

*Testimony prepared for the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs
FY2020 Budget for Global Basic Education Programs*

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On behalf of the Global Campaign for Education – US, a diverse coalition of more than 80 organizations working to ensure universal quality education for children around the world, I urge you to support effective investments in education globally by allocating \$800 million to USAID basic education bilateral programming, \$125 million for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), and at least \$21 million for the Education Cannot Wait Fund from the State Department and USAID budgets in the FY2020 budget. This funding will ensure that the United States continues to play a leadership role in the vital effort to achieve universal quality education.

The Global Campaign for Education – US commends Congress for sustaining funding for international education in the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2019. Congress funded International Basic Education at a minimum of \$800,000,000 and multilateral partnerships that support education at a minimum of \$90,000,000, both of which are critical to ensure that the United States continues to be a leader in efforts to improve education opportunities for all around the world.

The power of education is clear – brighter futures, healthier communities, and increased economic growth for individuals and countries. U.S. partnerships with developing countries have helped to build stronger education systems and drastically decreased the number of out of school children around the world.

Today, one in four of the world’s school-aged children live in countries affected by crisis. Of these children, 75 million are either in danger of, or already missing out on, their right to education. Education is a life-saving intervention for children during times of conflict. It provides a sense of normalcy in otherwise challenging circumstances, helps children heal from trauma, and offers an alternative to further migration in search of safety and security. Access to quality education helps create a future for children where they can provide for themselves, their families and help rebuild their communities. Without a basic education, children are more vulnerable to the pull of extremist groups, at greater risk to infectious and deadly diseases, and more likely targets for forced labor, trafficking, and child marriage. Research has shown that each additional year of formal schooling for males reduces their risk of becoming involved in conflict by 20 percent.

Thanks to the leadership of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the USAID education strategy, the U.S. has tripled the number of students being reached to 27.7 million per year since the strategy’s launch in 2011. USAID has also increased access for 2.4 million children who were previously out-of-school due to conflict and crisis. I urge you to fully fund our global education programs.

Fully funding our global education programs is not only the right thing to do, it's also a smart use of U.S. resources. Education increases security and stability, spurs economic growth, and provides proven results across development sectors. If all students in low-income countries left school with reading, numeracy and citizenship skills, 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty. Education for girls is particularly effective; when 10 percent more adolescent girls attend school, a country's GDP increases by an average of 3 percent.

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has played a leading role in providing education in the lowest-income countries. In GPE partner countries, 72 million more children were in primary school in 2015 compared to 2002. U.S. financial commitments to GPE will contribute to the development of sustainable national education systems owned and led by developing country partners. As GPE continues to show progress on its GPE2020 strategy to get an additional 25 million children in school, sustained U.S. support in the FY2020 budget is critical.

Since 2010, less than two percent of all humanitarian funding has been spent on education. We appreciate the U.S. Government's recognition of the critical need to mobilize more resources for education in emergency and crisis settings, and the initial \$21 million commitment to the new Education Cannot Wait fund for education in emergencies. Education Cannot Wait is an important new effort to transform the delivery of education in emergencies, by bringing together governments and humanitarian and development actors to deliver a more collaborative and rapid response to the educational needs of children and youth affected by crises. By mobilizing resources from both the public and private sectors, Education Cannot Wait has already allocated funds to help ensure that education and learning are central components of humanitarian response efforts, and that no child's right to education is disrupted by conflict or disaster. We encourage expanded support for Education Cannot Wait in the FY2020 budget.

While we recognize the challenges of the current budget environment, we urge that this funding not come at the expense of other effective humanitarian and development assistance. We strongly support sustained funding for the entirety of poverty-focused development accounts, which work together to serve the common goal of building a safer and more prosperous world.

Continued bipartisan congressional commitment to this issue positions the United States as a leader in global progress towards quality education for all. By allocating \$800 million to basic education, \$125 million for the Global Partnership for Education, and at least \$21 million for the Education Cannot Wait Fund in the FY 2020 State and Foreign Operations Bill, Congress can ensure millions more children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.