

Support Robust Funding for International Basic Education in FY2024

****Deadline COB April 11, 2023****

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Please join Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) in the call for robust funding for USAID International Basic Education, including the Global Partnership for Education, in fiscal year 2024. For more information, or to sign onto the letter, please contact Francesca Eremeeva at Francesca_Eremeeva@vanhollen.senate.gov

April 12, 2023

The Honorable Chris Coons
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations, and Related Programs
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Coons and Ranking Member Graham:

Thank you for your continued bipartisan commitment to fighting poverty and improving education for children in need around the world. We are writing to urge you to provide increased support for Basic Education in the fiscal year 2024 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, including funding for U.S. Government international education programs, the Global Partnership for Education, and Education Cannot Wait.

The need for U.S. leadership in global education has never been more important. Disruptions to education during the pandemic continue to impact children around the world. In low- and middle-income countries, for example, an estimated 70 percent of 10-year-olds are unable to read or understand a simple written text. This rate was 57 percent before the pandemic, which demonstrates how dire the learning crisis has become in the wake of COVID-19. Learning loss, increased dropout rates, and poor nutrition threaten the ability of children and youth to complete their education on time and lead healthy, peaceful, and successful lives.

The world is dealing with numerous crises, and we cannot afford to leave behind an entire generation of learners. Girls in particular have been disproportionately impacted, with recent estimates indicating that over 11 million girls are currently at risk of never returning to school. If left unaddressed, the long-term ramifications of inaction at the global level are real and severe, as lower educational attainment can lead to less economic opportunity and worse health outcomes. Education is an essential lifeline in times of crisis, and investments in international education are needed to mitigate the harmful effects of the pandemic on the lives of children and youth.

Investments in U.S. international basic education programs are essential to addressing these challenges: they increase access to quality education, provide children with foundational reading, math, social and emotional learning skills, and prepare youth for successful careers in 57 countries. U.S. foreign assistance must build upon and enhance ongoing efforts to support the world's learners, assess and address learning loss, support educators, provide psychosocial and protection services, and increase emergency preparedness and response capacity in partner countries.

U.S. support for multilateral partnerships, including the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW), complements our bilateral programs and leverages additional resources for this important work. GPE mobilized \$500 million from other donors in accelerated funding support to help developing countries mitigate both the immediate and long-term disruptions to education caused by the pandemic supporting educational opportunities for up to 355 million children in 67 countries. Through ECW's first emergency rapid response, multi-year funding platforms and the COVID-19 education emergency response, ECW has reached over 38 million children and more than 176,000 teachers in 41 countries.

To sustain and enhance international efforts to support foundational learning and improve learning outcomes, it will be imperative for the **Subcommittee to robustly fund USAID's bilateral Basic Education programs, GPE, and ECW in the fiscal year 2024 State and Foreign Operations Appropriations bill**. We greatly appreciate your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,