three countries.

60 This calculation excludes cross-country thematic support and accelerated funding.

61 These actions include (1) providing new guidance on grant agent selection, which can now be launched once the draft compact is available and runs concurrently with finalization of the compact; (2) setting out and agreeing with the grant agent the expected timelines for application submission; (3) streamlining the quality assurance process using a risk-based approach; (4) simplifying restructuring of variable parts in GPE 2020 grants; (5) introducing a universal grant application template and (6) introducing a more user-friendly accelerated funding application template. See more details in Global Partnership for Education (GPE), "Grant Portfolio Status Pre-read" (Washington, DC: GPE, June 2023), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2023-06-gpe-bod-grant-portfolio-status.pdf>.

**TABLE 3.1.****The number and the amount of GPE grants active as of June 30, 2023, for all grant types**

Type	Number	Amount (US\$)	Share of overall portfolio (%)
<b>Grants approved under GPE 2020 operating model and active as of June 2023</b>			
Education sector plan development grant	12	7,171,158	0.3
Education sector program implementation grant (including Multipliers)	72	2,109,220,590	77.4
Subtotal: GPE 2020 operating model	84	2,116,391,748	77.7
<b>Grants approved under GPE 2025 operating model and active as of June 2023</b>			
System transformation grant (including Multipliers and Girls' Education Accelerator)	4	168,300,000	6.2
System capacity grant	47	41,087,436	1.5
Program development grant	14	2,987,479	0.1
Subtotal: GPE 2025 operating model	65	212,374,914	7.8
<b>Emergency response</b>			
Accelerated funding	14	125,050,000	4.6
<b>Cross-country thematic support</b>			
Education Out Loud	1	123,884,136	4.5
Knowledge and Innovation Exchange	1	143,457,944	5.3
Strategic capabilities grant	2	2,274,200	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>2,723,432,942</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: GPE Secretariat.

Note: The number and the amount for strategic capability grants exclude the support for Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, which is considered part of Secretariat operating expenses.

Regarding the other financing mechanisms, in December 2022, the Education Out Loud and Knowledge and Innovation Exchange grants received costed extensions of \$60 million and \$88 million (including \$8 million in cofinancing from the International Development Research Centre), respectively.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, fiscal year 2023 saw the rollout of the strategic capability grants. Three pilot initiatives are in progress: (1) the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning strategic capability; (2) the Climate Smart Education Systems strategic capability; and (3) the Education Data Leadership Program (see section 4.3 in chapter 4 for more details).

### Portfolio of Implementation Grants

Implementation grants—which consist of the education sector program implementation grant, Multipliers, system transformation grants, Girls' Education Accelerator,

regular accelerated funding grants and, previously, the COVID-19 accelerated funding grants—make up 98 percent of the total active country grant portfolio.<sup>63</sup> This subsection discusses the trend in approvals, the size of the active portfolio and the fund utilization of these grants. See the next subsection for the progress of the Girls' Education Accelerator.

Implementation grant approvals have started to bounce back, increasing from \$267 million in fiscal year 2022 to \$398 million in fiscal year 2023, a 49 percent increase. Out of 20 implementation grants approved in fiscal year 2023, nine were accelerated funding grants, worth \$72 million. Of the remaining 11, seven grants were approved under the GPE 2025 operating model (two system transformation grants, one system transformation grant and Multiplier, and four Multipliers).<sup>64</sup>

<sup>62</sup> GPE approved \$80 million in additional financing for KIX, with a cofinancing of \$8 million from the International Development Research Centre.

<sup>63</sup> This total excludes cross-country thematic support.

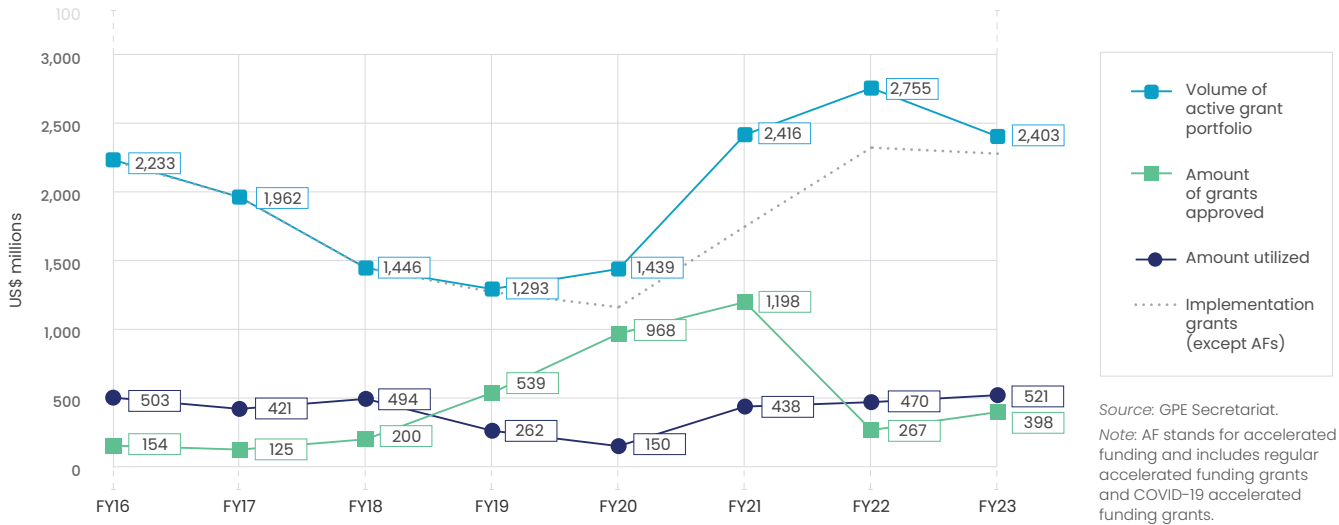
<sup>64</sup> Other than the grants under the new operating model, the implementation grant approvals under the previous operating model include two reallocations of education sector program implementation grants (following cancellations of education sector program implementation grants) and two Multiplier grant approvals.



**FIGURE 3.1.**

**Implementation grants' approval and fund utilization increased, but the volume of active grants fell in the past year.**

Amount of implementation grants' approval, utilization, and volume of active portfolio as of the end of June 2023



Although approval of system transformation grants has been slower than expected, there is a large pipeline for fiscal year 2024: an estimated 27 system transformation grants are expected to be approved. Of the two stages that lead to a system transformation grant approval (that is, pre-grant processes and grant application processes), the pre-grant processes<sup>65</sup> have taken longer than expected, resulting in a slower-than-expected rollout. The initial expectation was that the pre-grant processes would take seven months, but they have taken on average 18 months. However, the pace of approvals is expected to pick up. As of mid-November 2023, apart from five countries or subnational entities with a system transformation grant already approved in fiscal year 2024, 25 had completed pre-grant processes and are moving through the grant application processes, which have taken less time than pre-grant processes, averaging eight months so far. Additional countries or subnational entities are expected to complete pre-grant processes on time to finalize the grant application processes by the end of the fiscal year. If most of these countries meet their expected timelines<sup>66</sup> and take the average time of seven months to develop their programs (plus one month for approval), 27 system transformation grants are expected to be approved in fiscal year 2024. This would leave approximately

44<sup>67</sup> system transformation grant applications to be approved by the end of GPE 2025.

The size of the active implementation grant portfolio decreased slightly from \$2.8 billion in June 2022 to \$2.4 billion in June 2023 (figure 3.1). The decrease is mainly due to the closure of many grants in fiscal year 2023. In fact, 53 implementation grants totaling \$636 million were closed in fiscal year 2023, of which 44 (83 percent) totaling \$391 million (61 percent) were accelerated grants. Of these 44, 33 were COVID-19 accelerated funding grants and 11 were regular accelerated funding grants. These closures, combined with the limited approval of system transformation grants discussed above, put downward pressure on the size of the portfolio.

Fund utilization has continued a gradual increase over the past four fiscal years, to \$521 million in fiscal year 2023, but has not yet reached the expected level. At the end of fiscal year 2023, 44 percent of all implementation grants were on track with fund utilization, 18 percent were slightly behind and 38 percent were off track.<sup>68</sup> These off-track and slightly behind grants (worth \$1.4 billion) should have utilized \$433 million to be considered on-track, about double the \$203 million that they actually utilized in fiscal year 2023.

<sup>65</sup> Pre-grant processes mainly consist of enabling factor analysis, Independent Technical Advisory Panel assessment and approval of strategic parameters. The grant application stage mainly consists of program development. Even though the GPE 2025 new pre-grant processes seem to have caused delays in grant approvals, they are expected to help improve the quality of the programs.

<sup>66</sup> On average, 81 percent of these countries are on track with pre-grant and grant application processes.

<sup>67</sup> This number excludes Syria because it is accessing its system transformation grant in accelerated funding form and is exempted from strategic parameters.

<sup>68</sup> These figures differ from the figures presented in the "Overall Progress during Implementation" subsection, because the former figures include all implementation grants (including accelerated funding grants) and the latter figures represent the percentage on track for nonaccelerated implementation grants with at least one progress report.

## Girls' Education Accelerator

The Girls' Education Accelerator, a special-purpose fund to address key barriers to girls' education in the partner countries where girls lag farthest behind boys, is one of the new grant mechanisms introduced by the 2025 operating model. As of the end of July 2023, one country (El Salvador) has an active Girls' Education Accelerator grant and seven other countries or subnational entities—the Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Niger,<sup>69</sup> Somalia (Puntland), Somalia (Somaliland) and Zimbabwe—have secured their Girls' Education Accelerator allocations.<sup>70</sup> The total commitment to these eight countries amounts to \$140 million,<sup>71</sup> or 79 percent of the \$177 million raised so far for this funding window.

El Salvador has started implementation of its grant with a focus on eliminating harmful gender stereotypes in early learning. The review of reading materials and knowledge assessments for gender stereotypes has been completed, and the redesign of new materials free from stereotypes is under way. Zimbabwe's grant was approved in July 2023. The program—which will be implemented in part by a civil society organization, the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED), as a grant agent—will focus specifically on addressing school dropout among marginalized girls.

Other countries are in the process of developing a program for approval. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the program will focus on supporting girls in conflict-affected regions with high numbers of internally displaced children and refugees, where gender norms and violence are significant barriers. Somalia will use its allocation to close enrollment gaps and to change harmful social norms against girls' education. This includes reducing economic barriers to girls' enrollment through capitation grants and scholarships, expanding alternative education options and increasing the availability of female teachers. Ethiopia intends to use

the Girls' Education Accelerator to develop child-friendly school environments, including water and sanitation, a school code of conduct with zero tolerance for gender-based violence and upgraded school facilities that are more gender-sensitive and inclusive.

## Allocation of Implementation Grants by Priority Area and Education Level

The GPE Secretariat regularly codes grant program documents to understand the extent to which the grants support eight priority areas under GPE 2025 (that is, access; learning; gender equality; inclusion; early learning; teaching and teachers; volume, equity and efficiency of domestic finance; and organizational capacity)—see methodology in [appendix D](#). This section presents the results of the coding of program documents for the 84 implementation grants<sup>72</sup> (worth \$2.5 billion) that were active at some point in fiscal year 2023.<sup>73</sup> Because the GPE 2025 operating model is being rolled out, all but four grants included in the analysis in this section were approved before GPE 2025.<sup>74</sup>

In fiscal year 2023, 33.3 percent of the grant funding was allocated to teaching and learning. Active grants allocated 8.9 percent of grant funds to access, 13.7 percent to learning, 7.4 percent to gender equality (see also the discussion on gender mainstreaming later in this subsection),<sup>75</sup> 10 percent to inclusion, 10.7 percent to early learning, 19.6 percent to teachers, 4.9 percent to domestic finance and 17 percent to organizational capacity ([figure 3.2](#)).<sup>76</sup> Comparing the thematic allocation in partner countries affected by fragility and conflict (PCFCs) and those not affected, countries not affected by fragility and conflict allocated a larger share of their grant money to early learning; PCFCs allocated a larger share for teaching and learning (in the primary and secondary levels). [Box 3.1](#) describes GPE support for climate change efforts.

69 In Niger, further development is on hold at the time of writing this report because of political circumstances in the country.

70 Girls' Education Accelerator allocation is considered "secured" when the GPE Board approves strategic parameters.

71 This amount includes the Democratic Republic of Congo (\$25 million), Côte d'Ivoire (\$22.5 million), El Salvador (\$5 million), Ethiopia (\$25 million), Niger (\$25 million), Somalia (Puntland) (\$18.8 million), Somalia (Somaliland) (\$6.2 million) and Zimbabwe (\$12.4 million).

72 Implementation grants refer to education sector program implementation grants, Multipliers and system transformation grants. This analysis does not include accelerated funding grants.

73 This number excludes the Multiplier for Vietnam, which is in the process of cancellation.

74 Those four grants are in El Salvador (Multiplier and Girls' Education Accelerator), Kenya (system transformation grants), Nepal (system transformation grants) and Rwanda (Multiplier).

75 This share 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, following the methodology for these data (see [appendix D](#)). See the next section, "Gender Equality in the Implementation Grants" for the full (that is, unsplit) amount mainstreaming gender equality.

76 The remaining 7.9 percent goes to other expenses, such as program management, grant agents' implementation support cost and an unallocated amount.

### BOX 3.1. GPE's grant support for climate change adaptation and mitigation

Of 84 implementation grants active at some point in fiscal year 2023, 22 grants support climate change adaptation and mitigation. In addition, six accelerated funding grants support this area. The grant funding allocated to subcomponents supporting activities related to climate change amounts to \$224 million. Grant support in this area can be broadly categorized into two areas: (1) incorporating climate change into the curriculum or into teacher training and (2) integrating climate change considerations into the design of school construction. For example, in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, with GPE support, teachers are being trained in emergency response, conservation knowledge and efficiencies of natural resources and the environment. In addition, climate-resilient design measures are incorporated into early learning facilities, such as drainage improvement for flood control, rainwater harvesting and recycling in water-scarce areas and tree planting to protect school areas from erosion and landslides. Similarly, in Somalia, all new construction or rehabilitation of schools under the project will include installation of renewable energy sources (such as solar power) wherever possible. For further details on GPE's work to promote climate-smart education systems, see GPE's factsheet on climate change and education<sup>a</sup> and its 2022 annual report.<sup>b</sup> Chapter 4 of this report also discusses support to this area through strategic capability grants.

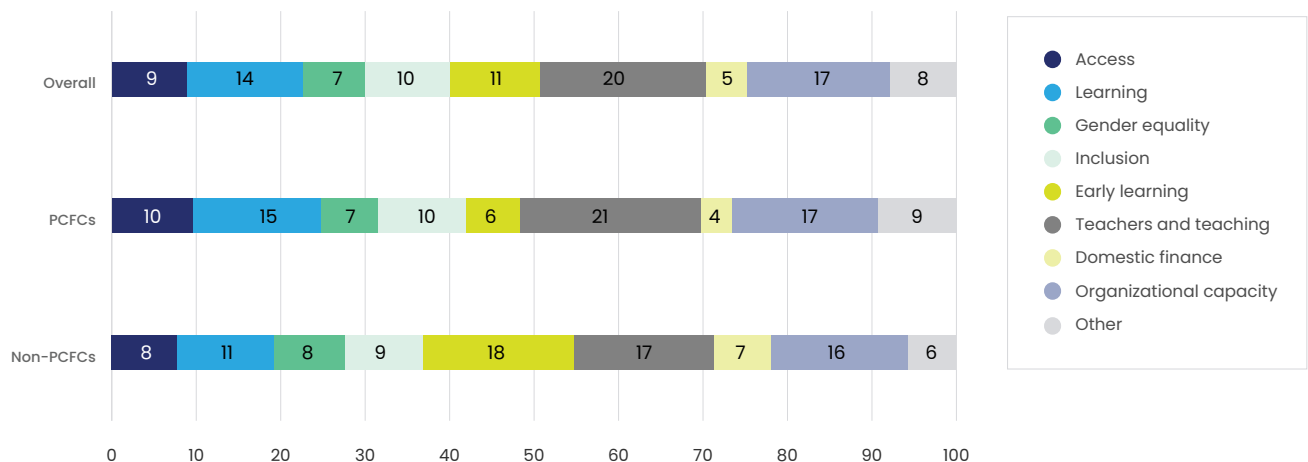
a. Global Partnership for Education (GPE), "Confronting Climate Change through Education," (Washington, DC: GPE, April 2023), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/factsheet-confronting-climate-change-through-education>.

b. Global Partnership for Education (GPE), *Annual Report 2022*, (Washington, DC: GPE, 2022), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/annual-report-2022>.

### FIGURE 3.2.

#### The proportion of grant funding allocated to priority areas varied for PCFCs and non-PCFCs.

Proportion allocated to eight priority areas under GPE 2025, overall, PCFCs and non-PCFCs (percent)



Source: GPE Secretariat.

Note: For more information on amount allocated to various activities under each priority area, please refer to Global Partnership for Education (GPE), "Allocation of implementation grants by priority areas under GPE 2025 and by education levels," (Washington DC: GPE, October 2023), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2023-10-gpe-grants-coding-report.pdf>.

The allocation of funding for each education level has remained relatively consistent compared to previous years. As part of its yearly reporting to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), GPE provides the estimated disbursement for different education levels. The data reported for calendar year 2022 show that approximately 48 percent of GPE's implementation grant funding is directed toward primary education. Additionally, 14 percent of the funding is allocated to lower-secondary education, 11 percent to early childhood education and 5 percent to upper-secondary education.<sup>77</sup>

### Gender Equality in the Implementation Grants

According to the Secretariat's coding of grant program documents, of the 84 implementation grants that were active at some point in fiscal year 2023, 66 (79 percent) mainstreamed gender equality in one or more activities. In total, \$830 million worth of grant activities (or 33 percent of the total grant amount) mainstreamed gender equality.<sup>78</sup> All but four of these grants were approved before GPE 2025, which called for gender hardwiring in all grants.

To provide a more accurate and granular estimate of the extent to which existing grants integrate gender equality into program design, the Secretariat developed a new gender marker system in 2023 (box 3.2). In addition, to ensure gender equality is hardwired in every new grant approved under the GPE 2025 operating model, the Secretariat assesses grant concept notes and tracks the proportion of grants hardwiring gender equality from an early stage of program design (see box 3.3 for details).

#### BOX 3.2. GPE's gender marker system

To track the extent to which GPE grants contribute to the advancement of gender equality, the GPE Secretariat has recently developed a gender marker system. Building on the OECD Development Assistance Committee Gender Equality Policy Marker,<sup>a</sup> the new system will replace the way GPE currently assesses the extent of gender mainstreaming in GPE grants. It enables more accurate estimation of GPE's grant contribution to gender equality, nuancing different levels of gender focus in the grants.

The GPE gender marker system assigns a score from 0 to 2 to the subcomponents of a program based on the extent to which they target gender equality as a policy objective: 0 = not targeted; 1 = gender equality targeted as a significant objective; and 2 = gender equality targeted as a principal objective. Appendix E provides the definition of each score and examples of activities that qualify for each score. The scoring system is being piloted at the time of writing and the results of the analysis will be presented in future results reports.

a. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Handbook on the OECD-DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker, (Paris: OECD, December 2016), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Handbook-OECD-DAC-Gender-Equality-Policy-Marker.pdf>.

77 The remaining 22 percent consists of 19 percent for education level unspecified (for example, supporting education policy and administrative management) and 3 percent for other education levels and categories (for example, adult education).

78 The previous section showed the amount allocated to gender equality, which 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. The full (that is, unsplit) amount mainstreaming gender equality is \$830 million (or 33 percent of the total grant amount) as shown in this section.



### BOX 3.3. Hardwiring gender equality into program design

The GPE Secretariat conducts assessments of program concept notes in the early stage of program development to assess whether the program design sufficiently integrates gender equality and to identify grants that may need additional support.<sup>a</sup> The results of the assessment are aggregated to report on a new indicator (proportion of grants that sufficiently integrate gender equality from an early stage of their program design).<sup>b</sup> Of the first 11 countries assessed as of the end of July 2023, seven were on track at an early stage, and four were considered not on track and in need of additional focus on gender equality and support. For the four countries considered not on track, the grant agent, partners and GPE Secretariat have committed additional support to ensure that all program designs meet the gender equality standards before being submitted for approval. The indicator will continue to be reported in future results reports.

a. This process indicator, based on the first stage of the quality assurance process, does not necessarily reflect the characteristics of the program at a later stage.

b. The indicator is tracked cumulatively (all programs reviewed under GPE 2025) and will be reported on a rolling 12-month basis.

## 3.2. PERFORMANCE OF GPE GRANTS

(Indicators 14ia and 14ib)

### Overall Progress during Implementation

GPE results framework Indicator 14ia tracks the proportion of GPE implementation grants meeting objectives during implementation. Grants are considered on track to achieve their objectives if the overall implementation status and the fund utilization status are both on track, using GPE's grant monitoring standards.<sup>79</sup> This indicator covers education sector program implementation grants, Multiplier grants and system transformation grants.

Of the 67 grants with an implementation rating available in fiscal year 2023, 38 (or 57 percent) are on track to meet their overall objectives. The proportion of on-track grants decreased slightly from 64 percent in fiscal

year 2022, reversing the improvement in that year and returning to the levels of fiscal years 2020 and 2021, which reflected the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (figure 3.3).

Although the proportion of on-track grants is the lowest since the start of GPE 2020, there are promising signs in the progress of grants. Of the 29 grants rated off track in fiscal year 2023, more than half (16, or 55 percent of all off-track grants) received that rating because of off-track fund utilization even though implementation is on track.<sup>80</sup> These grants had issues that delayed implementation earlier in the program (for example, school closure due to COVID-19, delay in setting up project management unit). During this fiscal year, however, implementation has picked up the pace whereas fund utilization, which was backloaded because of initial implementation delay, is still catching up—resulting in an off-track utilization status. In four other grants, only implementation is off track, but utilization is not,<sup>81</sup> and

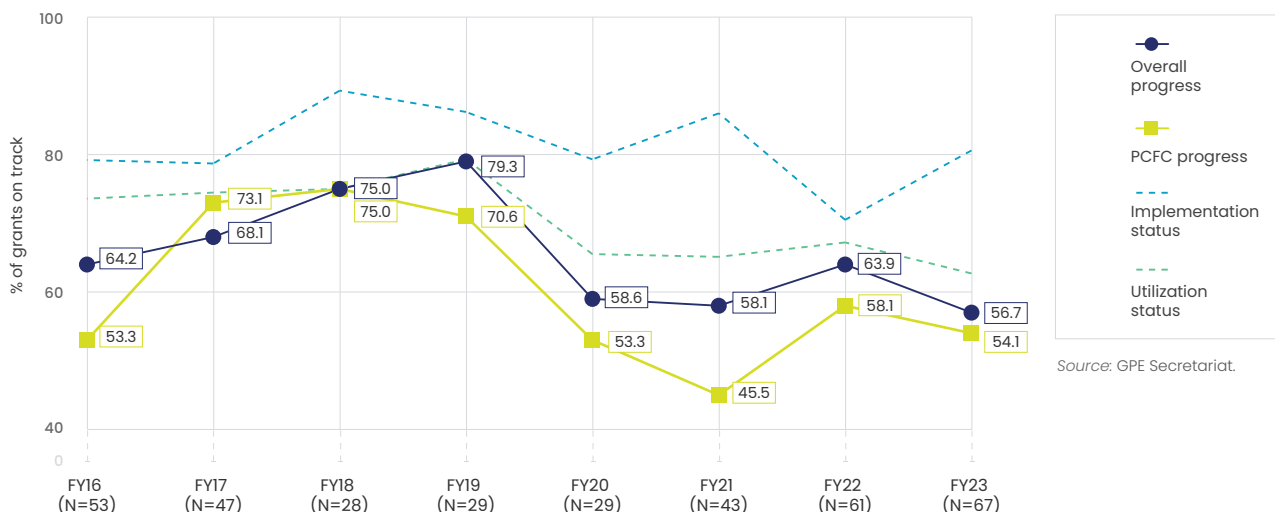
79 Global Partnership for Education (GPE), "Education Sector Program Implementation Grants' Annual Progress Report Template" (Washington, DC: GPE, May 2022), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/education-sector-program-implementation-grants-annual-progress-report-template-draft>. The process to reach an overall progress rating for each grant consists of four steps. First, the grant agent provides an overall implementation rating in the grant progress report. Ratings use a six-point scale from highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory, as defined in the progress report template. Second, the Secretariat triangulates that rating with other evidence available (for example, mission report, aide memoire) and converts the rating to on-track/off-track categorization (ratings of "moderately satisfactory" or better are considered on track). Third, the Secretariat determines the use rating for the grant, based on the fund utilization report received from the grant agent. A grant receives an on-track rating for the fund utilization if, at the end of the fiscal year, the proportion of grant time elapsed in a grant period does not exceed by more than 25 percentage points the proportion of funds used. Last, the Secretariat determines the overall progress rating by combining implementation and fund utilization ratings, rating a grant on track if both implementation and fund utilization are on track.

80 The 16 grants are Bangladesh, Caribbean, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia (education sector program implementation grant), Ethiopia (Multiplier), Ghana, Guinea-Bissau (approved in 2018), Kyrgyz Republic, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, South Sudan, Syria, Tanzania (Zanzibar), Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and the Republic of Yemen.

81 The four are Lao PDR, Mali, Pakistan (Balochistan) and Pakistan (Punjab). Mali's implementation rating was downgraded by the Secretariat.

**FIGURE 3.3.****The share of on-track grants fell after rebounding slightly from COVID-19 levels.**

Proportion of grants with on-track overall progress rating, overall and PCFCs, FY2016 to FY2023 (percent)



Source: GPE Secretariat.

Note: The methodology for this indicator changed slightly in FY2022 to ensure coherence in implementation ratings across the portfolio. The proportion of grants on track with implementation and the number of grants included in the analysis differ from those shown in past results reports and other reports for some years because the new analysis removed a few accelerated funding grants for consistency with the methodology of results framework Indicator 14ia under GPE 2025.

most of these grants have started to pick up the pace of implementation. The remaining nine were off track in both utilization and implementation.<sup>82</sup> Governments and grant agents are working to resolve the implementation stall.<sup>83</sup>

Grant implementation and fund utilization experience delays for various reasons. The Secretariat's analysis of delays in off-track grants from fiscal years 2014 to 2023 finds that procurement is the top reason for implementation delays, followed by the pandemic, challenges in the pre-implementation phase, issues related to program management, coordination challenges and program design issues. In recent years, more grants have also been affected by political instability in partner countries (for example, in the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Myanmar and Sudan). In addition, various analyses conducted by the Secretariat show a pattern of protracted delays when grants faced delays in the early years of the program.<sup>84</sup> This pattern explains the continued high proportion of off-track grants in recent years: the surge in approvals in the last years of GPE 2020

coincided with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused delays in the early stage of implementation of these grants.

The Secretariat has implemented several measures in recent years to further strengthen grant monitoring. The measures include (1) creation of the Grant Operations team, a stand-alone team dedicated to the administrative aspects of grants including consistency of reporting and monitoring on program implementation; (2) introduction of standardized reporting templates to strengthen reporting practices, notably on issues in implementation; (3) launch of several information technology tools for grant reporting and monitoring to facilitate the management of knowledge on grant performance; and (4) semiannual portfolio-level meetings with each grant agent. Together, these measures have further strengthened mutual accountability in grant implementation and better equipped the Secretariat to support governments and grant agents in smoother grant implementation.

<sup>82</sup> The nine off-track grants are in Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Madagascar, Micronesia, Myanmar, Pacific Islands, Sudan and Timor-Leste. The GPE Secretariat downgraded the implementation ratings of four of these grants (Honduras, Micronesia, Pacific Islands and Sudan), and two (Myanmar and Guinea-Bissau) did not have progress reports available.

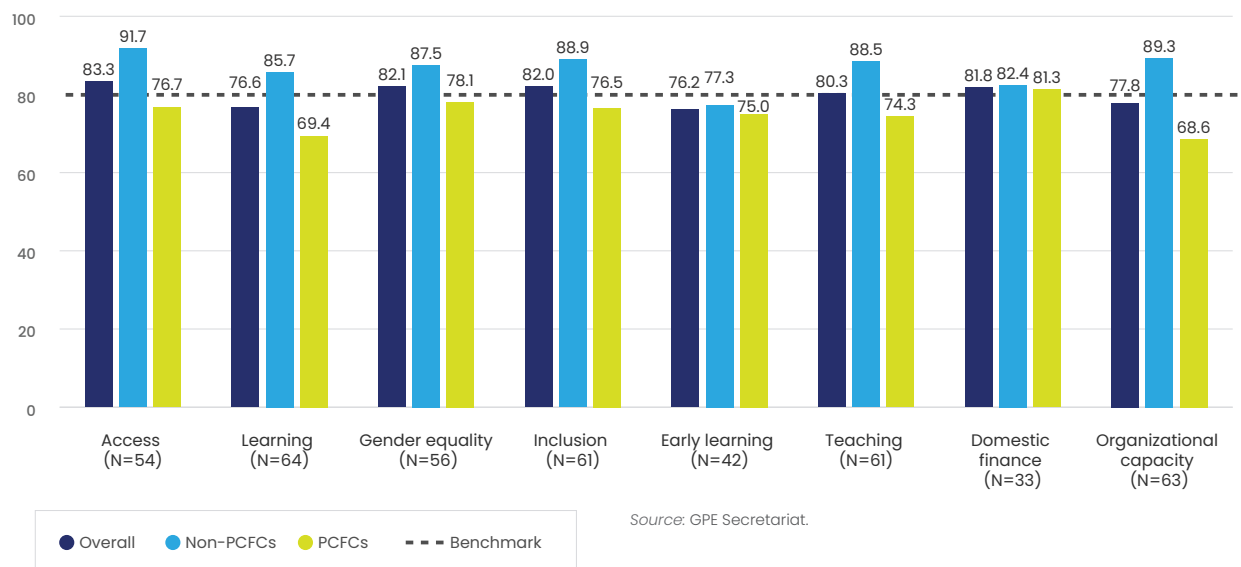
<sup>83</sup> In Myanmar, however, a solution is highly unlikely because of the continued pause of disbursement by the grant agent. The program is expected to be closed and the remaining allocation canceled.

<sup>84</sup> For example, the Secretariat's analysis of 61 closed grants that were approved after December 2011 shows that, if a grant took 4.5 months or longer from approval to effectiveness, it is more likely that the grant will take 4.5 years or longer to complete. GPE's grant policy then stipulated that grant duration should be three to four years. A recently conducted review of the completion reports (see box 3.5 for details) confirmed this trend by analyzing the narrative included in the completion reports for grants that experienced significant delays in implementation.

**FIGURE 3.4.**

**The proportion of on-track grants was around the 80 percent benchmark for all priority areas.**

*Proportion of on-track grants by GPE 2025 priority area, FY2023 (percent)*



### Progress by Priority Area

GPE results framework Indicator 14ia also tracks the proportion of implementation grants on track to meet the objectives for each of the eight priority areas under GPE 2025.<sup>85</sup> In fiscal year 2023, the proportion of on-track grants was around the 80 percent benchmark for all priority areas,<sup>86</sup> with little variation across priority areas (figure 3.4). For all priority areas, PCFCs had a lower proportion of grants on track to meet the objectives.

When looking at the share of component cost rated on track or off track, teaching and learning and organizational capacity had a higher share of the grant amount rated off track than other priority areas.<sup>87</sup> Notably, in the learning priority area, a high proportion of grants that were rated off track invested in curriculum development or textbook distribution. Grant agents' progress reports tend to note delays in the curriculum development or

approval process. For some grants, these delays affect the subsequent process of procuring textbooks or training teachers on the new curriculum. Grant agents' progress reports also note some delays in activities related to education management and information systems, decentralization and capacity development of school leaders, all of which are considered part of the development of organizational capacity in the GPE 2025 coding framework.

### Grant Completion Status

Results framework Indicator 14ib monitors the proportion of implementation grants that met their objectives at completion. A grant is considered to have met its overall objectives if the grant's efficacy is rated "substantial" or "high" according to GPE's grant completion reporting standards.<sup>88</sup> The indicator value

<sup>85</sup> The assessment of progress by priority area involves several steps. First, as part of their annual grant reporting, grant agents provide a rating on a six-point scale (from "highly satisfactory" to "highly unsatisfactory") assessing the level of progress for each grant component. Second, the Secretariat triangulates the grant agent's component ratings and provides its own ratings. Third, the Secretariat maps the implementation rating for each grant component to its respective priority area(s). Finally, a grant is considered on track to meet objectives in a priority area if more than 50 percent of the total cost for the grant components allocated to the priority area is rated "moderately satisfactory" or better.

<sup>86</sup> This proportion is higher than that of grants on track to meet the objectives discussed in the previous section, because overall grant progress takes implementation status and fund utilization status into account. This indicator considers only implementation status.

<sup>87</sup> The proportion of component costs that are rated on track is 88 percent for access, 79 percent for learning, 87 percent for gender equality, 86 percent for inclusion, 83 percent for early learning, 79 percent for teaching, 84 percent for domestic finance and 77 percent for organizational capacity.

<sup>88</sup> Global Partnership for Education (GPE), "Education Sector Plan Implementation Grant Completion Report Template for Projects," (Washington, DC: GPE, January 2022), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/education-sector-program-implementation-grants-completion-report-template>. Efficacy is defined as the extent to which the project achieved (or is expected to achieve) its objectives at the time of grant closing and to which results can be plausibly attributed to the project's activities. Efficacy ratings follow a four-point scale: high, substantial, modest and negligible. A project receives a "substantial" rating if it almost fully achieved its objectives or is likely to do so.

is calculated cumulatively for all grants that have submitted completion reports since fiscal year 2022, the first year of reporting on this indicator. Like the grant implementation status discussed in the previous section, this indicator tracks the proportion of grants that met the overall objective at completion and met the objectives for each of the eight priority areas under GPE 2025. Grants that are counted toward the indicator value for this year are education sector program implementation grants and Multipliers. See [box 3.4](#) for the achievement of COVID-19 accelerated funding grants.

Since the start of fiscal year 2022, 10 grants<sup>89</sup> have submitted completion reports. Performance of these grants was rated “substantial” or “high” for all grants except Afghanistan. The Afghanistan grant was on track to meet its objectives, but was canceled following the Taliban takeover in August 2021 before it met its objectives by the scheduled completion in 2024. Overall efficacy for all other grants was rated “high” for three grants and “substantial” for six grants. As of fiscal year 2023, the proportion of grants with available completion reports that have achieved their objectives is 90 percent.

Achievement status by the eight priority areas is assessed by mapping a component’s efficacy rating to the priority areas to which the component contributes. In a priority area, an implementation grant is considered to

have achieved its objectives if more than 50 percent of the total grant amount across the relevant components is rated “substantial” or “high.”

For the 10 grants that have submitted completion reports, most grants met their objectives in all priority areas. For all priority areas, only one grant (Afghanistan) did not meet the objective ([table 3.2](#)), with the exception of the learning priority area, in which the Kenya grant also missed its targets for improving early grade mathematics competencies.

The grant completion status for the 10 closed grants that have submitted completion reports so far during GPE 2025 is broadly consistent with the performance of the larger pool of closed grants included in the Secretariat’s recent review of completion reports ([box 3.5](#)).<sup>90</sup> Overall efficacy was in the satisfactory range for most grants, but a closer look at grant performance in different areas reveals the challenges grants face. For example, these 10 grants were extended for 22 months on average, indicating challenges in implementation efficiency. Completion reports also noted challenges in showing measurable improvements in learning outcome, issues with collecting the project’s monitoring and evaluation data in a timely manner and the need for additional flexibility to adapt project design in PCFCs.

**TABLE 3.2.**

**Most grants met their objectives in all priority areas.**

*Proportion of grants that met objectives, by eight priority areas under GPE 2025, FY2023 (N=10)*

	Access	Learning	Gender equality	Inclusion	Early learning	Teaching	Domestic finance	Organizational capacity
Number of grants supporting priority area	9	10	7	9	6	10	9	10
Number of grants that met objective	8	8	6	8	5	9	8	9
Proportion of grants that met objective (%)	89	80	86	89	83	90	89	90

Source: GPE Secretariat.

<sup>89</sup> The 10 grants are in Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Lao PDR, Malawi, Lesotho, Nepal, the Republic of Yemen and Zimbabwe.

<sup>90</sup> Partly because four grants included in the review are also counted toward Indicator 141b.

### **BOX 3.4. Achievement of COVID-19 accelerated funding grants**

As of the end of December 2022, all 67 COVID-19 accelerated funding grants had closed. These grants supported 66 partner countries in mitigating the impact of school closures and building resilience in education systems. Total funding for these 67 grants was \$474 million, with individual country allocations ranging from \$750,000 to \$20 million, depending on the size of the school-age population in each country. The average grant period was 22.1 months.

As of July 2023, the data cutoff for this report, 60 grants had submitted completion reports. Here are some highlights of the results reported.

- › **Distance and home learning programs** reached 100 million children through 53 grants, representing 20 percent of the total school-age population in the countries that reported this figure.<sup>a</sup> Of these 53 grants, 43 reported the number of girls reached, totaling 30 million, representing 48 percent of all children reached through these 43 grants.
- › **School meals and/or hygiene and sanitation kits** were provided for 21 million children through 19 grants.
- › **Awareness-raising campaigns** reached 59 million children through 31 grants. These campaigns aimed to minimize the negative effects of school closures, such as psychological effects, gender-based violence and issues related to unequal social norms.
- › **Teacher training on distance learning methods** reached more than 722,000 teachers through 38 grants.
- › **Teacher training on accelerated programs** benefited 397,000 teachers through 18 grants.
- › More than 176,000 schools were equipped with **minimum hygiene standards** for prevention of COVID-19 spread by 45 grants.
- › **Learning assessments** were conducted for 21 million children through 19 grants to assess the learning loss during school closures.

GPE's "Stories of Resilience during the COVID-19 Pandemic" showcases how eight partner countries, with funding from GPE, coped with the pandemic's impact on their education systems.<sup>b</sup> A summative evaluation is under way and the results will be available in December 2023.

*Note:* The numbers reported in this box do not correspond to the numbers of teachers trained and children benefited reported in another section of this chapter because (1) the number of teachers trained reported in the other section refers to the number of teachers trained in one year in fiscal year 2023, (2) the numbers of teachers and of children benefiting reported in the other section use the highest number reported among the indicators to avoid double counting and (3) for the seven grants that are missing a completion report, the number of teachers and beneficiary children reported in the other section are from the last progress report. See [appendix I](#) for details on the methodology used to determine the number of children benefiting from GPE grant funding.

a. For pre-primary to upper secondary.

b. Global Partnership for Education (GPE), "Stories of Resilience during the COVID-19 Pandemic: How Children Continued Learning with GPE Support," (Washington, DC: GPE, June 2022), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/stories-resilience-during-covid-19-pandemic>.



### **BOX 3.5. Key findings from the review of completion reports for GPE's education sector program implementation grants**

The Secretariat recently conducted a review of 26 completion reports submitted between 2019 and 2022.<sup>a</sup> The review aimed to assess the performance of closed programs, primarily along three dimensions: relevance, efficacy and efficiency. The review adapted the methodologies used for similar reviews commissioned by the Secretariat in 2019.<sup>b</sup> This internal, desk-based review did not involve interviews or surveys of country partners. Because of the sources of information examined, the review focused primarily on what the grants achieved and not necessarily on how they interacted with the broader education system.

In terms of relevance, completion reports show that all the programs aligned with their country's education sector plans as well as with GPE's continued goals of improving learning outcomes and promoting equity and inclusion. The largest number of programs addressed learning, followed by access and organizational capacity. In the area of learning, all but one of the objectives aimed to improve learning outcomes; however, less than half of these objectives had an indicator to measure progress in learning outcomes through learning assessments. Other program objectives used a proxy (for example, primary completion rates) or measured output-level results (for example, number of teachers trained) or intermediate outcome-level results (for example, increased competency of trained teachers), but did not measure improved learning outcomes in their results frameworks.

As for efficacy, all programs achieved most of their objectives. However, looking at the achievement level of individual program objectives, of the 46 objectives with independently validated efficacy ratings available, performance was modest for eight objectives. Seven of those eight objectives were to improve learning outcomes, and one was to improve equity in access. Program objectives were rated "modest" not only because of their low achievement status, but also because of issues related to data and measurement. Analysis of the achievement of program objective indicators also revealed that learning had the lowest share of indicators meeting targets.

Of the 18 programs with independently validated efficiency ratings available, more than half (10 out of 18) had low overall efficiency ratings. Almost all programs extended their completion dates, with an average extension of 18 months. The main factors for implementation delays related to procurement, such as lack of procurement staff with good technical and administrative knowledge and bandwidth.

The Secretariat has been working to consider the way forward based on the findings of this review. Potential areas for action include further research on success factors for interventions aimed at improving learning outcomes; ways to identify appropriate measurement, indicators and targets, particularly for learning outcomes; better use of lessons learned from a closed grant to a new grant in the same country; and better ways to support procurement in grants.

a. Global Partnership for Education (GPE), *Review of Completion Reports for GPE's Education Sector Program Implementation Grants (2019–22)*, (Washington, DC: GPE), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/review-completion-reports-gpes-education-sector-program-implementation-grants-2019-2022>.

b. J. H. Gaubatz, "Review of Completion Reports for the Global Partnership for Education's Education Sector Program Implementation Grants 2016–2018," (Washington, DC: GPE, December 2019), [https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2020-01-15-GPE-Review-of-Completion-Report-for-GPE-programs\\_0.pdf](https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=document/file/2020-01-15-GPE-Review-of-Completion-Report-for-GPE-programs_0.pdf); Global Partnership for Education (GPE), "Review of Value for Money Analyses in Closed GPE Education Sector Program Implementation Grants," (Washington DC: GPE, August 2019), <https://www.globalpartnership.org/sites/default/files/2019-10-07-gpe-review-of-value-for-money-analyses.pdf>.

## Textbook Distribution, Teacher Training and Classroom Construction and Rehabilitation

It has long been recognized that textbooks, professionally trained teachers and good physical learning environments are essential for a quality education. GPE's implementation grants have continuously supported the distribution of textbooks, teacher training and classroom construction. According to reports from grant agents, in fiscal year 2023,<sup>91</sup> 48 million textbooks were distributed, 481,000 teachers were trained and 6,664 classrooms were constructed or rehabilitated by implementation grants (see [appendix F](#) for unrounded numbers). Fifty-nine percent (or 28 million) of all textbooks distributed, 71 percent (or 342 thousand) of all teachers trained and 86 percent (or 5,723) of all classrooms constructed or rehabilitated were in PCFCs.

Although all three numbers decreased in fiscal year 2023 compared to fiscal year 2022 (see [appendix G](#)), the numbers achieved in the three years under GPE 2025 have already exceeded or are approaching the numbers achieved in the five years under GPE 2020 (see [table 3.3](#)). These numbers fluctuate from year to year, reflecting the number of grants supporting each area, the number of grants reporting actual numbers achieved and the scale of activities completed in each grant. In fiscal year 2023, the number of teachers trained was particularly affected by the closing of all COVID-19 accelerated funding grants (see "Portfolio

of Implementation Grants" section).<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, grants are achieving these numbers at a faster pace in GPE 2025 than in GPE 2020. Since the start of GPE 2025, 21,034 classrooms have been built or rehabilitated (exceeding, by 25 percent, the 16,837 classrooms built during GPE 2020), 1.4 million teachers have been trained (representing 92 percent of the 1.6 million teachers trained during GPE 2020) and 123 million textbooks have been distributed (representing 79 percent of the 156 million textbooks distributed during GPE 2020). COVID-19 accelerated funding grants accounted for 46 percent of all textbooks distributed and 62 percent of all teachers trained during the GPE 2025 period.

## Number of Students Benefiting from GPE Grant Financing

Since the start of GPE 2025, GPE has been monitoring the number of students benefiting from its implementation grants. This number is based on grant agents' reports on the number of students who directly participated in project activities, received project-supported incentives or services or otherwise benefited from project interventions through GPE implementation grants (see [appendix H](#) for the methodology). The implementation grants reporting this figure include regular implementation grants<sup>93</sup> and accelerated funding grants (including COVID-19 accelerated funding grants). The cumulative number of children benefiting increased from 107 million

**TABLE 3.3.**

### Number of textbooks distributed, teachers trained and classrooms constructed or rehabilitated, GPE 2020 and GPE 2025

	Numbers achieved in five years of GPE 2020 (2016–20)	Numbers achieved in three years in GPE 2025 (2021–23)
Number of textbooks distributed	155,715,890	123,052,602
Number of teachers trained	1,570,909	1,448,472
Number of classrooms constructed/ rehabilitated	16,837	21,034

Source: GPE Secretariat.

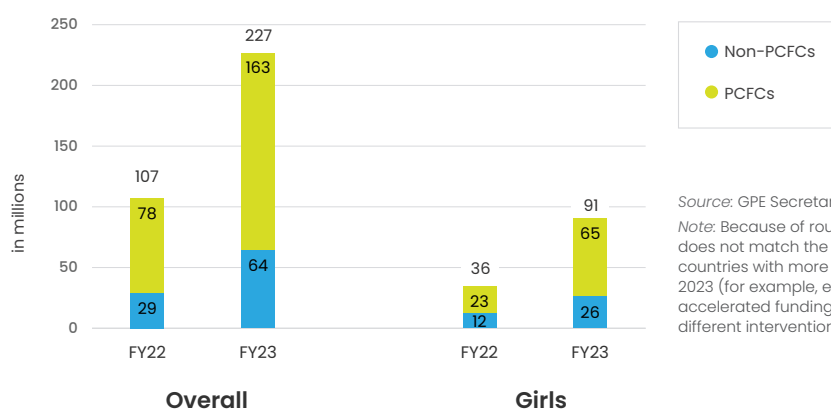
<sup>91</sup> This section shows the numbers of textbooks distributed, teachers trained and classrooms constructed or rehabilitated during the one-year period covered in the grants' progress or completion reports submitted in fiscal year 2023. Because grant agents submit these reports at different times in a year, the results included in these reports may predate the GPE Secretariat's fiscal year 2023.

<sup>92</sup> As indicated in table F.2 in [appendix F](#), in fiscal year 2023, 40 COVID-19 accelerated funding grants reported the number of teachers trained. Of these 40, 27 reported additional teachers trained, and 13 did not train any additional teachers who were not counted toward the fiscal year 2022 number.

<sup>93</sup> Education sector program implementation grants and multipliers.

**FIGURE 3.5.****GPE's implementation grants have reached 227 million children since the beginning of GPE 2025.**

Cumulative number of children benefiting from GPE financing since the beginning of GPE 2025, overall, PCFCs and non-PCFCs, FY2022 and FY2023 (in millions)



Source: GPE Secretariat.

Note: Because of rounding, the total number of girls benefiting in fiscal year 2022 does not match the sum of girls benefiting in PCFCs and non-PCFCs. For partner countries with more than one type of implementation grant during fiscal year 2023 (for example, education sector program implementation grant and COVID-19 accelerated funding grant), the same children may be counted as beneficiaries of different interventions financed by different grants.

in fiscal year 2022 to 227 million in fiscal year 2023 (figure 3.5; see appendix I for unrounded figures). This number represents 35 percent of all school-age children in the 68 countries with grants that reported this number.<sup>94</sup> Of the 227 million children reached, 72 percent, or 163 million children, are in PCFCs.

Of the 143 grants that reported the number of children reached, 130 (or 90 percent) also reported the number of girls reached. These grants reached 91 million girls, up from 36 million in fiscal year 2022. The number of girls benefited is 40 percent of the total number of children benefiting<sup>95</sup>—less than half of the total number of children benefiting—not only because 14 grants did not report the number of girls benefiting, but also because some grants reported only the number of girls benefiting from a specific activity in the grant rather than a disaggregation of girls for the total number of children benefiting from the entire project. Of the 91 million girls benefiting, 65 million (or 72 percent) are in PCFCs.

Grant agents also reported the cumulative numbers of children with disabilities, of refugee children and of internally displaced children supported by GPE grants since the start of GPE 2025. By the end of fiscal year 2023, GPE had cumulatively supported 242,188 children with disabilities, 48,276 refugee children and 211,110 internally displaced children (table 3.4). The increase in the number

of beneficiaries with disabilities can largely be explained by the COVID-19 accelerated funding grants and regular accelerated funding grants, for which many of the completion reports included the number of children with disabilities supported for the first time. The increase in the number of internally displaced children supported is largely due to an accelerated funding grant in Nigeria supporting conflict-affected children in the northeastern states.

### Grant Portfolio Performance: Overcoming Challenges and Delivering on Commitment

This chapter provides an update on the rollout of the new grant mechanism introduced by the GPE 2025 operating model and discusses the performance of active implementation grants. It shows that the rollout of the system transformation grants has been slower than expected because the pre-grant processes took longer than anticipated. As for the active implementation grants, their implementation and fund utilization continue to be affected by protracted delays due to the pandemic and other exogenous and endogenous factors. Although they have already reached 227 million children since the beginning of GPE 2025, this number is likely to decline in the coming years with the closure of all COVID-19 accelerated funding grants in December 2022.

<sup>94</sup> The percentage of children benefiting from GPE grants in the total school-age population may be overestimated because there may be inevitable double-counting of the same children benefiting from multiple GPE grants (for example, education sector program implementation grants and COVID-19 accelerated funding grants) in the same country.

<sup>95</sup> The 91 million account for 46 percent of all children benefiting from these 130 grants that reported number of girls benefiting.

**TABLE 3.4.****Grant agents reported over 210,000 children with disabilities and internally displaced children supported since the start of GPE 2025.**

*Cumulative number of children with disabilities, refugee children and internally displaced children benefiting from grant interventions, as of the end of FY2022 and FY2023*

	As of the end of FY2022		As of the end of FY2023	
	Cumulative number of grants reported	Cumulative number of beneficiaries	Cumulative number of grants reported	Cumulative number of beneficiaries
Children with disabilities	17	62,163	40	242,188
Refugee children	5	45,542	11	48,276
Internally displaced children	6	45,835	10	211,110

Source: GPE Secretariat.

However, there are promising signs that the tide will turn in fiscal year 2024. As of mid-November 2023, apart from five countries or subnational entities with a system transformation grant already approved in fiscal year 2024, 25 have already completed pre-grant processes as of mid-November 2023 and are in the grant application stage, which takes less time than pre-grant processes. This progress, along with the operating model adaptations approved by the Board in July 2023 and other actions already taken by the Secretariat, is expected to accelerate the rollout. Of ongoing implementation grants, most of the grants that were off-track in fiscal year 2023 are expected to be back on track in the coming years.

As revealed in chapter 1, only one in five children in our partner countries attains minimum proficiency by the end of primary education. Given this situation, it is evident that the demand for GPE funding remains significant and urgent. While recognizing the promising signs observed in new and ongoing grants, greater concerted efforts are needed from all partners to deliver on our commitment to transform education systems and to provide quality education for every child.

