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**Fund the Future: Funding the Global Partnership for Education**

**GCE BRIEFING PAPER**

**EDUCATION IN CRISIS**

In 2015, world leaders committed to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030 through the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SD4). The Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action, further elaborated the framework for operationalising SDG4.[[1]](#endnote-1) Together, they set ambitious targets to ensure free, inclusive, equitable, quality public education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Two years into implementation of the SDG framework, the world is far from making the kind of rapid and ambitious headway required to meet these goals. There are 264 million children and youth out of school.[[2]](#endnote-2) On current trends, the world will be half a century late in meeting the 2030 SDG deadline for all children to be in school.[[3]](#endnote-3)  What’s more, rather than making progress, the out-of-school rate is currently at a virtual stand-still.[[4]](#endnote-4) Without urgent change, globally, more than 1.5 billion adults will have no education beyond primary school in 2030.[[5]](#endnote-5)

This is a crisis of access to education, but there is also a crisis in learning. 617 million children and adolescents – 6 out of 10 children and adolescents - are failing to learn a minimum in reading and mathematics. Two-thirds of these children are in school: a devastating indictment of the quality of many education systems.[[6]](#endnote-6) On current trends, less than 10% of young people in low-income countries will be have learnt basic secondary level skills in 2030.[[7]](#endnote-7) A lack of quality educational opportunities also contributes to the 750 million adults – almost two thirds of whom are women – unable to read or write.[[8]](#endnote-8)

These twin crises disproportionately impact low-income families, children with disabilities, minority ethnic groups, those affected by conflict, refugees, migrants, girls and women; all too often, those already facing discrimination and disadvantage, further deepening a profound sense of marginalisation and rising inequality.

**INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION IS AN INVESTMENT IN A BETTER FUTURE**

The crisis in education cannot be allowed to continue: education is the answer to many of the problems faced in the world today. Education is also a fundamental human right.

The case for investing in education is unquestionable. Education is critical for long-term economic growth and fighting poverty. Education provides the skills that boost employment opportunities and incomes, while more equitable education reduces inequality, lifting the poorest out of extreme poverty. What’s more, young people today face extraordinary technological and demographic change, which is reshaping the future of the global economy. Investment in today’s young citizens is vital to a nation’s future wealth.

Investment in SDG4 is also a proven enabler of the whole sustainable development agenda. It can improve long-term health benefits, ensure greater gender equality, promote democratic governance, foster more sustainable livelihoods, and tackle environmental degradation.[[9]](#endnote-9)

In other words, investment in equitable and quality education for all, is a proven investment in a better tomorrow.

**Education is crucial to progress and prosperity: 10 key facts**

1. World poverty could be cut in half if all adults completed secondary education.[[10]](#footnote-1)
2. The cost of 250 million children not learning the basics is equivalent to a loss of US$129 billion per year.[[11]](#footnote-2),[[12]](#footnote-3)
3. Each additional year of schooling raises average annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth by 0.37%.[[13]](#footnote-4)
4. A dollar invested in an additional year of schooling, particularly for girls, generates earnings and health benefits of US$10 in low-income countries and nearly US$4 in lower-middle income countries.[[14]](#footnote-5)
5. Around one-third of the reductions in adult mortality since 1970 can be attributed to gains in educating girls and young women.[[15]](#footnote-6)
6. Some countries lose more than US$1 billion a year by failing to educate girls to the same level as boys.[[16]](#footnote-7)
7. A child whose mother can read is 50% more likely to live past the age of five, 50% more likely to be immunised, and twice as likely to attend school.[[17]](#footnote-8)
8. If all mothers completed primary education, maternal deaths would be reduced by two-thirds, saving 189,000 lives.[[18]](#footnote-9)
9. Inequality fuels unrest and when educational inequality doubles, the probability of conflict more than doubles.[[19]](#footnote-10)
10. Universalising upper secondary education by 2030 would prevent 200,000 disaster-related deaths in the 20 years that follow.[[20]](#footnote-11)

**A FAILURE OF FUNDING**

Sufficient financing is critical to delivering SDG4. Yet, financing remains significantly lower than it needs to be. This is due to insufficient domestic resources allocated to education in developing countries, combined with a lack of support from donors and the international community.

The Global Education Monitoring Report has estimated that unless we see a radical shift in financing for education, including aid, the SDG4 targets for primary and secondary education will remain off track by 50 years.[[21]](#endnote-10) The needs are great. The Education Commission estimates that financing for education needs to steadily increase from $1.2 trillion USD to $3 trillion USD by 2030.[[22]](#endnote-11)

Urgent attention is required to secure sufficient financing for the implementation of the ambitious SDG4 targets.

**FUNDING GPE 2020: A VITAL PART OF ACHIEVING A FINANCING BREAKTHROUGH FOR SDG4**

A financing breakthrough is required to achieve SDG4 – developing countries, donors and the international community must work together to achieve this. At the start of 2018, two full years into the implementation of Education 2030 period, there is a unique opportunity to begin to achieve this breakthrough.

*“The Global Partnership for Education’s Financing Conference is out first opportunity to turn political commitment into tangible support”*

**António Guterres,   
Secretary-General of the UN**

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) will hold an historic replenishment conference in Senegal, co‐hosted with France. Ensuring the Global Partnership for Education – the only multilateral partnership devoted to getting all children into school for a quality education – has sufficient funding is vital to reversing a global funding gap for education.

The Global Partnership for Education has set a goal of reaching US$2 billion annually by 2020. Both donors and developing country partners will be expected to make financing pledges at the upcoming conference. GPE is asking:

1. Donor governments to provide US$3.1 billion
2. Developing country governments to allocate 20% of government expenditure to education.

This is a unique opportunity to gain commitments where the need is often the greatest, because GPE supports quality and equitable primary and secondary education in the countries that are home to approximately 870 million children and youth, and 78% of the world’s out-of-school children.[[23]](#endnote-12)

**What is the Global Partnership for Education?**

Established in 2002, the Global Partnership for Education is the world’s only multilateral partnership exclusively devoted to improving the provision of quality education for children. GPE brings together governments, multilateral agencies, international organisations, foundations, the private sector, and civil society to mobilise technical and financial resources towards the areas in greatest need.

At the heart of GPE is a belief in the value of bringing together developing country governments with donor country governments, civil society, the teaching profession and the private sector, to pool resources and knowledge in support of education, both globally and nationally. Through this approach, it achieves coordinated, strategic support to nationally-led education plans that aim to provide every child with a quality basic education. The Global Partnership for Education has grown from 7 developing country partners in 2002 to 65 in 2017. GPE disbursements have increased from US$16 million in 2004 to US$446 million in 2015, making the organisation the second-largest multilateral donor to basic and secondary education after the World Bank in low- and lower-middle income countries.[[24]](#endnote-13)

GPE’s support has achieved the following results in partner countries:

* 72 million more children in primary school in 2015 compared with 2002
* 76% completed primary school in 2015 compared with 63% in 2002
* 74% primary completion rates for girls in 2015 compared with 57% in 2002
* 50% lower-secondary school completion rates in 2015 compared with 38% in 2002 (and from 35% to 48% for girls)

See GPE’s Case for Investment: <https://replenishment.globalpartnership.org/en/case-for-investment/>

**DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTNER COMMITMENTS AT THE GPE FINANCING CONFERENCE**

The Global Campaign for Education is calling for a significant breakthrough in mobilising new domestic resource commitments for education at the GPE Financing Conference. GPE has a unique approach, in which developing country partners are incentivised to increase financing through a results-based funding model.[[25]](#endnote-14) As a commitment to the partnership at the February 2nd Financing Conference, all developing country partners will be expected to make a pledge. Symbolic of this unique approach, the GPE financing conference, will be the first time that such a global fund replenishment has taken place in a developing country. This offers an incredible opportunity for developing countries to lead the way, and for donors and the international community to build on their efforts.

Securing new commitments to domestic financing particularly matters in education. The Education Finance Commission report recognised that 97% of the new financing needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal on education would need to come from domestic resources.[[26]](#endnote-15) Yet, while governments of low- and lower-middle-income countries have increased their spending on education since 2000, there is still a need for a huge scale-up of domestic finance directed towards education.[[27]](#endnote-16) A lack of finance for education is the result of insufficient prioritisation of education from domestic resources, and weak or regressive tax systems.

Download the [Compact on Domestic Finance](http://www.campaignforeducation.org/docs/resources/Compact%20on%20Domestic%20Financing%20of%20Education_EN.pdf) to find out more about GCE’s position on developing country partners commitments in Dakar.

Developing Country Partners can make timebound and ambitious pledges towards reversing this in Dakar on February 2nd. In line with the Education 2030 Framework for Action and the GPE benchmark,[[28]](#endnote-17) countries should pledge to maintain their budget share allocated to education at, or above, 20%. Countries that fall short, should pledge to make ambitious steps towards increasing their share of the national budget spent on education. They should demonstrate how pledges will be financed; this could include a commitment to expanding tax bases in progressive ways, to at least 20% tax to GDP ratio, (for example by ending harmful tax incentives, challenging avoidance, raising new earmarked taxes) and allocating a fair share of those funds to education. Pledges should also be framed in terms of how increased resources might help achieve the GPE 2020 strategic priorities of improving equity, inclusion and quality in education. Finally, commitments made must be credible with clear baseline data, evidence-based targets and a commitment to track and report on them over time in a fully transparent way.

We know that greater domestic resource mobilisation also needs concerted international efforts to tackle the unfair tax rules that leave developing countries losing billions (which could be spent on teachers and textbooks) in tax. It is for this reason, the Global Campaign for Education stands committed to advocating for international action for tax justice, including ensuring a UN body is formed to help re-draft fairer global tax rules.[[29]](#endnote-18)

**DONOR PARTNERS COMMITMENT AT THE FINANCING CONFERENCE**

In the spirit of shared responsibility, the Global Campaign for Education, is calling for efforts to increase domestic resources, to go hand-in-hand with international action to support countries to meet their education targets.

The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report has shown that even when domestic resources are increased to ambitious levels in low-income countries, there would still be a funding shortfall of US$39 billion in low-income countries.[[30]](#endnote-19) In this context, aid remains central to meeting the SDG targets. Yet aid remains far short of what is needed to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4, putting commitments at risk. In fact, aid needs to be multiplied six times to achieve SDG4. But rather than increasing, the amount of aid allocated to education has been falling - for six years in a row.

What’s more, aid, increasingly, is not allocated according to need. Aid to basic education in sub-Saharan Africa, home to over half of the world’s out-of-school children has been halved since 2002. Sub-Saharan Africa now only gets 26% of total aid to basic education, barely more than the 22% allocated to Northern Africa and Western Asia, where 9% of children are out of school.[[31]](#endnote-20)

In contrast to trends in bilateral aid to education, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) allocated 77% of its disbursements to sub-Saharan Africa, and 60% to countries affected by instability and conflict. And although aid to education has generally stagnated since 2010, GPE disbursements increased by 14% on average from 2010 to 2015. This is because the GPE allocation model is based on two key elements: the needs of the education sector in the partner country and the income level of the country in question.

Ensuring GPE 2020 is fully funded is central to turning the tide on diminishing aid allocations to education in countries with the most in need. It is vital that donor partners make timebound and ambitious pledges in Dakar on February 2nd 2018 so the GPE can continue to do its invaluable work.

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The continuing crisis in access to, and quality of, education is a disaster for millions of the world’s poorest children, young people, adults, families and communities. The GPE is uniquely positioned to facilitate coordination, harmonising funding but also in promoting stronger and more ambitious partnerships among governments, development partners, civil society and the private sector at the country level. The Global Campaign for Education, calls on all GPE partners to seize the opportunity of the February 2018 GPE Financing Conference, to make concrete pledges and commitments:

* **Developing countries**, should expand their domestic tax base (to at least 20% of GDP) and increase the share of spending on education (to at least 20% of budgets), and ensuring resources are closely scrutinised and spent sensitively to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and equitability of public education systems.
* **Bilateral donors** should increase ODA (towards 0.7% global target), commit at least 30% of their education aid to support multilateral efforts, and ensure they are supporting the countries and populations most in need, which can be achieved by prioritising the GPE.
* **International action:** Additional efforts are needed to support reforms to domestic tax systems and to develop a globally inclusive inter-governmental body that is empowered and resourced to set and enforce fair global tax rules.[[32]](#endnote-21)

Now is the time to act: we must fund education and turn the SDG4 promise into reality.

1. UNESCO et al. (2015) ‘Education 2030. Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action’. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. This includes; 61 million children of primary school age, 62 million adolescents of lower secondary school age and 141 million of upper secondary school age. UNESCO/GEM Report Policy Paper 32/Factsheet 44 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. This is for primary and secondary school. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. The level of out-of-school children has not moved since 2008 at the primary level, since 2012 at the lower secondary level and since 2013 at the upper secondary level. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Education Commission (2016), ‘The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world’. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. UNESCO et al. September 2017. More Than One-Half of Children and Adolescents Are Not Learning Worldwide results. Fact Sheet 46. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Education Commission (2016), ‘The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world’. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Of which 102 million are aged 15-24. UNESCO. September 2017. Literacy Rates Continue to Rise from One Generation to the Next Fact Sheet No. 45. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. See GPE’s ‘Case for Investment’ for a summary of evidence: <https://replenishment.globalpartnership.org/en/case-for-investment/> [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. UNESCO and GEM (June 2017). ‘Reducing global poverty through universal primary and secondary education’. Policy Paper 32 / Fact Sheet 44. p.1 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
11. UNESCO GEMR (2014) ‘Teaching and Learning: Achieving Education for All’. p.19 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
12. UIS estimates there are 614 million children currently not learning the basics http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs46-more-than-half-children-not-learning-en-2017.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
13. UNESCO GEMR (2011) ‘Education Counts, Toward the Millennium Development Goals’. p.6 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
14. Education Commission (2016), ‘The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world’. p,4 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
15. Ibid, p.34 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
16. Plan International 2011. ‘Paying the price: The economic cost of failing to educate girls’. p.10 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
17. Education Commission (2016), ‘The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world’. p.99 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
18. UNESCO GEMR (2013). ‘Education Transforms Lives’. P.7 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
19. Education Commission (2016), ‘The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world’. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
20. UNESCO GEMR (2016b). ‘Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all’. p.33 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
21. UNESCO GEMR (2016b) ‘*Global Education Monitoring Report 2016.* *Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all*’. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
22. Education Commission (2016), ‘The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world’. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
23. See GPE’s Case for Investment: <https://replenishment.globalpartnership.org/en/case-for-investment/> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
24. In February 2017, GPE introduced a new allocation model based on a needs index; this combines the primary and lower secondary school age population with the lower secondary completion rate and income per capita, and makes an adjustment for fragile and conflict affected countries. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
25. A country applying for an education sector program implementation grant is required to show that efforts were made to increase domestic spending on education to at least 20% of the national budget to be eligible for GPE funding. This approach has been shown increase domestic resources allocated to education; 78% of GPE partner countries have maintained their increase their education budget at or above 20%, in 2015. Source: GPE results report 2015/2016. See <http://www.globalpartnership.org/content/2016-results-report> [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
26. Education Commission (2016), ‘The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world’. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
27. UNESCO GEMR (2016b) ‘*Global Education Monitoring Report 2016.* *Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all*’. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
28. The allocation of 20% of national budgets towards education, is an internationally recognised benchmark. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
29. # See, ActionAid, 2016, The Learning Generation: Domestic Tax and Education, for more information

    # <http://www.actionaid.org/publications/learning-generation-domestic-tax-and-education>

    [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
30. Estimates that reaching universal pre-primary, primary and secondary education – of good quality – in low- and lower-middle-income countries will require a total of US$340 billion per year. Even if low-income countries spend over 6% of GDP on education this will still leave a US$39 billion gap. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
31. 2017 Aid to Education is Stagnating and Not Going to Countries Most in Need, published by UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
32. This is an extract from the GCE’s [Global Call to Action](http://www.campaignforeducation.org/docs/resources/Education_Financing_Campaign_2017_CTA_EN.pdf) on education financing. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)