

TOWARDS COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT TO GLOBAL EDUCATION:

A REVIEW OF THE U.S. PLEDGE TO
THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION



DISCUSSION PAPER 1 OF 3:

**THE U.S. COMMITMENT
TO THE GPE FUND**

RESULTS
the power to end poverty

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RESULTS EDUCATIONAL FUND

RESULTS Educational Fund (REF) is a 501(c)3 non-profit citizen's advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C. that is committed to educating the public, the media, and government leaders about issues related to poverty and hunger in the United States and abroad. It organizes public forums, trains citizens in being active participants in democracy, holds media conference calls to share the latest information, and conducts oversight research to determine the effectiveness of programs meant to address poverty and inequity. REF combines its advocacy efforts with its sister organization, RESULTS, Inc. (a 501(c)4 organization), and international affiliates in Australia, Canada, Japan, Mexico, and the United Kingdom for greater impact worldwide.

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Cover photos:

Top: Students in the USAID Accelerated Learning Program Plus in Liberia: Creative Associates International

Center: Global Partnership for Education 2011 Pledging Conference in Copenhagen: Networking Consultants

Bottom: Students in the USAID School WASH and Quality Education Project in Zambia: Development Aid from People to People in Zambia

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SUMMARY

In November 2011, the United States made a pledge to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the world's only multilateral institution exclusively devoted to ensuring that all children everywhere receive a quality basic education. The United States pledged to:

- *Contribute \$20 million to the GPE Fund in 2012.*
- *Improve the reading skills of 100 million children and increase equitable access to education in crisis and conflict environments for 15 million learners by 2015.*
- *Improve its aid effectiveness through the USAID Forward initiative, which aims to reform and revitalize USAID's strategic policy, planning and evaluation capabilities, and how it engages with partner countries.*

A year later, RESULTS conducted country visits to Liberia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia to explore the status of the U.S. pledge. The following paper reflects on what RESULTS learned about the role of the United States in GPE mechanisms on the ground and the status of the 2011 U.S. commitment to GPE, concluding that:

A greater, multi-year U.S. commitment at GPE's June 2014 pledging conference would:

- ***Meet the call from Congress***, which has been requesting that the Administration do more in the area of basic education and contribute more to GPE specifically.
- ***Achieve objectives that U.S. bilateral assistance cannot meet alone***, as GPE's country-led systems approach to education development builds the government and civil society landscapes needed by USAID to achieve its goals in sustainable development.
- ***More accurately reflect the United States' high level of partnership with GPE***, as the United States is very active in GPE structures at the country level yet has provided relatively little support to the GPE Fund.
- ***Bridge the gap to meet increasing demand***, as anticipated requests from developing countries for GPE support currently outweigh existing donor commitments.

To learn more about the other components of the 2011 U.S. pledge to GPE, see "Discussion Paper 2 of 3: The USAID Education Strategy" and "Discussion Paper 3 of 3: USAID Forward."

INTRODUCTION

The Global Partnership for Education

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is the world's premiere multilateral partnership for basic education. Originally established as the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) in 2002, GPE brings together donor country governments, developing country governments, multilateral agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, and private foundations to combine their financial and technical assistance to support education development in 58 countries.

Since 2002, GPE has allocated \$3.1 billion in financial aid to education through the Global Partnership for Education Fund, which manages partners' pooled contributions (GPE, 2013b). GPE channels the Fund through a country-led systems approach to education development. At the national level, Local Education Groups (LEGs), consisting of the government of the developing country partner, donors, multilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs), coordinate around the development, endorsement, and implementation of a national education plan.

Within each LEG, a member is designated as the Coordinating Agency, which acts as the primary communication link between the developing country government, other members of the LEG, and the GPE secretariat. One multilateral agency or donor in the LEG also takes the role of the Supervising Entity, which acts as the fund manager at the national level. The Supervising Entity receives grant funds from the GPE secretariat and transfers them to the government to implement activities called for by the national education plan.

The U.S. government has been part of GPE for over 10 years. The United States — represented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) — has been on the GPE Board of Directors since its beginnings as the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative, helped relaunch it as the Global Partnership for Education, and remains on the Board today.

The 2011 U.S. Pledge to GPE

In 2011, GPE embarked on a three-year replenishment campaign to secure resources for 2011-2014. The campaign kicked off with a pledging conference held in Copenhagen, Denmark on November 8th, 2011. Representatives from 52 countries came together and committed \$1.5 billion to the Global Partnership for Education Fund.

At the 2011 GPE pledging conference, the United States made a series of commitments — some financial, others programmatic:

The United States of America pledged a contribution of \$20 million to the Global Partnership Fund, following a grant of \$2 million to support monitoring

GPE vision:
A good quality education for all children, everywhere, so they fulfill their potential and contribute to their societies.

GPE mission:
To galvanize and coordinate a global effort to deliver a good quality education to all girls and boys, prioritizing the poorest and most vulnerable.

and evaluation by the Global Partnership Secretariat. The United States also pledged to improve its aid effectiveness through the USAID Forward Initiative, which aims to reform and revitalise USAID's strategic policy, planning and evaluation capabilities and to redefine how USAID will engage with partner countries. These reforms are key to implementing the aid effectiveness principles while ensuring more effective programming and closer collaboration with local actors in education and other sectors. The United States pledged to focus particular support for early learning outcomes and education in fragile states. In the first case, the United States pledged to improve reading skills for 100 million children in primary grades by 2015 and in the second case the United States will increase education access for 15 million learners in conflict-affected and fragile states by 2015 by strengthening crisis prevention efforts, supporting learning opportunities for youth and developing partner country institutional capacity to provide education services. (GPE, 2012)

Not all of these commitments were new. Reading skills, access to education in conflict-affected and fragile states, and aid effectiveness are objective areas set out in the USAID Education Strategy and USAID Forward, plans which predated the November 2011 GPE pledging conference. In addition to reaffirming these previous commitments, the United States pledged to contribute \$20 million to the GPE Fund in 2012.

RESULTS' Country Visits

With an interest in these commitments, RESULTS set out to explore the status of the 2011 U.S. pledge to GPE one year later. In October and November of 2012, RESULTS visited Liberia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia in an attempt to gain local insights and snapshots pertaining to the implementation of the U.S. pledge.

Liberia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia were selected on the basis that they (1) are in sub-Saharan Africa, the regional investment focus of USAID's Education Strategy, (2) have large, active USAID basic education program portfolios, (3) are GPE developing country partners, and (4) consist in part of conflict-affected or fragile states (Liberia and South Sudan).

Speaking with USAID missions, USAID implementing partners, donors, governments, international NGOs, local NGOs, CSOs, and GPE Coordinating Agencies, RESULTS met with a total of 49 representatives from across a range of development actors to discuss their views on USAID's Education Strategy, USAID Forward, and USAID's involvement with Local Education Groups.

The following sections examine the U.S. financial commitment to GPE and what RESULTS learned in light of its country visits. For findings and recommendations in regards to the USAID Education Strategy and USAID Forward, see "Discussion Paper 2 of 3: The USAID Education Strategy" and "Discussion Paper 3 of 3: USAID Forward." For in-depth country profiles of Liberia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia, see the Annex, available online.

MAP 1: RESULTS' COUNTRY VISITS

LIBERIA

Population:	4.2 million
GDP per capita:	\$422
Primary school net enrollment rate:	41% (female 40%, male 42%)
Out-of-school children of primary school age:	385,726 (50% female, 50% male)
Primary school pupil-teacher ratio:	27:1
Percent of teachers trained:	56%
Textbook-pupil ratio:	3:1
Primary school completion rate:	66% (female 60%, male 72%)
Youth literacy rate:	77% (female 82%, male 71%)

SOUTH SUDAN

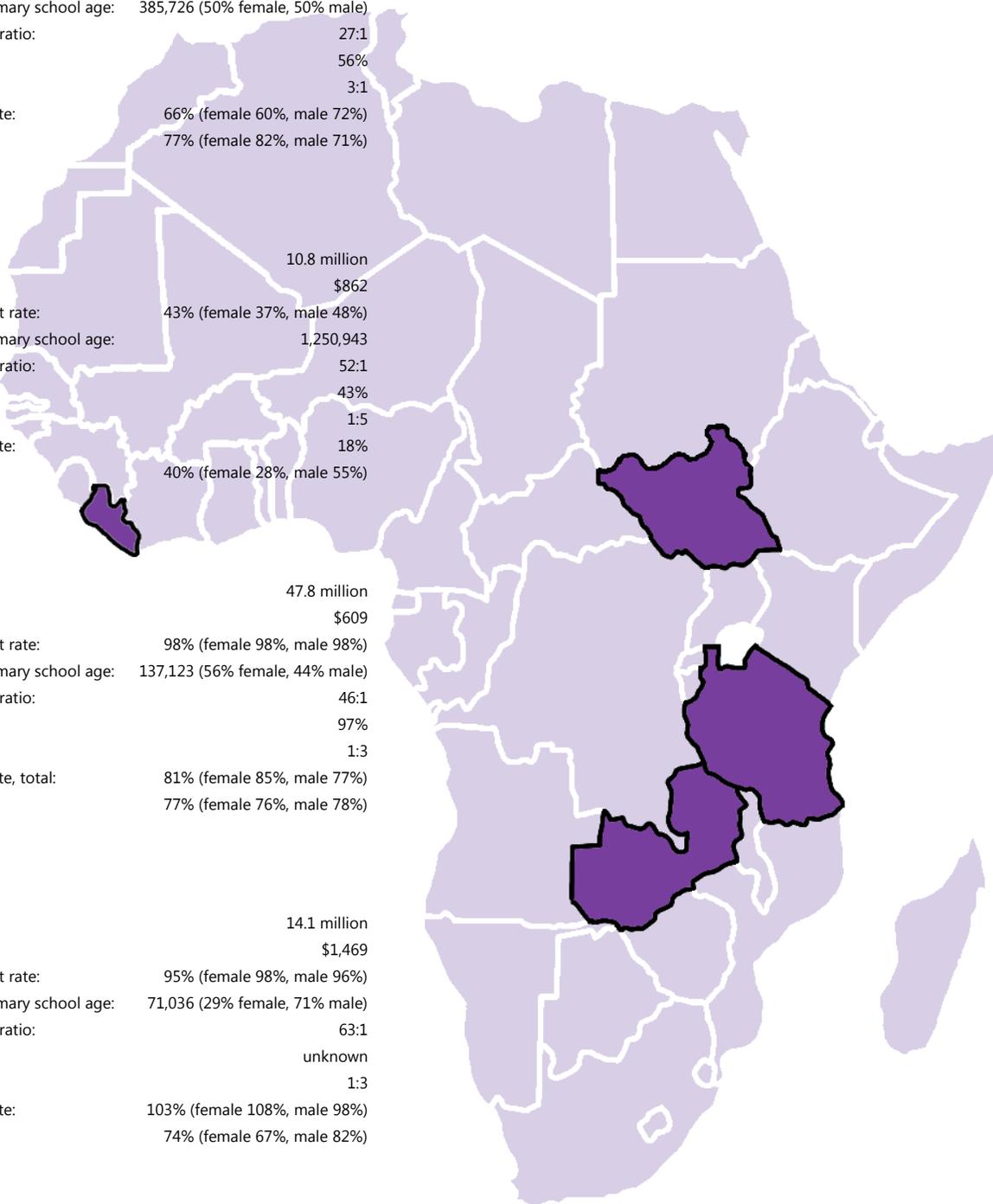
Population:	10.8 million
GDP per capita:	\$862
Primary school net enrollment rate:	43% (female 37%, male 48%)
Out-of-school children of primary school age:	1,250,943
Primary school pupil-teacher ratio:	52:1
Percent of teachers trained:	43%
Textbook-pupil ratio:	1:5
Primary school completion rate:	18%
Youth literacy rate:	40% (female 28%, male 55%)

TANZANIA

Population:	47.8 million
GDP per capita:	\$609
Primary school net enrollment rate:	98% (female 98%, male 98%)
Out-of-school children of primary school age:	137,123 (56% female, 44% male)
Primary school pupil-teacher ratio:	46:1
Percent of teachers trained:	97%
Textbook-pupil ratio:	1:3
Primary school completion rate, total:	81% (female 85%, male 77%)
Youth literacy rate:	77% (female 76%, male 78%)

ZAMBIA

Population:	14.1 million
GDP per capita:	\$1,469
Primary school net enrollment rate:	95% (female 98%, male 96%)
Out-of-school children of primary school age:	71,036 (29% female, 71% male)
Primary school pupil-teacher ratio:	63:1
Percent of teachers trained:	unknown
Textbook-pupil ratio:	1:3
Primary school completion rate:	103% (female 108%, male 98%)
Youth literacy rate:	74% (female 67%, male 82%)



Sources: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013; World Bank, 2013; Republic of South Sudan Ministry of General Education and Instruction, 2012

COUNTRY LEVEL: STRONG SPIRIT OF COLLABORATION

One area of interest that compelled RESULTS to visit Liberia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia concerned the level of U.S. participation in GPE processes at the country level, particularly in the Local Education Groups that the GPE helps establish to bring governments, donors, and civil society together to develop and implement national education plans.

High Involvement in Local Education Groups

RESULTS found USAID to be a highly active partner in Local Education Groups in the countries visited. In these countries, there were no bodies specifically called “Local Education Groups,” or LEGs. Rather, the role of LEGs was incorporated into existing multi-stakeholder structures. Whether it was Liberia’s Education Sector Development Committee, South Sudan’s National Education Forum, Tanzania’s Education Development Partners Group, or Zambia’s Education Sector Cooperating Partners Coordinating Committee, USAID was found to be highly engaged in the forums mandated to develop and implement GPE-endorsed education plans. In South Sudan, USAID is the co-chair of the National Education Forum alongside UNESCO, the GPE Coordinating Agency.

Joint GPE-USAID Activities

USAID’s in-country relationships with GPE also extend beyond LEGs. USAID is a partner in many regional and global GPE activities, meetings, and workshops, such as the Early Grade Reading Community of Practice and All Children Reading. While USAID supports these activities broadly, it also works with partners on the ground to more thoroughly engage them. For example, USAID/Tanzania facilitated the participation of local Tanzanian NGOs and CSOs to attend and participate in the All Children Reading Africa Workshops held in Kigali, Rwanda on March 12th-15th, 2012.

Limitations of USAID’s Approach

While those consulted were quick to acknowledge USAID’s active role in their national equivalents to Local Education Groups, many were equally quick to proclaim the limitations of USAID’s participation in these forums. USAID prefers project funding modalities in which it separately manages funds and executes projects. In collaborative mechanisms such as LEGs, this has created challenges in communication and planning with ministries of education and other actors. While its projects are aligned with and complement national education plans, USAID’s preferred approach to development often leaves it to bypass dialogue structures and offer “prepackaged” projects, a style that was criticized for not building government capacity.

GLOBAL LEVEL: ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

A Low and Late 2012 Commitment

On November 8th, 2011, at the GPE Pledging Conference, the United States made, among others, the following public commitment:

In recognition of the fact that the Global Partnership for Education is a significant contributor to the progress we need to make towards achieving the MDGs, we acknowledge and applaud the steps GPE has taken in implementing key recommendations arising from its midterm evaluation. The United States is pleased to announce that [we] are providing \$20 million USD in 2012 subject to the U.S. appropriations process. (GPE, 2011)

This \$20 million pledge from the United States to GPE came alongside pledges from 17 other donor countries, contributing to a total of \$1.5 billion in commitments to GPE. All of these pledges, including that of the United States, are illustrated below. The United States had previously agreed to provide \$2 million to the GPE Secretariat to support monitoring and evaluation activities. Thus, a total of \$22 million is reported as the U.S. pledge to GPE in the table below.

United Kingdom	\$402,600,000
Australia	\$278,000,000
Denmark	\$201,400,000
Netherlands	\$165,100,000
Sweden	\$100,700,000
Norway	\$98,000,000
France	\$65,500,000
Canada	\$57,000,000
European Commission	\$50,800,000
Spain	\$26,200,000
Germany	\$22,000,000
United States	\$22,000,000
Ireland	\$19,100,000
Belgium	\$8,100,000
Japan	\$5,400,000
Switzerland	\$5,400,000
Russia	\$2,000,000
Romania	\$100,000
Total	\$1,529,400,000

Source: GPE, 2012

TABLE 1:

2011 GPE PLEDGING CONFERENCE PLEDGES

The United States' \$22 million commitment to GPE fell far behind that of many other donor countries. While nations like the U.K. and Australia made multi-year commitments worth \$402.6 million and \$278 million, respectively, the United States made a single-year pledge of \$20 million plus \$2 million for monitoring and evaluation. Even countries with much smaller economies like Denmark and the Netherlands committed up to ten times that amount, with \$201.4 million and \$165.1 million, respectively. Charts 1 and 2 below illustrate donor country pledges to GPE both nominally and as a percentage of respective GDPs.

CHART 1:
2011 DONOR COUNTRY PLEDGES TO GPE, NOMINAL

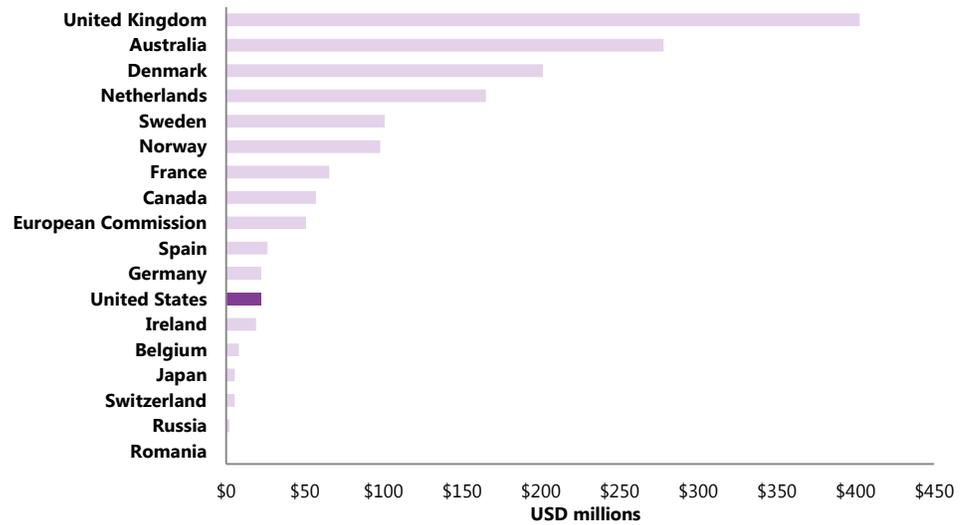
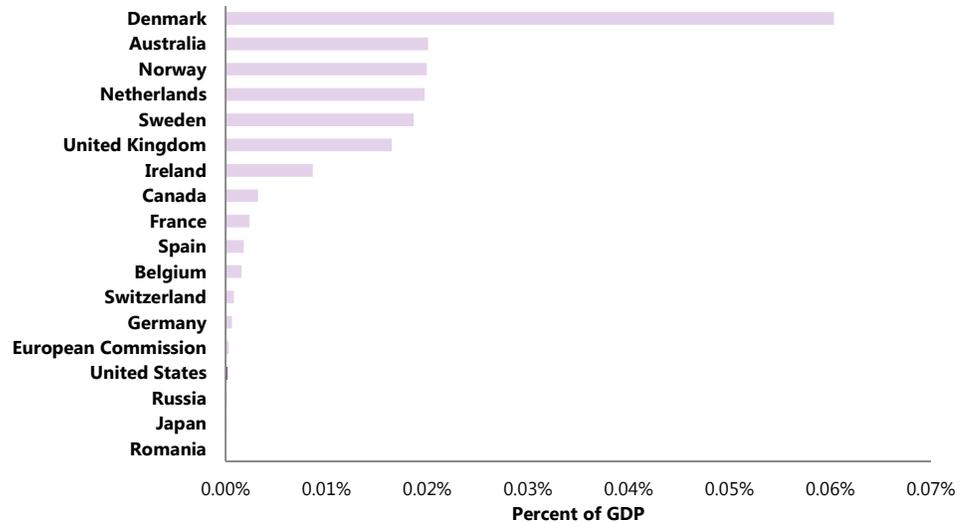


CHART 2:
2011 DONOR COUNTRY PLEDGES TO GPE, AS PERCENT OF GDP



Sources: GPE, 2012; World Bank, 2013

On December 23rd, 2011, a month after the United States pledged to provide \$20 million to GPE in 2012, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 became public law. In it, \$800 million was appropriated to USAID for basic education assistance, and Congress specifically authorized these funds to be “available for a contribution to the Global Partnership for Education” (Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012).

Despite the 2012 Appropriations Act, fiscal year 2012 came to a close without a U.S. contribution to GPE. Of the 16 donors that pledged to commit new contributions to GPE by the end of 2012, 14 transferred their annual commitment amount to GPE as planned. Spain’s contribution arrived late, being paid in early 2013, and GPE at last received the U.S. contribution in July 2013 — ten months after the close of the fiscal year (GPE, 2013a).

Demand for GPE support is high, and its current resources cannot fund all of the program implementation grants requested of it. As donor contributions to GPE finance national education plans, delays in contributions can effectively result in delays in getting girls into school, delays in rebuilding education systems in conflict-affected and fragile states, and delays in recruiting and training teachers.

The cause for United States’ delay in fulfilling its commitment is unclear. It was not due to near-exhaustion of the basic education budget. Congress appropriated \$800 million to the Department of State and USAID for basic education in 2012, but only \$626.6 million was obligated, leaving \$173.4 million unutilized (U.S. Department of State, 2013). A July 2013 report from the Senate Committee on Appropriations cited massive underspending by USAID in basic education in recent years of nearly \$1.4 billion (U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, 2013). It seems likely however that this is not a problem unique to the education sector but rather an indicator of agency-wide issues in procurement delays (U.S. GAO, 2003; USAID, n.d.).

The issue of underspending in basic education was also raised in a USAID budget hearing before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations in April 2013 and was linked to an inquiry about greater U.S. support to GPE (U.S. House Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, 2013).

There has also been a divergence in recent years between the amount the Administration has been requesting for basic education and the amount Congress has been appropriating, as illustrated in Chart 3 below. Since 2010, the Administration has been consistently requesting less money for basic education, but Congress continues to want it to do more.



Sources: Consolidated Appropriations Acts; Administration Requests

The Committee notes that the total unobligated balance of prior year appropriations for basic education, excluding fiscal year 2013, exceeds \$1,388,000,000.

— Senate Committee on Appropriations, Report on Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Bill, 2014

And if there is demonstrated need and we are having difficulty programming basic education funding bilaterally, why not put more money through channels such as the Global Partnership for Education?

— Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY) Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs USAID Budget Hearing April 24th, 2013

CHART 3:
BASIC EDUCATION, APPROPRIATIONS VS. ADMINISTRATION REQUESTS

Knowing of your strong commitment to promoting education for all children, particularly girls, around the world, we are writing to urge you to commit to contributing \$125 million to the Global Partnership for Education in fiscal year 2013.

— Letter to former Secretary of State Clinton signed by 70 members of Congress, September 13th, 2012

Congress has also been vocal in its requests to the Administration to make more substantive commitments to GPE. In September 2012, 70 members of Congress sent a letter to then Secretary of State Clinton requesting that the United States contribute \$125 million to GPE in fiscal year 2013 (Schakowsky, 2012). Despite this request, no 2013 commitment has been made by the United States to GPE.

On the procedural side, Automated Directives System (ADS) Chapter 308, Awards to Public International Organizations had recently been revised to delineate three types of awards, one being a “general contribution” defined as:

A general contribution is a mechanism based on an express statutory authority through which USAID provides contributions to a PIO for its overall operation and support (for example, annual appropriations for USAID/W contributions to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria). The purpose is not to finance specific goods, services, or activities. Nevertheless, USAID may document in the general contribution document or elsewhere its understanding that the PIO has decided to use the funds for a particular purpose. (USAID, 2012)

A “Template for General Contribution” was also developed. With adequate funds, the statutory authority to do so, Congressional appeals, and a recently streamlined procedure, it is unclear what prevented USAID from fulfilling the U.S. pledge to GPE on time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

June 2014 GPE Pledging Conference: A Greater, Multi-Year U.S. Commitment Provided on Time

The findings from RESULTS’ country visits to Liberia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia as well as reflections on the U.S. 2011 commitment to the GPE Fund point strongly towards the need for a much larger, multi-year commitment from the United States to the GPE Fund that is delivered on time. With GPE’s next replenishment conference due to take place in June 2014, now is the time for the United States to consider a substantively greater pledge to GPE. A larger, multi-year commitment to the GPE Fund would:

- **Meet the call from Congress:** Through letters to the Secretary of State, basic education appropriations that remain high despite Administration requests for less, and requests for greater contributions to GPE given USAID underspending in basic education, members of Congress have been consistently making it clear that they place a high priority on basic education and want to see the United States retain its role as a leader in the sector. A larger U.S. commitment to GPE would not only meet the call from Congress

but also potentially position the United States as a lead multilateral supporter of global education in addition to its existing bilateral role.

- **Achieve objectives that U.S. bilateral assistance cannot meet alone:** Highlighted in “Discussion Paper 3 of 3: USAID Forward,” GPE’s comparative advantage can help USAID meet its own development objectives. USAID has historically struggled to provide more direct government-to-government assistance instead of relying on primarily large U.S. contractors to implement development projects, and the agency has set targets in its USAID Forward reform agenda to address this. GPE, on the other hand, utilizes a systems approach to education development in which plans are developed by local stakeholders and funds are primarily channeled through government structures. GPE is in effect building the environments needed by USAID to meet some of the goals of USAID Forward and sustainable development in general: functioning national systems capable of direct partnership and service delivery.

Given its country-led systems approach to education development, GPE also prioritizes support to civil society, which is an essential stakeholder in establishing national education priorities and providing government oversight. Since 2009, GPE has supported national education coalitions across 45 countries through its Civil Society Education Fund. An informed, vibrant citizenry capable of holding its government accountable is a prerequisite for democracy, and GPE’s work in this sector directly contributes to USAID’s own goals in democracy, human rights, and governance.

- **More accurately reflect the United States’ high level of partnership with GPE:** There is a disconnect between the level of U.S. involvement with GPE at the country level and the global level. In the countries visited, USAID is highly involved in GPE processes and Local Education Groups, even co-chairing South Sudan’s National Education Forum. This is true as well for other countries in which USAID has basic education operations. At the global level, however, the United States’ willingness to support GPE appears wanting. The United States has been on GPE’s board of directors since its beginnings as the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative over ten years ago, helped launch it as the Global Partnership for Education, and remains on the board today. Yet only in 2011 did it make its first pledge to the GPE Fund. While nations of comparable GDP like the U.K. and Australia made multi-year commitments worth \$402.6 million and \$278 million, respectively, the United States made a single-year pledge of \$20 million. Even countries with much lower GDPs like Denmark and the Netherlands committed up to ten times that amount, with \$201.4 million and \$165.1 million, respectively. A larger, multi-year pledge would more accurately reflect the United States’ level of partnership with GPE.
- **Bridge the gap to meet increasing demand:** Demand for GPE support is on the rise. In 2013 alone, countries are expected to request over \$1 billion from GPE to support their basic education plans. GPE anticipates that by the end of 2014, it will have provided over \$4 billion since its establishment in 2002 to support education in nearly 60 countries. However, if it is to approve all anticipated program implementation grants over the 2013-2014 period, an additional \$406 million will be required beyond existing inflows

from current pledges (GPE, 2013c). If these funds do not materialize, they will be sourced from new commitments in the 2015-2018 replenishment period. This signifies the urgent need for not only an additional fiscal year 2014 commitment from the United States to GPE but also a robust, four-year pledge from the United States at the June 2014 replenishment conference that would ensure available resources to GPE over the 2015-2018 period.

A greater U.S. commitment to GPE — delivered on time — is a clear solution to meeting congressional requests, complementing U.S. bilateral efforts in basic education, supporting a partner in high demand, and balancing the United States' global involvement with GPE with the large role it is playing in GPE structures on the ground.

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