GPE’s Work in Conflict-affected and Fragile Countries

Highlights

1. 28 GPE’s developing country partners are classified as fragile and conflict-affected countries (FCAC). That’s 43 percent of all of GPE’s developing country partners.

2. 12 transitional education plans are currently being used with GPE support.

3. 4 countries have benefited from accelerated funding, totaling more than US$22 million (99 percent disbursed as of January 31, 2016).

   - CAR: US$3,690,000
   - Chad: US$6,955,170
   - Somalia (Federal government): US$1,380,000
   - Yemen: US$10,000,000

GPE has provided a foundation for coordination and dialogue among development and humanitarian actors in countries as diverse as Chad, Burundi, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Somalia, and Yemen. Through its Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-affected States, and its Guidelines for Accelerated Support in Emergency and Early Recovery Situations, GPE has successfully promoted coordinated decisions about the best way to utilize resources in crisis settings, such as shifting them to non-governmental providers for direct service provision during acute crises.

According to a 2013 Brookings study, GPE has introduced “modalities that not only allow GPE to support new FCAS entering the partnership but also continue supporting the education needs of young people when stable countries experience crises and disasters.”

1. Overview

Millions of children around the world are affected by conflict, natural disasters, complex humanitarian emergencies, internal strife, and fragility. Increasingly, the world’s out-of-school children live in countries facing war and violence. As a result, they are deprived of their right to education. Ensuring access to education protects the rights of children and youth in the midst of chaos while instilling a sense of normalcy and shoring up resilience.

1 Twenty-two are classified as fragile by the World Bank and 18 are classified as conflict-affected by UNESCO; 12 fall into both lists.
Many of these children have not been given an opportunity to go to school or have been taken away from schooling. Children cross borders or become permanently displaced without a guarantee that they can go to school when they finally arrive at a safer destination. Over one-third of the world’s refugee children are still missing out on primary education, and three out of four have no access to secondary education. More than one-third of countries hosting refugees do not recognize their right to education; more than 60 percent of these refugee children live within the boundaries of GPE partner countries.

The Global Partnership for Education is strongly committed to addressing this crisis. GPE 2020, the partnership’s new strategic plan, makes support for conflict-affected and fragile countries (FCAC) a focus over the next five years. This continues what has been a steady increase in GPE support to FCAC. Such a focus is supported by participation of countries affected by conflict and fragility on GPE’s Board and Board Committees.

GPE’s approach to FCAC begins with the allocation of GPE financing, using an eligibility and allocation framework that places an emphasis on low- and lower-middle-income countries with high levels of out-of-school children. It specifically weights allocations toward countries affected by fragility and conflict. This has led to a significant increase in the proportion of grants disbursed to FCAC (Chart 1) and the growth in the number of FCAC in the partnership (Chart 2).

GPE deploys a progressive approach in emergencies and during protracted crises, providing flexibility to address challenges and optimize program results. GPE finances education interventions that accompany children throughout a country’s progress from preparedness through to recovery to reduce the impact of any future crises. It recognizes that securing a continuum of education services across the divide between humanitarian and development interventions is crucial to maintaining the important progress made by school-going children and youth, teachers, and education systems.

**CHART 1: GPE ALLOCATIONS TO FCAC**

GPE Cumulative Allocations to Fragile and Conflict-affected Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Allocation (USD millions)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,039.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
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**Source:** GPE Secretariat, 2016
GPE support in emergency contexts has three main components:

1. GPE supports education sector plans that reinforce emergency readiness, preparedness, and planning through its sector planning grants.

2. GPE supports transitional education planning, which offers a unique starting point for policy coordination when countries are emerging from a crisis—specifically recognizing the need to link between development actors (organized within a local education group (LEG) and humanitarian actors (through the education cluster).

3. Through its accelerated financing mechanism, countries with existing GPE allocation are able to draw down on up to 20 percent of this allocation to meet immediate needs when a crisis strikes.

4. GPE grants can also be restructured to meet urgent emergency needs, and can be deployed for direct service provision to address urgent needs, under the GPE Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-affected States.
2. GPE Mechanisms for Support in Conflict-affected and Fragile Contexts

TRANSITIONAL EDUCATION PLANNING AND PREPAREDNESS PLANNING ACROSS THE PARTNERSHIP

During early recovery, GPE can provide financial and technical support to help countries to establish a transitional (or interim) education plan (TEP), which forms the basis for a coordinated approach by identifying priority actions in the medium term.

A TEP enables a government and its partners to develop a structured plan to maintain progress toward ensuring the right to education and meeting longer-term educational goals. It further seeks to address immediate needs relevant to the context, as well as actions needed to strengthen education system capacities.

A TEP results in:

- **A common framework to help the government align development and humanitarian partners in support of education.** This alignment is especially important in situations where both development and humanitarian partners and their funding are present. The TEP can then also serve as a vehicle for harmonizing emergency or early recovery education activities that may be specified in a humanitarian response plan with longer-term development priorities for the education sector.

- **Accelerated timelines** so that urgently needed funds can be received in transition contexts.

- **Robust plans** that will facilitate access to external education financing opportunities.

- **A sense of ownership** among those involved in the planning process, which will aid the implementation of the plan.

- **A “road map”** for a few priority education programs for three years.

In addition, GPE prioritizes and incentivizes the inclusion of crisis preparedness and planning in sector dialogue mechanisms and education planning exercises. Revised guidelines for education sector plan (ESP) preparation, created in cooperation with the International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP), are used by GPE to establish minimum standards for all ESPs, which GPE has committed to monitoring as part of GPE 2020. To qualify as credible, a plan must include “an analysis of the country vulnerabilities, such as conflict, disasters, and economic crises, and shall address preparedness, prevention, and risk mitigation for the resilience of the system.”

ACCELERATED SUPPORT IN EMERGENCY AND EARLY RECOVERY SITUATIONS (ADOPTED BY THE BOARD IN 2012)

GPE accelerated funding allows disbursement within eight weeks of up to 20 percent of GPE’s indicative allocation for a partner country. The use of funds is based on the education cluster needs assessment and agreed upon by the local education group and the education cluster at the country level.

Through this mechanism, GPE can provide rapid assistance to countries that are: (i) eligible for education sector plan implementation grants (ESPIG); (ii) affected by a crisis for which a humanitarian appeal has been launched and published by the UN Office for the Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs, with education as a part of that appeal; and (iii) able to demonstrate that GPE funds will not displace government and/or other donor funds, but will be in addition to other resources.

Activities can include, but are not limited to, emergency activities such as temporary shelters, school meals.
and distribution of school supplies, as well as activities critical to establishing or rebuilding education services, such as classroom construction, teacher remuneration, and school grants. Accelerated support should be implemented within one year, by which time the country should have applied for the remaining 80 percent allocation for longer-term development programming. This promotes a link between shorter-term emergency response and longer-term development needs.

**GPE OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE SUPPORT IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES (ADOPTED IN MAY 2013)**

In 2013, GPE adopted an Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-affected States. This policy aims to provide more effective support when emergencies occur during ESPIG implementation, calling for a rapid review of the situation by the local education group, immediate notification and exploration of alternatives in cases where a grant agent can no longer implement planned activities due to a crisis, and efficient grant revisions where adjustments are needed in order to address education needs arising from an emergency.

Under this policy GPE is able to redirect resources to priority activities arising from the emergency—with the same grant agent (as in Yemen in 2015), or to an alternative grant agent who can ensure continuity of services and salaries, as occurred in Madagascar in 2009 and is currently underway in Burundi.

**3. GPE’s Increased Focus on Refugee and Displaced Children**

GPE partner developing countries are home to just over 3 million refugee children, about 63 percent of the world’s refugee children population. Yet few GPE

**CHART 3: GPE GRANT ALLOCATIONS**

GPE Cumulative Grant Allocations—2003–2015
(in USD millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fragile and Conflict-Affected</th>
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<td>2015</td>
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**Source:** GPE Secretariat, 2016

4 UNHCR and GPE data. UNHCR data only accounts for refugees for whom demographic data is available.
partner countries include refugees in their education sector planning, and many lack the capacity and resources to address the educational needs of refugees.

In response, GPE is reaching out to strengthen the partnership by bringing in key partners that address the needs of displaced children affected by conflict and crisis, and also by encouraging greater attention to the education of refugees and displaced populations in education sector plans.

GPE and UNHCR signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on April 15, 2016, that aims to enhance their collaboration and further strengthen GPE’s work on refugee education. Some of the activities under the MoU include:

- Strengthened engagement by UNHCR in local education groups, and by education partners working with UNHCR on refugee education
- Focused work with national education partners on the inclusion of refugees in national and sub-national education policies, sector plans, and budgets
- Provision of technical advice to national partners in design and implementation of programs to address key challenges in meeting the educational needs of refugees
- Leveraging of development partners for programming and funds to benefit refugees in protracted settings and/or where enhancement of national systems is required to absorb refugees
- Targeted support to address critical gaps in refugee education service provision, including education for girls and adolescents, quality, and learning achievement

4. GPE’s Results in Partner Countries

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR): EARLY RECOVERY AND COORDINATION

In the Central African Republic, GPE contributed to an early recovery intervention through the provision of accelerated funding and support for the development of a transitional education plan. After the 2013 crisis, over one-third of schools were damaged and non-functioning. A GPE grant for US$15.5 million for 2014 to 2015, managed by UNICEF, has helped more than 100,000 children return to school. The grant has also delivered school kits to more than 250,000 children, rehabilitated more than 250 classrooms, and supported catch-up classes in target schools.

GPE played a unique role in promoting donor coordination through the creation of the first local education group in CAR, which in turn proved to be an important mechanism for planning when crisis struck. It also helped to leverage additional financing, aligned with the transitional education plan. Today, donors are fully aligned around CAR’s sector plan: a European Union program, fully aligned to the transitional education plan, complements the GPE program (targeting provinces not covered by the GPE program but with the same package of interventions). A program of Agence...
Française de Développement helps to re-establish the capacity of the Ministry of Education in coordination with the GPE program, NGOs provide co-funding to implement activities through the GPE program, and the humanitarian education cluster works closely with the local education group.

**CHAD: SUPPORTING A COORDINATED NATIONAL RESPONSE TO A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS**

The humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad region involves large numbers of refugees and returnees fleeing violence in northeastern Nigeria. The crisis is exacerbated by declining oil prices, which challenge the government’s ability to meet spending targets in education.

Using GPE support, Chad set a strong example for GPE partner countries by becoming the first GPE partner to include refugees in its transitional education plan in 2013. GPE subsequently provided Chad with two grants to implement the TEP (US$7.06 million and US$40.14 million for the period 2013–2016.) An existing humanitarian appeal includes education, and GPE confirmed in May 2015 an indicative allocation of US$34.8 million in new funding for Chad. GPE is supporting Chad’s development of an education sector plan for the period 2017 to 2026.

In March 2015, during Chad’s annual education joint sector review (JSR), a discussion between the Ministry of Education and its development partners led to a decision to mobilize additional funding to respond to its humanitarian crisis. Under GPE’s accelerated support policy, Chad was eligible to request US$6.96 million as accelerated funding to focus on basic service delivery in August 2015.

GPE and the members of the local education group worked closely with the country’s education cluster to develop an emergency project aimed at addressing the education crisis in the Lake Chad region. The Chadian government’s approach has been to shore up the school system in the most troubled areas so that affected populations will not feel abandoned in the context of severe national spending cuts. This has included payment of subsidies for community school teachers, school feeding, micronutrients, dignity kits for girls, and support for civics education, in addition to classroom construction, latrines and water supply for schools, in-service teacher training, textbook distribution, and literacy for out-of-school youth.

The Chadian authorities submitted a final proposal for accelerated financing to GPE on January 8, 2016. Funding was approved by the Country Grants and Performance Committee on February 4, 2016, meeting GPE’s commitment to processing accelerated funding proposals within a four-week window. Funds were rapidly disbursed to GPE implementing partner UNICEF by February 9, 2016, demonstrating the speed with which GPE can move to support accelerated financing for humanitarian crises.

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC): SUPPORT FOR BETTER PLANNING AND DOMESTIC FINANCING**

Access to a free, quality education for all Congolese children was introduced in 2010 by the government. But in many towns and villages, parents still contribute to school costs to cover school maintenance, administration, and even supplies and teachers’ salaries.

GPE has supported DRC to prepare a transitional education plan for the period 2012 to 2014—the country’s first education sector plan since independence. Motivated by the new TEP, the government increased the share of its budget allocated to education, from...
9 percent in 2010 to 16 percent in 2013, with the goal of reaching 18 percent by 2018.

GPE is presently supporting the government’s efforts with a US$100 million grant that covers school rehabilitation and construction in the most deprived provinces, distribution of 20 million textbooks around the country, and improvements in sector management. It is also investing in a new education sector plan, which includes a vulnerability analysis conducted with the support of IIEP.

GPE is supporting the DRC to develop a new ESP for the period 2016 to 2025, and to prepare its application for a second grant of US$100 million for consideration by the GPE Board in 2016.

**SIERRA LEONE: GRANT RESTRUCTURING DURING A HEALTH EMERGENCY**

In 2015, education progress in Sierra Leone was significantly affected by the Ebola crisis. In response, Sierra Leone, a GPE partner since 2007, used GPE’s Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-affected States to restructure a part of its US$17.9 million GPE grant to meet immediate educational needs. GPE funds were used to support emergency radio and television school programs when schools were closed and to ensure safe and secure learning environments when schools reopened.

GPE stood ready to similarly restructure its funding in Guinea and Liberia, staying in contact with local education groups and monitoring each situation closely. This however proved unnecessary as other sources of funding were available in these countries, allowing GPE financing to focus support on the transition out of crisis response to allow development efforts to resume.

**SOUTH SUDAN: LINKING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE AND LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT**

Two years after its independence, South Sudan joined the Global Partnership for Education. GPE supported the development of the country’s education sector plan, and provided US$36.1 million in funding to support it during the 2013–2016 period.

In December 2013, renewed conflict broke out in South Sudan, creating another humanitarian crisis in which an estimated 2 million people, including 500,000 children, were displaced in three states. Using GPE’s Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-affected States, the local education group, in consultation with the education cluster, including the Ministry of Education, donors, and UN agencies, was activated to plan for the best use of GPE and other funds to address this crisis.

GPE played an important role in facilitating consensus among these stakeholders to leverage funds from other donors to support educational programming in the three conflict-affected states. This allowed GPE funding to protect the rights of children in the unaffected states, as well as to support the transition from emergency to long-term development in the conflict-affected states.

Today, South Sudan is concluding its second sector analysis with support from GPE, and preparing for a GPE education sector plan implementation grant. The sector analysis has included a vulnerability analysis in order to integrate emergency needs within the ESP. As a result, the Ministry of Education is planning to establish an education-in-emergency unit within the ministry so as to better coordinate development and emergency activities in the future.

**SOMALIA: INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO TRANSITIONAL EDUCATION PLANNING**

After years of civil war, in 2012 Somalia joined GPE as a federal state. More than 75 percent of Somalia’s public schools were destroyed or closed, and two generations of children had grown up largely without access to basic education.

GPE provided critical funding and helped Somalia rally support for a plan to rebuild the nation’s school system, working in an innovative fashion with three regions to develop transitional education plans. For
the first time ever, there are TEPs in place for all three Somali regions: Somalia (Federal government), Somaliland, and Puntland. As a result, Somalia is shifting away from fragmented, emergency activities and toward better planning and program implementation.

Since 2012, GPE has supported Somalia with grants to each of these regions, providing US$14.5 million in total. These grants have supported payment of teachers’ salaries, girls’ access to schools, and accelerated training programs that allowed children access to public schools from the beginning of the 2013–2014 school year.

Somalia is presently eligible for an additional allocation of US$33.1 million for a second grant phase.

Yemen, a GPE partner since 2003, has received over US$120 million in funding from the partnership. GPE supported the country’s most recent TEP for 2013–2015.

In 2015, escalating conflict led to considerable disruption of education in Yemen. An emergency meeting of the local education group was convened by the Ministry of Education to determine how best to use GPE funds to respond to the conflict that left 1.8 million children out of school.

Using the GPE Operational Framework for Effective Support in Fragile and Conflict-affected States, approximately US$10 million (of a US$72.6 million grant) were subsequently redirected for rebuilding 150 schools, psycho-social support to 37,500 girls and boys, and basic school supplies for nearly 91,000 children.

More recently, during the meeting of the local education group in Amman, Jordan, Yemeni partners supported the TEP to ensure the continuation of education activities in the country. The LEG in Yemen helped partners who have suspended their operations in the country to be involved in the sector dialogue and so enabled them to remain engaged during the crisis.

5. Conclusion

GPE’s three main mechanisms for support in fragile and conflict-affected contexts—accelerated financing, transitional education plans, and the Operational Framework for Effective Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-affected States—ensure that GPE’s funding to the education sector does not stop when emergencies strike, and that partners work together to identify needs and the best use of GPE funds, as has happened in CAR, Chad, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen.

Moreover, the process to receive accelerated funding requires development and humanitarian actors to work together in a way that helps strengthen the link between emergency response, recovery, and development, and promotes improved coordination. Notably, this model has ensured rapid response, sustained financing, and improved donor alignment and coordination in countries such as CAR, DRC, Madagascar, Yemen, and more recently Chad. As demonstrated in

5 See GPE Portfolio Review 2015 and Menashy and Dryden-Peterson, 2015a and 2015b.
Chad and Sierra Leone, GPE financing can be moved rapidly and effectively to meet emergency needs.

GPE is continuing to refine policy and program approaches to improve support for education in crisis environments and address gaps and challenges:

1. **The Operational Framework for Effective Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-affected States and its accelerated financing mechanism forces a choice between emergency and development needs, whereby funds for crisis are not additional to existing development funds. Some countries choose to use GPE funding to address emergency needs; on the whole, however, governments tend to choose to try to raise funds from other sources if possible and retain GPE funds to address longer-term development goals, as South Sudan chose to do when the crisis intensified and the potential reallocation of GPE funds was discussed and decided against in 2014.**

2. **Although more than half of the world’s refugee children live within GPE partner countries, few countries include them in their national education sector plans and programs— a notable exception being Chad. More can be done to include refugee education within nationally owned planning and programming.**

GPE’s eligibility and allocation models are not responsive when there is a rapid deterioration of educational opportunities in countries and regions that are not already GPE partners. For example, as of the 2014 data released in 2016, Syria is now eligible for GPE financing because it has more than 15 percent of children out of primary school and a per capita income of under US$2,500. However, GPE was not positioned to support Syria as the crisis unfolded, missing the chance to provide education for the millions of out-of-school children who are the victims of this crisis.

Given the significant gap in education emergency funding, and the fact that so many out-of-school children affected by conflict and crises live within GPE partner countries, GPE recognizes the need for enhanced action. GPE’s current approach should be seen as a solid foundation and model for future efforts, but also warrants further elaboration in order to meet these challenges.
Bibliography


