

**ALICE ALBRIGHT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS,
AND RELATED PROGRAMS
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

MARCH 12, 2019

Madam Chairwoman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity once again to update you regarding the continuing progress of the 67 developing country partners of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) over the past year. I respectfully ask the Subcommittee to recommend at least \$125 million, under the United States Agency for International Development's Development Assistance account, as the US Government's fiscal year 2020 contribution to the Global Partnership for Education. I also request that the Subcommittee recommend at least \$925 million from various accounts in the bill for overall basic education funding.

I would like to begin by thanking Congresswoman Lowey for her leadership on global education and the entire Committee for its support in fiscal year 2019 for a \$90 million contribution to GPE. This additional contribution from the United States will help the Global Partnership close its financing gap and continue its campaign to ensure that children in the world's poorest countries have access to a quality basic education.

Country Examples

Over the last several weeks, I have traveled to Sierra Leone to review the progress of this country since the Ebola crisis and to meet with its leaders, teachers and partners on the ground. Years of civil war and the Ebola crisis have taken their toll on Sierra Leone's education system, but the country has a remarkable story of resilience and innovation. One example of this was the Ministry of Education's use of radio broadcasting during the Ebola crisis, with support from GPE, to provide instruction to students while schools were closed.

Sierra Leone has made strong progress since the crisis and has committed to increasing its domestic financing for education to 21% of its budget. However, the country continues to face serious challenges, such as the need to improve learning outcomes for early grades, decrease the number of unapproved schools operating without government support, and increase the number of trained teachers. The government has established a new Teaching Service Commission, the first of its kind in West Africa, to improve teacher effectiveness.

In Chad, I met with its national leaders, including the Minister for Education, and also traveled outside the capital and visited a number of schools, seeing perhaps 1,000 students. For example, I spoke with students at a teacher training college – the number one teacher training college in Chad -- who told me that what they really needed was books. When we visited the

library, it was completely empty except for one stack of books on geography from the 1930s entitled “France and the colonies.” I visited a primary school where students were learning in a classroom with a broken thatched roof. The remnants of the previous classroom stood nearby. Again, we noted the lack of books. The country’s high population growth is fueling a growing primary school education age population in a country where nearly eighty percent of the population is illiterate. We must address the lack of training, textbooks and other reading material.

I will shortly visit Burkina Faso and look forward to sharing my observations of its progress and challenges with the Committee.

The Global Partnership for Education

The Global Partnership for Education is a public-private partnership of donor and developing country governments, UNICEF, UNHCR, the World Bank and other international organizations, civil society, teachers’ associations, and the private sector and foundations. The United States is among the donor governments represented on the GPE Board and on its key governance committees, such as the Grant and Performance Committee.

GPE provides financial and technical support to 67 partner countries which are required to commit at least 20% of their national budgets to education, 45% of which should be designated for basic education. The GPE results-based funding model supports the strengthening of national education systems through the development and implementation of good quality education sector plans and education sector reforms.

Our principle objectives are:

- to secure improved and more equitable learning outcomes through quality teaching;
- to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of education systems so that they can deliver a quality basic education to all; and
- to increase equity and inclusion for all, particularly the most poor and marginalized, including gender, disability, ethnicity, and conflict or fragility

Ensuring that children in developing countries have access to a quality basic education is in the national interest of the United States. Education promotes economic growth and stability; reduces the potential of sudden mass migrations; provides increased opportunities for employment; and reduces the risk of hopelessness and radicalization among young people.

Support from the United States will also help leverage additional donor country and private sector financing for the 2018-2020 period.

Fragile and/or Conflict-Affected Countries – Responsive Support

Twenty-eight of GPE’s 67 partner countries are classified as fragile and/or conflict affected due to a natural disaster such as an earthquake or protracted conflict. A majority of the world’s out of school children reside in such countries. More than fifty percent of GPE’s disbursements over the past few years were made to fragile and/or conflict affected countries –

representing approximately \$250 million per year. As a result, GPE is one of the largest sources of education support in crisis countries.

For example, escalation of armed conflict has led to considerable disruption of education in Yemen and 1.8 million children in the country are now out of school. As a result, GPE's multi-year \$72.6 million grant has been restructured to re-direct \$9.7 million of the grant to refurbish 150 schools, provide support to 37,500 children and basic school supplies for almost 91,000 children.

Similarly, the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone and other countries in West Africa forced closure of all schools for almost 18 months in 2014/15. GPE reallocated \$1.45 million of its grant to Sierra Leone to mitigate the effects of the crisis on the education system, including supporting education via radio and re-organization of two condensed school years, transitioning back to a normal school year in 2016. In response to a growing number of emergencies in GPE-supported countries, GPE has developed new flexible and responsive funding policies that support the development of transitional sector plans and have provided countries such as Chad, Somalia, the Central African Republic and Yemen accelerated funding to enable these countries to better respond to unexpected and acute crises.

Gender Equality – More Girls in School

As a top priority, GPE supports the development of policies and strategies in its partner countries and provides funding to increase gender equity in basic education.

GPE has in place a Gender Equality Policy and Strategy that is designed to address the gender gap among teachers, administrators and throughout the education system, in addition to students. The gender policy and strategy support countries to identify barriers to gender equality, provides countries guidelines for conducting gender analysis, and provides financing for interventions that promote gender equality.

GPE Results

GPE assesses its results by looking at completion rates, exclusion of key segments of the population such as girls, learning outcomes, and whether countries are making sufficient investments of their domestic resources into education. GPE-supported countries show a strong positive trend over the 17 years of the Global Partnership's existence:

- The primary school completion rate in GPE-supported countries has climbed to 76.7%, from 63% in 2002. 51.6% of children are now completing lower secondary school.
- 74% of girls in GPE-supported countries finish primary school today, compared to 56% in 2002. While we are pleased with the progress achieved over the past decade in relation to the gender gap, securing further increases remains challenging. 73% of the girls who are out of school worldwide and 63% of those who are out of lower secondary school reside in GPE-supported countries.

- GPE’s developing country partners are also contributing more domestic financing to education, reaching almost 80% of countries maintaining at least 20% of their national budgets for education.
- Over 40% of GPE’s support to countries in FY 2018 was allocated to improving learning outcomes.

More Work to be Done

There remain very significant education access and quality challenges in countries, including many that are designated as fragile and/or conflict affected. Worldwide, over 260 million children and young people are out of school. Approximately 130 million more children have attended several years of primary school but have not learned to read, write or to do simple math. Children in lowest-income countries are the most at risk, with only two out of three completing primary school.

As noted by the International Commission on Financing Education Opportunity, unless we increase investments in education more than half of the upcoming generation—825 million of the 1.6 billion young people who are estimated to be alive in 2030—will not be on track to acquire basic secondary education skills. They will be shut out of economic opportunities through a lack of education and in some countries, this can result in national and/or regional instability and radicalization among some youth.

In 2018, GPE held its third Financing Conference. This Financing Conference was held in Dakar and was co-hosted by the presidents of France and Senegal and attended by eight other heads of state and numerous donor government ministers, business and private foundation leaders. This conference secured \$2.3 billion in new commitments from donors for 2018 to 2020. The United States announced there a contribution of \$75 million in fiscal year 2017 funds for GPE and projected increased funds in the following fiscal years. Many thanks to this Committee and the Congress on a bipartisan basis for its approval of a further \$87.5 million to GPE for FY 2018 and recently \$90 million for FY 2019. Germany and the Netherlands have also announced new and increased support and as a result GPE will have raised to date approximately \$2.5 billion of the \$3.1 billion needed to achieve our goals.

In addition, at this Financing Conference, over 50 developing country ministers committed over \$110 billion of their own domestic resources to education in their countries.

The United States, through our partner the US Agency for International Development (USAID), sits on GPE’s Board and contributes at a technical level to the development of GPE’s policies and strengthening of its funding and operational models. USAID also often serves as a member of the local education group in countries, a key priority setting and program monitoring body in all countries. US support to GPE contributes to the achievement of USAID’s education goals and the US support to education in fragile and conflict affected countries. More than half of GPE’s disbursements support fragile and/or conflict affected countries.

GPE's strategic plan is very well aligned with USAID's new global basic education strategy. USAID missions in GPE-supported countries are often closely engaged with the local education groups that work with ministries of education on the formulation of national plans and applications for GPE support. US support to GPE is contributing to the achievement of USAID's global basic education goals.

In February 2018, GPE launched a new public-private initiative called the Education Data Solutions Roundtable with strong engagement of companies, such as Mastercard, Microsoft, Intel, HP and Tableau, which are providing their expertise on the improvement of data collection, management and utilization. The Roundtable is focusing on the need for better tools for education information management and better data visualization, and ways that multiple data systems can be integrated to provide a more comprehensive, wholistic picture at school level.

GPE Results Based Funding Model

A key aspect of the GPE is its finance and technical support for the development and implementation of good quality education sector plans that bring all key partners together at country level under one national strategy and minimizes the fragmentation caused by multiple programs and approaches. USAID and other donors are generally members of the local education groups that are at the center of this process in all countries.

GPE features a result-based funding model that requires developing country partners to commit their own domestic resources for education before receiving GPE financing and rewards progress on learning, efficiency, equity. GPE also requires all partner countries to meet minimum levels of domestic finance for education: at least 20% of national budgets for the sector overall, with at least 45% of this supporting basic education. As noted above, developing country ministers committed over \$110 billion of their own domestic resources for education in Dakar in February 2018.

GPE's operational model at country level also increases transparency regarding funding gaps as well supports improved monitoring of progress through the continued engagement of the local education groups throughout the life of the grant.

Fiscal Year 2020 United States Support for GPE and Basic Education

Madam Chairwoman, I urge the Committee to provide a fiscal year 2020 US contribution to the Global Partnership for Education of \$125 million. I also urge you to support an overall level for basic education of \$925 million.

Thank you for your consideration.